

THE
COUNT OF MONTE-CRISTO
BY
ALEXANDRE DUMAS



Edmond Dantès.

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THE COUNT OF MONTE
CRISTO

by Alexandre Dumas [père]

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VOLUME ONE

Chapter 1. Marseilles—The Arrival

On the 24th of February, 1815, the look-out at Notre-Dame de la Garde signalled the three-master, the *Pharaon* from Smyrna, Trieste, and Naples.

As usual, a pilot put off immediately, and rounding the Château d'If, got on board the vessel between Cape Morgiou and Rion island.

Immediately, and according to custom, the ramparts of Fort Saint-Jean were covered with spectators; it is always an event at Marseilles for a ship to come into port, especially when this ship, like the *Pharaon*, has been built, rigged, and laden at the old Phocean docks, and belongs to an owner of the city.

The ship drew on and had safely passed the strait, which some volcanic shock has made between the Calasareigne and Jaros islands; had doubled Pomègue, and approached the harbor under topsails, jib, and spanker, but so slowly and sedately that the idlers, with that instinct which is the forerunner of evil, asked one another what misfortune could have happened on board. However, those experienced in navigation saw plainly that if any accident had occurred, it was not to the vessel herself, for she bore down with all the evidence of being skilfully handled, the anchor a-cockbill, the jib-boom guys already eased off, and standing by the side of the pilot, who was steering the *Pharaon* towards the narrow entrance of the inner port, was a young man, who, with activity and vigilant eye, watched every motion of the ship, and repeated each direction of the pilot.

The vague disquietude which prevailed among the spectators had so much affected one of the crowd that he did not await the arrival of the vessel in harbor, but jumping into a small skiff, desired to be pulled alongside the *Pharaon*, which he reached as she rounded into La Réserve basin.

When the young man on board saw this person approach, he left his station by the pilot, and, hat in hand, leaned over the ship's bulwarks.

He was a fine, tall, slim young fellow of eighteen or twenty, with black eyes, and hair as dark as a raven's wing; and his whole appearance bespoke that calmness and resolution peculiar to men accustomed from their cradle to contend with danger.

"Ah, is it you, Dantès?" cried the man in the skiff. "What's the matter? and

why have you such an air of sadness aboard?"

"A great misfortune, M. Morrel," replied the young man, "a great misfortune, for me especially! Off Civita Vecchia we lost our brave Captain Leclere."

"And the cargo?" inquired the owner, eagerly.

"Is all safe, M. Morrel; and I think you will be satisfied on that head. But poor Captain Leclere——"

"What happened to him?" asked the owner, with an air of considerable resignation. "What happened to the worthy captain?"

"He died."

"Fell into the sea?"

"No, sir, he died of brain-fever in dreadful agony." Then turning to the crew, he said, "Bear a hand there, to take in sail!"

All hands obeyed, and at once the eight or ten seamen who composed the crew, sprang to their respective stations at the spanker brails and outhaul, topsail sheets and halyards, the jib downhaul, and the topsail clewlines and buntlines. The young sailor gave a look to see that his orders were promptly and accurately obeyed, and then turned again to the owner.

"And how did this misfortune occur?" inquired the latter, resuming the interrupted conversation.

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"Alas, sir, in the most unexpected manner. After a long talk with the harbor-master, Captain Leclere left Naples greatly disturbed in mind. In twenty-four hours he was attacked by a fever, and died three days afterwards. We performed the usual burial service, and he is at his rest, sewn up in his hammock with a thirty-six-pound shot at his head and his heels, off El Giglio island. We bring to his widow his sword and cross of honor. It was worth while, truly," added the young man with a melancholy smile, "to make war against the English for ten years, and to die in his bed at last, like everybody else."

"Why, you see, Edmond," replied the owner, who appeared more comforted at every moment, "we are all mortal, and the old must make way for the young. If not, why, there would be no promotion; and since you assure me that the cargo _____"

"Is all safe and sound, M. Morrel, take my word for it; and I advise you not to take 25,000 francs for the profits of the voyage."

Then, as they were just passing the Round Tower, the young man shouted:

“Stand by there to lower the topsails and jib; brail up the spanker!”

The order was executed as promptly as it would have been on board a man-of-war.

“Let go—and clue up!” At this last command all the sails were lowered, and the vessel moved almost imperceptibly onwards.

“Now, if you will come on board, M. Morrel,” said Dantès, observing the owner’s impatience, “here is your supercargo, M. Danglars, coming out of his cabin, who will furnish you with every particular. As for me, I must look after the anchoring, and dress the ship in mourning.”

The owner did not wait for a second invitation. He seized a rope which Dantès flung to him, and with an activity that would have done credit to a sailor, climbed up the side of the ship, while the young man, going to his task, left the conversation to Danglars, who now came towards the owner. He was a man of twenty-five or twenty-six years of age, of unprepossessing countenance, obsequious to his superiors, insolent to his subordinates; and this, in addition to his position as responsible agent on board, which is always obnoxious to the sailors, made him as much disliked by the crew as Edmond Dantès was beloved by them.

“Well, M. Morrel,” said Danglars, “you have heard of the misfortune that has befallen us?”

“Yes—yes: poor Captain Leclerc! He was a brave and an honest man.”

“And a first-rate seaman, one who had seen long and honorable service, as became a man charged with the interests of a house so important as that of Morrel & Son,” replied Danglars.

“But,” replied the owner, glancing after Dantès, who was watching the anchoring of his vessel, “it seems to me that a sailor needs not be so old as you say, Danglars, to understand his business, for our friend Edmond seems to understand it thoroughly, and not to require instruction from anyone.”

“Yes,” said Danglars, darting at Edmond a look gleaming with hate. “Yes, he is young, and youth is invariably self-confident. Scarcely was the captain’s breath out of his body when he assumed the command without consulting anyone, and he caused us to lose a day and a half at the Island of Elba, instead of making for Marseilles direct.”

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“As to taking command of the vessel,” replied Morrel, “that was his duty as captain’s mate; as to losing a day and a half off the Island of Elba, he was wrong,

unless the vessel needed repairs.”

“The vessel was in as good condition as I am, and as, I hope you are, M. Morrel, and this day and a half was lost from pure whim, for the pleasure of going ashore, and nothing else.”

“Dantès,” said the shipowner, turning towards the young man, “come this way!”

“In a moment, sir,” answered Dantès, “and I’m with you.” Then calling to the crew, he said, “Let go!”

The anchor was instantly dropped, and the chain ran rattling through the port-hole. Dantès continued at his post in spite of the presence of the pilot, until this manœuvre was completed, and then he added, “Half-mast the colors, and square the yards!”

“You see,” said Danglars, “he fancies himself captain already, upon my word.”

“And so, in fact, he is,” said the owner.

“Except your signature and your partner’s, M. Morrel.”

“And why should he not have this?” asked the owner; “he is young, it is true, but he seems to me a thorough seaman, and of full experience.”

A cloud passed over Danglars’ brow.

“Your pardon, M. Morrel,” said Dantès, approaching, “the vessel now rides at anchor, and I am at your service. You hailed me, I think?”

Danglars retreated a step or two. “I wished to inquire why you stopped at the Island of Elba?”

“I do not know, sir; it was to fulfil the last instructions of Captain Leclerc, who, when dying, gave me a packet for Marshal Bertrand.”

“Then did you see him, Edmond?”

“Who?”

“The marshal.”

“Yes.”

Morrel looked around him, and then, drawing Dantès on one side, he said suddenly—

“And how is the emperor?”

“Very well, as far as I could judge from the sight of him.”

“You saw the emperor, then?”

“He entered the marshal’s apartment while I was there.”

“And you spoke to him?”

“Why, it was he who spoke to me, sir,” said Dantès, with a smile.

“And what did he say to you?”

“Asked me questions about the vessel, the time she left Marseilles, the course she had taken, and what was her cargo. I believe, if she had not been laden, and I had been her master, he would have bought her. But I told him I was only mate, and that she belonged to the firm of Morrel & Son. ‘Ah, yes,’ he said, ‘I know them. The Morrels have been shipowners from father to son; and there was a Morrel who served in the same regiment with me when I was in garrison at Valence.’”

“*Pardieu!* and that is true!” cried the owner, greatly delighted. “And that was Policar Morrel, my uncle, who was afterwards a captain. Dantès, you must tell my uncle that the emperor remembered him, and you will see it will bring tears into the old soldier’s eyes. Come, come,” continued he, patting Edmond’s shoulder kindly, “you did very right, Dantès, to follow Captain Leclere’s instructions, and touch at Elba, although if it were known that you had conveyed a packet to the marshal, and had conversed with the emperor, it might bring you into trouble.”

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“How could that bring me into trouble, sir?” asked Dantès; “for I did not even know of what I was the bearer; and the emperor merely made such inquiries as he would of the first comer. But, pardon me, here are the health officers and the customs inspectors coming alongside.” And the young man went to the gangway. As he departed, Danglars approached, and said,—

“Well, it appears that he has given you satisfactory reasons for his landing at Porto-Ferrajo?”

“Yes, most satisfactory, my dear Danglars.”

“Well, so much the better,” said the supercargo; “for it is not pleasant to think that a comrade has not done his duty.”

“Dantès has done his,” replied the owner, “and that is not saying much. It was Captain Leclere who gave orders for this delay.”

“Talking of Captain Leclere, has not Dantès given you a letter from him?”

“To me?—no—was there one?”

“I believe that, besides the packet, Captain Leclere confided a letter to his

care."

"Of what packet are you speaking, Danglars?"

"Why, that which Dantès left at Porto-Ferrajo."

"How do you know he had a packet to leave at Porto-Ferrajo?"

Danglars turned very red.

"I was passing close to the door of the captain's cabin, which was half open, and I saw him give the packet and letter to Dantès."

"He did not speak to me of it," replied the shipowner; "but if there be any letter he will give it to me."

Danglars reflected for a moment. "Then, M. Morrel, I beg of you," said he, "not to say a word to Dantès on the subject. I may have been mistaken."

At this moment the young man returned; Danglars withdrew.

"Well, my dear Dantès, are you now free?" inquired the owner.

"Yes, sir."

"You have not been long detained."

"No. I gave the custom-house officers a copy of our bill of lading; and as to the other papers, they sent a man off with the pilot, to whom I gave them."

"Then you have nothing more to do here?"

"No—everything is all right now."

"Then you can come and dine with me?"

"I really must ask you to excuse me, M. Morrel. My first visit is due to my father, though I am not the less grateful for the honor you have done me."

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"Right, Dantès, quite right. I always knew you were a good son."

"And," inquired Dantès, with some hesitation, "do you know how my father is?"

"Well, I believe, my dear Edmond, though I have not seen him lately."

"Yes, he likes to keep himself shut up in his little room."

"That proves, at least, that he has wanted for nothing during your absence."

Dantès smiled. "My father is proud, sir, and if he had not a meal left, I doubt if he would have asked anything from anyone, except from Heaven."

"Well, then, after this first visit has been made we shall count on you."

"I must again excuse myself, M. Morrel, for after this first visit has been paid

I have another which I am most anxious to pay."

"True, Dantès, I forgot that there was at the Catalans someone who expects you no less impatiently than your father—the lovely Mercédès."

Dantès blushed.

"Ah, ha," said the shipowner, "I am not in the least surprised, for she has been to me three times, inquiring if there were any news of the *Pharaon*. Peste! Edmond, you have a very handsome mistress!"

"She is not my mistress," replied the young sailor, gravely; "she is my betrothed."

"Sometimes one and the same thing," said Morrel, with a smile.

"Not with us, sir," replied Dantès.

"Well, well, my dear Edmond," continued the owner, "don't let me detain you. You have managed my affairs so well that I ought to allow you all the time you require for your own. Do you want any money?"

"No, sir; I have all my pay to take—nearly three months' wages."

"You are a careful fellow, Edmond."

"Say I have a poor father, sir."

"Yes, yes, I know how good a son you are, so now hasten away to see your father. I have a son too, and I should be very wroth with those who detained him from me after a three months' voyage."

"Then I have your leave, sir?"

"Yes, if you have nothing more to say to me."

"Nothing."

"Captain Leclerc did not, before he died, give you a letter for me?"

"He was unable to write, sir. But that reminds me that I must ask your leave of absence for some days."

"To get married?"

"Yes, first, and then to go to Paris."

"Very good; have what time you require, Dantès. It will take quite six weeks to unload the cargo, and we cannot get you ready for sea until three months after that; only be back again in three months, for the *Pharaon*," added the owner, patting the young sailor on the back, "cannot sail without her captain."

"Without her captain!" cried Dantès, his eyes sparkling with animation; "pray mind what you say, for you are touching on the most secret wishes of my heart."

Is it really your intention to make me captain of the *Pharaon*?"

"If I were sole owner we'd shake hands on it now, my dear Dantès, and call it settled; but I have a partner, and you know the Italian proverb—*Chi ha compagno ha padrone*—'He who has a partner has a master.' But the thing is at least half done, as you have one out of two votes. Rely on me to procure you the other; I will do my best."

"Ah, M. Morrel," exclaimed the young seaman, with tears in his eyes, and grasping the owner's hand, "M. Morrel, I thank you in the name of my father and of Mercédès."

"That's all right, Edmond. There's a providence that watches over the deserving. Go to your father; go and see Mercédès, and afterwards come to me."

"Shall I row you ashore?"

"No, thank you; I shall remain and look over the accounts with Danglars. Have you been satisfied with him this voyage?"

"That is according to the sense you attach to the question, sir. Do you mean is he a good comrade? No, for I think he never liked me since the day when I was silly enough, after a little quarrel we had, to propose to him to stop for ten minutes at the island of Monte Cristo to settle the dispute—a proposition which I was wrong to suggest, and he quite right to refuse. If you mean as responsible agent when you ask me the question, I believe there is nothing to say against him, and that you will be content with the way in which he has performed his duty."

"But tell me, Dantès, if you had command of the *Pharaon* should you be glad to see Danglars remain?"

"Captain or mate, M. Morrel, I shall always have the greatest respect for those who possess the owners' confidence."

"That's right, that's right, Dantès! I see you are a thoroughly good fellow, and will detain you no longer. Go, for I see how impatient you are."

"Then I have leave?"

"Go, I tell you."

"May I have the use of your skiff?"

"Certainly."

"Then, for the present, M. Morrel, farewell, and a thousand thanks!"

"I hope soon to see you again, my dear Edmond. Good luck to you."

The young sailor jumped into the skiff, and sat down in the stern sheets, with

the order that he be put ashore at La Canebière. The two oarsmen bent to their work, and the little boat glided away as rapidly as possible in the midst of the thousand vessels which choke up the narrow way which leads between the two rows of ships from the mouth of the harbor to the Quai d'Orléans.

The shipowner, smiling, followed him with his eyes until he saw him spring out on the quay and disappear in the midst of the throng, which from five o'clock in the morning until nine o'clock at night, swarms in the famous street of La Canebière,—a street of which the modern Phocéens are so proud that they say with all the gravity in the world, and with that accent which gives so much character to what is said, “If Paris had La Canebière, Paris would be a second Marseilles.” On turning round the owner saw Danglars behind him, apparently awaiting orders, but in reality also watching the young sailor,—but there was a great difference in the expression of the two men who thus followed the movements of Edmond Dantès.

Chapter 2. Father and Son

We will leave Danglars struggling with the demon of hatred, and endeavoring to insinuate in the ear of the shipowner some evil suspicions against his comrade, and follow Dantès, who, after having traversed La Canebière, took the Rue de Noailles, and entering a small house, on the left of the Allées de Meilhan, rapidly ascended four flights of a dark staircase, holding the baluster with one hand, while with the other he repressed the beatings of his heart, and paused before a half-open door, from which he could see the whole of a small room.

This room was occupied by Dantès' father. The news of the arrival of the *Pharaon* had not yet reached the old man, who, mounted on a chair, was amusing himself by training with trembling hand the nasturtiums and sprays of clematis that clambered over the trellis at his window. Suddenly, he felt an arm thrown around his body, and a well-known voice behind him exclaimed, "Father—dear father!"

The old man uttered a cry, and turned round; then, seeing his son, he fell into his arms, pale and trembling.

"What ails you, my dearest father? Are you ill?" inquired the young man, much alarmed.

"No, no, my dear Edmond—my boy—my son!—no; but I did not expect you; and joy, the surprise of seeing you so suddenly—Ah, I feel as if I were going to die."

"Come, come, cheer up, my dear father! 'Tis I—really I! They say joy never hurts, and so I came to you without any warning. Come now, do smile, instead of looking at me so solemnly. Here I am back again, and we are going to be happy."

"Yes, yes, my boy, so we will—so we will," replied the old man; "but how shall we be happy? Shall you never leave me again? Come, tell me all the good fortune that has befallen you."

"God forgive me," said the young man, "for rejoicing at happiness derived from the misery of others, but, Heaven knows, I did not seek this good fortune; it has happened, and I really cannot pretend to lament it. The good Captain Leclerc is dead, father, and it is probable that, with the aid of M. Morrel, I shall have his place. Do you understand, father? Only imagine me a captain at twenty, with a

hundred louis pay, and a share in the profits! Is this not more than a poor sailor like me could have hoped for?"

"Yes, my dear boy," replied the old man, "it is very fortunate."

"Well, then, with the first money I touch, I mean you to have a small house, with a garden in which to plant clematis, nasturtiums, and honeysuckle. But what ails you, father? Are you not well?"

"'Tis nothing, nothing; it will soon pass away"—and as he said so the old man's strength failed him, and he fell backwards.

"Come, come," said the young man, "a glass of wine, father, will revive you. Where do you keep your wine?"

"No, no; thanks. You need not look for it; I do not want it," said the old man.

"Yes, yes, father, tell me where it is," and he opened two or three cupboards.

"It is no use," said the old man, "there is no wine."

"What, no wine?" said Dantès, turning pale, and looking alternately at the hollow cheeks of the old man and the empty cupboards. "What, no wine? Have you wanted money, father?"

"I want nothing now that I have you," said the old man.

"Yet," stammered Dantès, wiping the perspiration from his brow,—"yet I gave you two hundred francs when I left, three months ago."

"Yes, yes, Edmond, that is true, but you forgot at that time a little debt to our neighbor, Caderousse. He reminded me of it, telling me if I did not pay for you, he would be paid by M. Morrel; and so, you see, lest he might do you an injury
_____."

"Well?"

"Why, I paid him."

"But," cried Dantès, "it was a hundred and forty francs I owed Caderousse."

"Yes," stammered the old man.

"And you paid him out of the two hundred francs I left you?"

The old man nodded.

"So that you have lived for three months on sixty francs," muttered Edmond.

"You know how little I require," said the old man.

"Heaven pardon me," cried Edmond, falling on his knees before his father.

"What are you doing?"

"You have wounded me to the heart."

"Never mind it, for I see you once more," said the old man; "and now it's all over—everything is all right again."

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"Yes, here I am," said the young man, "with a promising future and a little money. Here, father, here!" he said, "take this—take it, and send for something immediately." And he emptied his pockets on the table, the contents consisting of a dozen gold pieces, five or six five-franc pieces, and some smaller coin. The countenance of old Dantès brightened.

"Whom does this belong to?" he inquired.

"To me, to you, to us! Take it; buy some provisions; be happy, and tomorrow we shall have more."

"Gently, gently," said the old man, with a smile; "and by your leave I will use your purse moderately, for they would say, if they saw me buy too many things at a time, that I had been obliged to await your return, in order to be able to purchase them."

"Do as you please; but, first of all, pray have a servant, father. I will not have you left alone so long. I have some smuggled coffee and most capital tobacco, in a small chest in the hold, which you shall have tomorrow. But, hush, here comes somebody."

"'Tis Caderousse, who has heard of your arrival, and no doubt comes to congratulate you on your fortunate return."

"Ah, lips that say one thing, while the heart thinks another," murmured Edmond. "But, never mind, he is a neighbor who has done us a service on a time, so he's welcome."

As Edmond paused, the black and bearded head of Caderousse appeared at the door. He was a man of twenty-five or six, and held a piece of cloth, which, being a tailor, he was about to make into a coat-lining.

"What, is it you, Edmond, back again?" said he, with a broad Marseillaise accent, and a grin that displayed his ivory-white teeth.

"Yes, as you see, neighbor Caderousse; and ready to be agreeable to you in any and every way," replied Dantès, but ill-concealing his coldness under this cloak of civility.

"Thanks—thanks; but, fortunately, I do not want for anything; and it chances that at times there are others who have need of me." Dantès made a gesture. "I do not allude to you, my boy. No!—no! I lent you money, and you returned it; that's like good neighbors, and we are quits."

“We are never quits with those who oblige us,” was Dantès’ reply; “for when we do not owe them money, we owe them gratitude.”

“What’s the use of mentioning that? What is done is done. Let us talk of your happy return, my boy. I had gone on the quay to match a piece of mulberry cloth, when I met friend Danglars. ‘You at Marseilles?’—‘Yes,’ says he.

“I thought you were at Smyrna.’—‘I was; but am now back again.’

“And where is the dear boy, our little Edmond?”

“Why, with his father, no doubt,’ replied Danglars. And so I came,” added Caderousse, “as fast as I could to have the pleasure of shaking hands with a friend.”

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“Worthy Caderousse!” said the old man, “he is so much attached to us.”

“Yes, to be sure I am. I love and esteem you, because honest folks are so rare. But it seems you have come back rich, my boy,” continued the tailor, looking askance at the handful of gold and silver which Dantès had thrown on the table.

The young man remarked the greedy glance which shone in the dark eyes of his neighbor. “Eh,” he said, negligently, “this money is not mine. I was expressing to my father my fears that he had wanted many things in my absence, and to convince me he emptied his purse on the table. Come, father” added Dantès, “put this money back in your box—unless neighbor Caderousse wants anything, and in that case it is at his service.”

“No, my boy, no,” said Caderousse. “I am not in any want, thank God, my living is suited to my means. Keep your money—keep it, I say;—one never has too much;—but, at the same time, my boy, I am as much obliged by your offer as if I took advantage of it.”

“It was offered with good will,” said Dantès.

“No doubt, my boy; no doubt. Well, you stand well with M. Morrel I hear,—you insinuating dog, you!”

“M. Morrel has always been exceedingly kind to me,” replied Dantès.

“Then you were wrong to refuse to dine with him.”

“What, did you refuse to dine with him?” said old Dantès; “and did he invite you to dine?”

“Yes, my dear father,” replied Edmond, smiling at his father’s astonishment at the excessive honor paid to his son.

“And why did you refuse, my son?” inquired the old man.

"That I might the sooner see you again, my dear father," replied the young man. "I was most anxious to see you."

"But it must have vexed M. Morrel, good, worthy man," said Caderousse. "And when you are looking forward to be captain, it was wrong to annoy the owner."

"But I explained to him the cause of my refusal," replied Dantès, "and I hope he fully understood it."

"Yes, but to be captain one must do a little flattery to one's patrons."

"I hope to be captain without that," said Dantès.

"So much the better—so much the better! Nothing will give greater pleasure to all your old friends; and I know one down there behind the Saint Nicolas citadel who will not be sorry to hear it."

"Mercédès?" said the old man.

"Yes, my dear father, and with your permission, now I have seen you, and know you are well and have all you require, I will ask your consent to go and pay a visit to the Catalans."

"Go, my dear boy," said old Dantès; "and Heaven bless you in your wife, as it has blessed me in my son!"

"His wife!" said Caderousse; "why, how fast you go on, father Dantès; she is not his wife yet, as it seems to me."

"No, but according to all probability she soon will be," replied Edmond.

"Yes—yes," said Caderousse; "but you were right to return as soon as possible, my boy."

"And why?"

"Because Mercédès is a very fine girl, and fine girls never lack followers; she particularly has them by dozens."

"Really?" answered Edmond, with a smile which had in it traces of slight uneasiness.

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"Ah, yes," continued Caderousse, "and capital offers, too; but you know, you will be captain, and who could refuse you then?"

"Meaning to say," replied Dantès, with a smile which but ill-concealed his trouble, "that if I were not a captain——"

"Eh—eh!" said Caderousse, shaking his head.

“Come, come,” said the sailor, “I have a better opinion than you of women in general, and of Mercédès in particular; and I am certain that, captain or not, she will remain ever faithful to me.”

“So much the better—so much the better,” said Caderousse. “When one is going to be married, there is nothing like implicit confidence; but never mind that, my boy,—go and announce your arrival, and let her know all your hopes and prospects.”

“I will go directly,” was Edmond’s reply; and, embracing his father, and nodding to Caderousse, he left the apartment.

Caderousse lingered for a moment, then taking leave of old Dantès, he went downstairs to rejoin Danglars, who awaited him at the corner of the Rue Senac.

“Well,” said Danglars, “did you see him?”

“I have just left him,” answered Caderousse.

“Did he allude to his hope of being captain?”

“He spoke of it as a thing already decided.”

“Indeed!” said Danglars, “he is in too much hurry, it appears to me.”

“Why, it seems M. Morrel has promised him the thing.”

“So that he is quite elated about it?”

“Why, yes, he is actually insolent over the matter—has already offered me his patronage, as if he were a grand personage, and proffered me a loan of money, as though he were a banker.”

“Which you refused?”

“Most assuredly; although I might easily have accepted it, for it was I who put into his hands the first silver he ever earned; but now M. Dantès has no longer any occasion for assistance—he is about to become a captain.”

“Pooh!” said Danglars, “he is not one yet.”

“*Ma foi!* it will be as well if he is not,” answered Caderousse; “for if he should be, there will be really no speaking to him.”

“If we choose,” replied Danglars, “he will remain what he is; and perhaps become even less than he is.”

“What do you mean?”

“Nothing—I was speaking to myself. And is he still in love with the Catalane?”

“Over head and ears; but, unless I am much mistaken, there will be a storm in that quarter.”

“Explain yourself.”

“Why should I?”

“It is more important than you think, perhaps. You do not like Dantès?”

“I never like upstarts.”

“Then tell me all you know about the Catalane.”

“I know nothing for certain; only I have seen things which induce me to believe, as I told you, that the future captain will find some annoyance in the vicinity of the Vieilles Infirmeries.”

“What have you seen?—come, tell me!”

“Well, every time I have seen Mercédès come into the city she has been accompanied by a tall, strapping, black-eyed Catalan, with a red complexion, brown skin, and fierce air, whom she calls cousin.”

“Really; and you think this cousin pays her attentions?”

“I only suppose so. What else can a strapping chap of twenty-one mean with a fine wench of seventeen?”

“And you say that Dantès has gone to the Catalans?”

“He went before I came down.”

“Let us go the same way; we will stop at La Réserve, and we can drink a glass of La Malgue, whilst we wait for news.”

“Come along,” said Caderousse; “but you pay the score.”

“Of course,” replied Danglars; and going quickly to the designated place, they called for a bottle of wine, and two glasses.

Père Pamphile had seen Dantès pass not ten minutes before; and assured that he was at the Catalans, they sat down under the budding foliage of the planes and sycamores, in the branches of which the birds were singing their welcome to one of the first days of spring.

Chapter 3. The Catalans

Beyond a bare, weather-worn wall, about a hundred paces from the spot where the two friends sat looking and listening as they drank their wine, was the village of the Catalans. Long ago this mysterious colony quitted Spain, and settled on the tongue of land on which it is to this day. Whence it came no one knew, and it spoke an unknown tongue. One of its chiefs, who understood Provençal, begged the commune of Marseilles to give them this bare and barren promontory, where, like the sailors of old, they had run their boats ashore. The request was granted; and three months afterwards, around the twelve or fifteen small vessels which had brought these gypsies of the sea, a small village sprang up. This village, constructed in a singular and picturesque manner, half Moorish, half Spanish, still remains, and is inhabited by descendants of the first comers, who speak the language of their fathers. For three or four centuries they have remained upon this small promontory, on which they had settled like a flight of seabirds, without mixing with the Marseillaise population, intermarrying, and preserving their original customs and the costume of their mother-country as they have preserved its language.

Our readers will follow us along the only street of this little village, and enter with us one of the houses, which is sunburned to the beautiful dead-leaf color peculiar to the buildings of the country, and within coated with whitewash, like a Spanish posada. A young and beautiful girl, with hair as black as jet, her eyes as velvety as the gazelle's, was leaning with her back against the wainscot, rubbing in her slender delicately moulded fingers a bunch of heath blossoms, the flowers of which she was picking off and strewing on the floor; her arms, bare to the elbow, brown, and modelled after those of the Arlesian Venus, moved with a kind of restless impatience, and she tapped the earth with her arched and supple foot, so as to display the pure and full shape of her well-turned leg, in its red cotton, gray and blue clocked, stocking. At three paces from her, seated in a chair which he balanced on two legs, leaning his elbow on an old worm-eaten table, was a tall young man of twenty, or two-and-twenty, who was looking at her with an air in which vexation and uneasiness were mingled. He questioned her with his eyes, but the firm and steady gaze of the young girl controlled his look.

“You see, Mercédès,” said the young man, “here is Easter come round again; tell me, is this the moment for a wedding?”

“I have answered you a hundred times, Fernand, and really you must be very stupid to ask me again.”

“Well, repeat it,—repeat it, I beg of you, that I may at last believe it! Tell me for the hundredth time that you refuse my love, which had your mother’s sanction. Make me understand once for all that you are trifling with my happiness, that my life or death are nothing to you. Ah, to have dreamed for ten years of being your husband, Mercédès, and to lose that hope, which was the only stay of my existence!”

“At least it was not I who ever encouraged you in that hope, Fernand,” replied Mercédès; “you cannot reproach me with the slightest coquetry. I have always said to you, ‘I love you as a brother; but do not ask from me more than sisterly affection, for my heart is another’s.’ Is not this true, Fernand?”

“Yes, that is very true, Mercédès,” replied the young man, “Yes, you have been cruelly frank with me; but do you forget that it is among the Catalans a sacred law to intermarry?”

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“You mistake, Fernand; it is not a law, but merely a custom, and, I pray of you, do not cite this custom in your favor. You are included in the conscription, Fernand, and are only at liberty on sufferance, liable at any moment to be called upon to take up arms. Once a soldier, what would you do with me, a poor orphan, forlorn, without fortune, with nothing but a half-ruined hut and a few ragged nets, the miserable inheritance left by my father to my mother, and by my mother to me? She has been dead a year, and you know, Fernand, I have subsisted almost entirely on public charity. Sometimes you pretend I am useful to you, and that is an excuse to share with me the produce of your fishing, and I accept it, Fernand, because you are the son of my father’s brother, because we were brought up together, and still more because it would give you so much pain if I refuse. But I feel very deeply that this fish which I go and sell, and with the produce of which I buy the flax I spin,—I feel very keenly, Fernand, that this is charity.”

“And if it were, Mercédès, poor and lone as you are, you suit me as well as the daughter of the first shipowner or the richest banker of Marseilles! What do such as we desire but a good wife and careful housekeeper, and where can I look for these better than in you?”

“Fernand,” answered Mercédès, shaking her head, “a woman becomes a bad

manager, and who shall say she will remain an honest woman, when she loves another man better than her husband? Rest content with my friendship, for I say once more that is all I can promise, and I will promise no more than I can bestow."

"I understand," replied Fernand, "you can endure your own wretchedness patiently, but you are afraid to share mine. Well, Mercédès, beloved by you, I would tempt fortune; you would bring me good luck, and I should become rich. I could extend my occupation as a fisherman, might get a place as clerk in a warehouse, and become in time a dealer myself."

"You could do no such thing, Fernand; you are a soldier, and if you remain at the Catalans it is because there is no war; so remain a fisherman, and contented with my friendship, as I cannot give you more."

"Well, I will do better, Mercédès. I will be a sailor; instead of the costume of our fathers, which you despise, I will wear a varnished hat, a striped shirt, and a blue jacket, with an anchor on the buttons. Would not that dress please you?"

"What do you mean?" asked Mercédès, with an angry glance,—"what do you mean? I do not understand you?"

"I mean, Mercédès, that you are thus harsh and cruel with me, because you are expecting someone who is thus attired; but perhaps he whom you await is inconstant, or if he is not, the sea is so to him."

"Fernand," cried Mercédès, "I believed you were good-hearted, and I was mistaken! Fernand, you are wicked to call to your aid jealousy and the anger of God! Yes, I will not deny it, I do await, and I do love him of whom you speak; and, if he does not return, instead of accusing him of the inconstancy which you insinuate, I will tell you that he died loving me and me only." The young girl made a gesture of rage. "I understand you, Fernand; you would be revenged on him because I do not love you; you would cross your Catalan knife with his dirk. What end would that answer? To lose you my friendship if he were conquered, and see that friendship changed into hate if you were victor. Believe me, to seek a quarrel with a man is a bad method of pleasing the woman who loves that man. No, Fernand, you will not thus give way to evil thoughts. Unable to have me for your wife, you will content yourself with having me for your friend and sister; and besides," she added, her eyes troubled and moistened with tears, "wait, wait, Fernand; you said just now that the sea was treacherous, and he has been gone four months, and during these four months there have been some terrible storms."

Fernand made no reply, nor did he attempt to check the tears which flowed

down the cheeks of Mercédès, although for each of these tears he would have shed his heart's blood; but these tears flowed for another. He arose, paced a while up and down the hut, and then, suddenly stopping before Mercédès, with his eyes glowing and his hands clenched,—“Say, Mercédès,” he said, “once for all, is this your final determination?”

“I love Edmond Dantès,” the young girl calmly replied, “and none but Edmond shall ever be my husband.”

“And you will always love him?”

“As long as I live.”

Fernand let fall his head like a defeated man, heaved a sigh that was like a groan, and then suddenly looking her full in the face, with clenched teeth and expanded nostrils, said,—“But if he is dead——”

“If he is dead, I shall die too.”

“If he has forgotten you——”

“Mercédès!” called a joyous voice from without,—“Mercédès!”

“Ah,” exclaimed the young girl, blushing with delight, and fairly leaping in excess of love, “you see he has not forgotten me, for here he is!” And rushing towards the door, she opened it, saying, “Here, Edmond, here I am!”

Fernand, pale and trembling, drew back, like a traveller at the sight of a serpent, and fell into a chair beside him. Edmond and Mercédès were clasped in each other's arms. The burning Marseilles sun, which shot into the room through the open door, covered them with a flood of light. At first they saw nothing around them. Their intense happiness isolated them from all the rest of the world, and they only spoke in broken words, which are the tokens of a joy so extreme that they seem rather the expression of sorrow. Suddenly Edmond saw the gloomy, pale, and threatening countenance of Fernand, as it was defined in the shadow. By a movement for which he could scarcely account to himself, the young Catalan placed his hand on the knife at his belt.

“Ah, your pardon,” said Dantès, frowning in his turn; “I did not perceive that there were three of us.” Then, turning to Mercédès, he inquired, “Who is this gentleman?”

“One who will be your best friend, Dantès, for he is my friend, my cousin, my brother; it is Fernand—the man whom, after you, Edmond, I love the best in the world. Do you not remember him?”

“Yes!” said Dantès, and without relinquishing Mercédès' hand clasped in one of his own, he extended the other to the Catalan with a cordial air. But Fernand,

instead of responding to this amiable gesture, remained mute and trembling. Edmond then cast his eyes scrutinizingly at the agitated and embarrassed Mercédès, and then again on the gloomy and menacing Fernand. This look told him all, and his anger waxed hot.

"I did not know, when I came with such haste to you, that I was to meet an enemy here."

"An enemy!" cried Mercédès, with an angry look at her cousin. "An enemy in my house, do you say, Edmond! If I believed that, I would place my arm under yours and go with you to Marseilles, leaving the house to return to it no more."

Fernand's eye darted lightning. "And should any misfortune occur to you, dear Edmond," she continued with the same calmness which proved to Fernand that the young girl had read the very innermost depths of his sinister thought, "if misfortune should occur to you, I would ascend the highest point of the Cape de Morgiou and cast myself headlong from it."

Fernand became deadly pale. "But you are deceived, Edmond," she continued. "You have no enemy here—there is no one but Fernand, my brother, who will grasp your hand as a devoted friend."

And at these words the young girl fixed her imperious look on the Catalan, who, as if fascinated by it, came slowly towards Edmond, and offered him his hand. His hatred, like a powerless though furious wave, was broken against the strong ascendancy which Mercédès exercised over him. Scarcely, however, had he touched Edmond's hand when he felt he had done all he could do, and rushed hastily out of the house.

"Oh," he exclaimed, running furiously and tearing his hair—"Oh, who will deliver me from this man? Wretched—wretched that I am!"

"Hallo, Catalan! Hallo, Fernand! where are you running to?" exclaimed a voice.

The young man stopped suddenly, looked around him, and perceived Caderousse sitting at table with Danglars, under an arbor.

"Well", said Caderousse, "why don't you come? Are you really in such a hurry that you have no time to pass the time of day with your friends?"

"Particularly when they have still a full bottle before them," added Danglars. Fernand looked at them both with a stupefied air, but did not say a word.

"He seems besotted," said Danglars, pushing Caderousse with his knee. "Are we mistaken, and is Dantès triumphant in spite of all we have believed?"

"Why, we must inquire into that," was Caderousse's reply; and turning

towards the young man, said, “Well, Catalan, can’t you make up your mind?”

Fernand wiped away the perspiration steaming from his brow, and slowly entered the arbor, whose shade seemed to restore somewhat of calmness to his senses, and whose coolness somewhat of refreshment to his exhausted body.

“Good-day,” said he. “You called me, didn’t you?” And he fell, rather than sat down, on one of the seats which surrounded the table.

“I called you because you were running like a madman, and I was afraid you would throw yourself into the sea,” said Caderousse, laughing. “Why, when a man has friends, they are not only to offer him a glass of wine, but, moreover, to prevent his swallowing three or four pints of water unnecessarily!”

Fernand gave a groan, which resembled a sob, and dropped his head into his hands, his elbows leaning on the table.

“Well, Fernand, I must say,” said Caderousse, beginning the conversation, with that brutality of the common people in which curiosity destroys all diplomacy, “you look uncommonly like a rejected lover;” and he burst into a hoarse laugh.

“Bah!” said Danglars, “a lad of his make was not born to be unhappy in love. You are laughing at him, Caderousse.”

“No,” he replied, “only hark how he sighs! Come, come, Fernand,” said Caderousse, “hold up your head, and answer us. It’s not polite not to reply to friends who ask news of your health.”

“My health is well enough,” said Fernand, clenching his hands without raising his head.

“Ah, you see, Danglars,” said Caderousse, winking at his friend, “this is how it is; Fernand, whom you see here, is a good and brave Catalan, one of the best fishermen in Marseilles, and he is in love with a very fine girl, named Mercédès; but it appears, unfortunately, that the fine girl is in love with the mate of the *Pharaon*; and as the *Pharaon* arrived today—why, you understand!”

“No; I do not understand,” said Danglars.

“Poor Fernand has been dismissed,” continued Caderousse.

“Well, and what then?” said Fernand, lifting up his head, and looking at Caderousse like a man who looks for someone on whom to vent his anger; “Mercédès is not accountable to any person, is she? Is she not free to love whomsoever she will?”

“Oh, if you take it in that sense,” said Caderousse, “it is another thing. But I thought you were a Catalan, and they told me the Catalans were not men to

allow themselves to be supplanted by a rival. It was even told me that Fernand, especially, was terrible in his vengeance.”

Fernand smiled piteously. “A lover is never terrible,” he said.

“Poor fellow!” remarked Danglars, affecting to pity the young man from the bottom of his heart. “Why, you see, he did not expect to see Dantès return so suddenly—he thought he was dead, perhaps; or perchance faithless! These things always come on us more severely when they come suddenly.”

“Ah, *ma foi*, under any circumstances!” said Caderousse, who drank as he spoke, and on whom the fumes of the wine began to take effect,—“under any circumstances Fernand is not the only person put out by the fortunate arrival of Dantès; is he, Danglars?”

“No, you are right—and I should say that would bring him ill-luck.”

“Well, never mind,” answered Caderousse, pouring out a glass of wine for Fernand, and filling his own for the eighth or ninth time, while Danglars had merely sipped his. “Never mind—in the meantime he marries Mercédès—the lovely Mercédès—at least he returns to do that.”

During this time Danglars fixed his piercing glance on the young man, on whose heart Caderousse’s words fell like molten lead.

“And when is the wedding to be?” he asked.

“Oh, it is not yet fixed!” murmured Fernand.

“No, but it will be,” said Caderousse, “as surely as Dantès will be captain of the *Pharaon*—eh, Danglars?”

Danglars shuddered at this unexpected attack, and turned to Caderousse, whose countenance he scrutinized, to try and detect whether the blow was premeditated; but he read nothing but envy in a countenance already rendered brutal and stupid by drunkenness.

“Well,” said he, filling the glasses, “let us drink to Captain Edmond Dantès, husband of the beautiful Catalane!”

Caderousse raised his glass to his mouth with unsteady hand, and swallowed the contents at a gulp. Fernand dashed his on the ground.

“Eh, eh, eh!” stammered Caderousse. “What do I see down there by the wall, in the direction of the Catalans? Look, Fernand, your eyes are better than mine. I believe I see double. You know wine is a deceiver; but I should say it was two lovers walking side by side, and hand in hand. Heaven forgive me, they do not know that we can see them, and they are actually embracing!”

Danglars did not lose one pang that Fernand endured.

“Do you know them, Fernand?” he said.

“Yes,” was the reply, in a low voice. “It is Edmond and Mercédès!”

“Ah, see there, now!” said Caderousse; “and I did not recognize them! Hallo, Dantès! hello, lovely damsel! Come this way, and let us know when the wedding is to be, for Fernand here is so obstinate he will not tell us.”

“Hold your tongue, will you?” said Danglars, pretending to restrain Caderousse, who, with the tenacity of drunkards, leaned out of the arbor. “Try to stand upright, and let the lovers make love without interruption. See, look at Fernand, and follow his example; he is well-behaved!”

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Fernand, probably excited beyond bearing, pricked by Danglars, as the bull is by the bandilleros, was about to rush out; for he had risen from his seat, and seemed to be collecting himself to dash headlong upon his rival, when Mercédès, smiling and graceful, lifted up her lovely head, and looked at them with her clear and bright eyes. At this Fernand recollects her threat of dying if Edmond died, and dropped again heavily on his seat. Danglars looked at the two men, one after the other, the one brutalized by liquor, the other overwhelmed with love.

“I shall get nothing from these fools,” he muttered; “and I am very much afraid of being here between a drunkard and a coward. Here’s an envious fellow making himself boozy on wine when he ought to be nursing his wrath, and here is a fool who sees the woman he loves stolen from under his nose and takes on like a big baby. Yet this Catalan has eyes that glisten like those of the vengeful Spaniards, Sicilians, and Calabrians, and the other has fists big enough to crush an ox at one blow. Unquestionably, Edmond’s star is in the ascendant, and he will marry the splendid girl—he will be captain, too, and laugh at us all, unless”—a sinister smile passed over Danglars’ lips—“unless I take a hand in the affair,” he added.

“Hallo!” continued Caderousse, half-rising, and with his fist on the table, “hallo, Edmond! do you not see your friends, or are you too proud to speak to them?”

“No, my dear fellow!” replied Dantès, “I am not proud, but I am happy, and happiness blinds, I think, more than pride.”

“Ah, very well, that’s an explanation!” said Caderousse. “How do you do, Madame Dantès?”

Mercédès courtesied gravely, and said—“That is not my name, and in my country it bodes ill fortune, they say, to call a young girl by the name of her

betrothed before he becomes her husband. So call me Mercédès, if you please."

"We must excuse our worthy neighbor, Caderousse," said Dantès, "he is so easily mistaken."

"So, then, the wedding is to take place immediately, M. Dantès," said Danglars, bowing to the young couple.

"As soon as possible, M. Danglars; today all preliminaries will be arranged at my father's, and tomorrow, or next day at latest, the wedding festival here at La Réserve. My friends will be there, I hope; that is to say, you are invited, M. Danglars, and you, Caderousse."

"And Fernand," said Caderousse with a chuckle; "Fernand, too, is invited!"

"My wife's brother is my brother," said Edmond; "and we, Mercédès and I, should be very sorry if he were absent at such a time."

Fernand opened his mouth to reply, but his voice died on his lips, and he could not utter a word.

"Today the preliminaries, tomorrow or next day the ceremony! You are in a hurry, captain!"

"Danglars," said Edmond, smiling, "I will say to you as Mercédès said just now to Caderousse, 'Do not give me a title which does not belong to me'; that may bring me bad luck."

"Your pardon," replied Danglars, "I merely said you seemed in a hurry, and we have lots of time; the *Pharaon* cannot be under weigh again in less than three months."

"We are always in a hurry to be happy, M. Danglars; for when we have suffered a long time, we have great difficulty in believing in good fortune. But it is not selfishness alone that makes me thus in haste; I must go to Paris."

"Ah, really?—to Paris! and will it be the first time you have ever been there, Dantès?"

"Yes."

"Have you business there?"

"Not of my own; the last commission of poor Captain Leclerc; you know to what I allude, Danglars—it is sacred. Besides, I shall only take the time to go and return."

"Yes, yes, I understand," said Danglars, and then in a low tone, he added, "To Paris, no doubt to deliver the letter which the grand marshal gave him. Ah, this letter gives me an idea—a capital idea! Ah; Dantès, my friend, you are not yet

registered number one on board the good ship *Pharaon*;" then turning towards Edmond, who was walking away, "A pleasant journey," he cried.

"Thank you," said Edmond with a friendly nod, and the two lovers continued on their way, as calm and joyous as if they were the very elect of heaven.

Chapter 4. Conspiracy

Danglars followed Edmond and Mercédès with his eyes until the two lovers disappeared behind one of the angles of Fort Saint Nicolas; then, turning round, he perceived Fernand, who had fallen, pale and trembling, into his chair, while Caderousse stammered out the words of a drinking-song.

“Well, my dear sir,” said Danglars to Fernand, “here is a marriage which does not appear to make everybody happy.”

“It drives me to despair,” said Fernand.

“Do you, then, love Mercédès?”

“I adore her!”

“For long?”

“As long as I have known her—always.”

“And you sit there, tearing your hair, instead of seeking to remedy your condition; I did not think that was the way of your people.”

“What would you have me do?” said Fernand.

“How do I know? Is it my affair? I am not in love with Mademoiselle Mercédès; but for you—in the words of the gospel, seek, and you shall find.”

“I have found already.”

“What?”

“I would stab the man, but the woman told me that if any misfortune happened to her betrothed, she would kill herself.”

“Pooh! Women say those things, but never do them.”

“You do not know Mercédès; what she threatens she will do.”

“Idiot!” muttered Danglars; “whether she kill herself or not, what matter, provided Dantès is not captain?”

“Before Mercédès should die,” replied Fernand, with the accents of unshaken resolution, “I would die myself!”

“That’s what I call love!” said Caderousse with a voice more tipsy than ever. “That’s love, or I don’t know what love is.”

“Come,” said Danglars, “you appear to me a good sort of fellow, and hang me, I should like to help you, but——”

“Yes,” said Caderousse, “but how?”

“My dear fellow,” replied Danglars, “you are three parts drunk; finish the bottle, and you will be completely so. Drink then, and do not meddle with what we are discussing, for that requires all one’s wit and cool judgment.”

“I—drunk!” said Caderousse; “well that’s a good one! I could drink four more such bottles; they are no bigger than cologne flasks. Père Pamphile, more wine!”

And Caderousse rattled his glass upon the table.

“You were saying, sir——” said Fernand, awaiting with great anxiety the end of this interrupted remark.

“What was I saying? I forget. This drunken Caderousse has made me lose the thread of my sentence.”

“Drunk, if you like; so much the worse for those who fear wine, for it is because they have bad thoughts which they are afraid the liquor will extract from their hearts;” and Caderousse began to sing the two last lines of a song very popular at the time:

‘Tous les méchants sont buveurs d’eau;
C’est bien prouvé par le déluge.’¹

“You said, sir, you would like to help me, but——”

“Yes; but I added, to help you it would be sufficient that Dantès did not marry her you love; and the marriage may easily be thwarted, methinks, and yet Dantès need not die.”

“Death alone can separate them,” remarked Fernand.

“You talk like a noodle, my friend,” said Caderousse; “and here is Danglars, who is a wide-awake, clever, deep fellow, who will prove to you that you are wrong. Prove it, Danglars. I have answered for you. Say there is no need why Dantès should die; it would, indeed, be a pity he should. Dantès is a good fellow; I like Dantès. Dantès, your health.”

Fernand rose impatiently. “Let him run on,” said Danglars, restraining the young man; “drunk as he is, he is not much out in what he says. Absence severs as well as death, and if the walls of a prison were between Edmond and Mercédès they would be as effectually separated as if he lay under a tombstone.”

0056m

“Yes; but one gets out of prison,” said Caderousse, who, with what sense was

left him, listened eagerly to the conversation, “and when one gets out and one’s name is Edmond Dantès, one seeks revenge——”

“What matters that?” muttered Fernand.

“And why, I should like to know,” persisted Caderousse, “should they put Dantès in prison? he has neither robbed, nor killed, nor murdered.”

“Hold your tongue!” said Danglars.

“I won’t hold my tongue!” replied Caderousse; “I say I want to know why they should put Dantès in prison; I like Dantès; Dantès, your health!” and he swallowed another glass of wine.

0057m

Danglars saw in the muddled look of the tailor the progress of his intoxication, and turning towards Fernand, said, “Well, you understand there is no need to kill him.”

“Certainly not, if, as you said just now, you have the means of having Dantès arrested. Have you that means?”

“It is to be found for the searching. But why should I meddle in the matter? it is no affair of mine.”

“I know not why you meddle,” said Fernand, seizing his arm; “but this I know, you have some motive of personal hatred against Dantès, for he who himself hates is never mistaken in the sentiments of others.”

“I! motives of hatred against Dantès? None, on my word! I saw you were unhappy, and your unhappiness interested me; that’s all; but since you believe I act for my own account, adieu, my dear friend, get out of the affair as best you may;” and Danglars rose as if he meant to depart.

“No, no,” said Fernand, restraining him, “stay! It is of very little consequence to me at the end of the matter whether you have any angry feeling or not against Dantès. I hate him! I confess it openly. Do you find the means, I will execute it, provided it is not to kill the man, for Mercédès has declared she will kill herself if Dantès is killed.”

Caderousse, who had let his head drop on the table, now raised it, and looking at Fernand with his dull and fishy eyes, he said, “Kill Dantès! who talks of killing Dantès? I won’t have him killed—I won’t! He’s my friend, and this morning offered to share his money with me, as I shared mine with him. I won’t have Dantès killed—I won’t!”

“And who has said a word about killing him, muddlehead?” replied Danglars. “We were merely joking; drink to his health,” he added, filling Caderousse’s

glass, “and do not interfere with us.”

“Yes, yes, Dantès’ good health!” said Caderousse, emptying his glass, “here’s to his health! his health—hurrah!”

“But the means—the means?” said Fernand.

“Have you not hit upon any?” asked Danglars.

“No!—you undertook to do so.”

“True,” replied Danglars; “the French have the superiority over the Spaniards, that the Spaniards ruminate, while the French invent.”

“Do you invent, then,” said Fernand impatiently.

“Waiter,” said Danglars, “pen, ink, and paper.”

“Pen, ink, and paper,” muttered Fernand.

“Yes; I am a supercargo; pen, ink, and paper are my tools, and without my tools I am fit for nothing.”

“Pen, ink, and paper, then,” called Fernand loudly.

“There’s what you want on that table,” said the waiter.

“Bring them here.” The waiter did as he was desired.

0059m

“When one thinks,” said Caderousse, letting his hand drop on the paper, “there is here wherewithal to kill a man more sure than if we waited at the corner of a wood to assassinate him! I have always had more dread of a pen, a bottle of ink, and a sheet of paper, than of a sword or pistol.”

“The fellow is not so drunk as he appears to be,” said Danglars. “Give him some more wine, Fernand.” Fernand filled Caderousse’s glass, who, like the confirmed toper he was, lifted his hand from the paper and seized the glass.

The Catalan watched him until Caderousse, almost overcome by this fresh assault on his senses, rested, or rather dropped, his glass upon the table.

“Well!” resumed the Catalan, as he saw the final glimmer of Caderousse’s reason vanishing before the last glass of wine.

“Well, then, I should say, for instance,” resumed Danglars, “that if after a voyage such as Dantès has just made, in which he touched at the Island of Elba, someone were to denounce him to the king’s procureur as a Bonapartist agent _____”

“I will denounce him!” exclaimed the young man hastily.

“Yes, but they will make you then sign your declaration, and confront you

with him you have denounced; I will supply you with the means of supporting your accusation, for I know the fact well. But Dantès cannot remain forever in prison, and one day or other he will leave it, and the day when he comes out, woe betide him who was the cause of his incarceration!"

"Oh, I should wish nothing better than that he would come and seek a quarrel with me."

"Yes, and Mercédès! Mercédès, who will detest you if you have only the misfortune to scratch the skin of her dearly beloved Edmond!"

"True!" said Fernand.

"No, no," continued Danglars; "if we resolve on such a step, it would be much better to take, as I now do, this pen, dip it into this ink, and write with the left hand (that the writing may not be recognized) the denunciation we propose." And Danglars, uniting practice with theory, wrote with his left hand, and in a writing reversed from his usual style, and totally unlike it, the following lines, which he handed to Fernand, and which Fernand read in an undertone:

"The honorable, the king's attorney, is informed by a friend of the throne and religion, that one Edmond Dantès, mate of the ship *Pharaon*, arrived this morning from Smyrna, after having touched at Naples and Porto-Ferrajo, has been intrusted by Murat with a letter for the usurper, and by the usurper with a letter for the Bonapartist committee in Paris. Proof of this crime will be found on arresting him, for the letter will be found upon him, or at his father's, or in his cabin on board the *Pharaon*."

"Very good," resumed Danglars; "now your revenge looks like common sense, for in no way can it revert to yourself, and the matter will thus work its own way; there is nothing to do now but fold the letter as I am doing, and write upon it, 'To the king's attorney,' and that's all settled." And Danglars wrote the address as he spoke.

"Yes, and that's all settled!" exclaimed Caderousse, who, by a last effort of intellect, had followed the reading of the letter, and instinctively comprehended all the misery which such a denunciation must entail. "Yes, and that's all settled; only it will be an infamous shame;" and he stretched out his hand to reach the letter.

"Yes," said Danglars, taking it from beyond his reach; "and as what I say and do is merely in jest, and I, amongst the first and foremost, should be sorry if anything happened to Dantès—the worthy Dantès—look here!" And taking the letter, he squeezed it up in his hands and threw it into a corner of the arbor.

"All right!" said Caderousse. "Dantès is my friend, and I won't have him ill-

used."

"And who thinks of using him ill? Certainly neither I nor Fernand," said Danglars, rising and looking at the young man, who still remained seated, but whose eye was fixed on the denunciatory sheet of paper flung into the corner.

"In this case," replied Caderousse, "let's have some more wine. I wish to drink to the health of Edmond and the lovely Mercédès."

"You have had too much already, drunkard," said Danglars; "and if you continue, you will be compelled to sleep here, because unable to stand on your legs."

"I?" said Caderousse, rising with all the offended dignity of a drunken man, "I can't keep on my legs? Why, I'll wager I can go up into the belfry of the Accoules, and without staggering, too!"

"Done!" said Danglars, "I'll take your bet; but tomorrow—today it is time to return. Give me your arm, and let us go."

"Very well, let us go," said Caderousse; "but I don't want your arm at all. Come, Fernand, won't you return to Marseilles with us?"

"No," said Fernand; "I shall return to the Catalans."

"You're wrong. Come with us to Marseilles—come along."

"I will not."

"What do you mean? you will not? Well, just as you like, my prince; there's liberty for all the world. Come along, Danglars, and let the young gentleman return to the Catalans if he chooses."

Danglars took advantage of Caderousse's temper at the moment, to take him off towards Marseilles by the Porte Saint-Victor, staggering as he went.

When they had advanced about twenty yards, Danglars looked back and saw Fernand stoop, pick up the crumpled paper, and putting it into his pocket then rush out of the arbor towards Pillon.

"Well," said Caderousse, "why, what a lie he told! He said he was going to the Catalans, and he is going to the city. Hallo, Fernand! You are coming, my boy!"

"Oh, you don't see straight," said Danglars; "he's gone right by the road to the Vieilles Infirmeries."

"Well," said Caderousse, "I should have sworn that he turned to the right—how treacherous wine is!"

"Come, come," said Danglars to himself, "now the thing is at work and it will effect its purpose unassisted."

Chapter 5. The Marriage Feast

The morning's sun rose clear and resplendent, touching the foamy waves into a network of ruby-tinted light.

The feast had been made ready on the second floor at La Réserve, with whose arbor the reader is already familiar. The apartment destined for the purpose was spacious and lighted by a number of windows, over each of which was written in golden letters for some inexplicable reason the name of one of the principal cities of France; beneath these windows a wooden balcony extended the entire length of the house. And although the entertainment was fixed for twelve o'clock, an hour previous to that time the balcony was filled with impatient and expectant guests, consisting of the favored part of the crew of the *Pharaon*, and other personal friends of the bridegroom, the whole of whom had arrayed themselves in their choicest costumes, in order to do greater honor to the occasion.

Various rumors were afloat to the effect that the owners of the *Pharaon* had promised to attend the nuptial feast; but all seemed unanimous in doubting that an act of such rare and exceeding condescension could possibly be intended.

Danglars, however, who now made his appearance, accompanied by Caderousse, effectually confirmed the report, stating that he had recently conversed with M. Morrel, who had himself assured him of his intention to dine at La Réserve.

In fact, a moment later M. Morrel appeared and was saluted with an enthusiastic burst of applause from the crew of the *Pharaon*, who hailed the visit of the shipowner as a sure indication that the man whose wedding feast he thus delighted to honor would ere long be first in command of the ship; and as Dantès was universally beloved on board his vessel, the sailors put no restraint on their tumultuous joy at finding that the opinion and choice of their superiors so exactly coincided with their own.

With the entrance of M. Morrel, Danglars and Caderousse were despatched in search of the bridegroom to convey to him the intelligence of the arrival of the important personage whose coming had created such a lively sensation, and to beseech him to make haste.

Danglars and Caderousse set off upon their errand at full speed; but ere they had gone many steps they perceived a group advancing towards them, composed of the betrothed pair, a party of young girls in attendance on the bride, by whose side walked Dantès' father; the whole brought up by Fernand, whose lips wore their usual sinister smile.

Neither Mercédès nor Edmond observed the strange expression of his countenance; they were so happy that they were conscious only of the sunshine and the presence of each other.

Having acquitted themselves of their errand, and exchanged a hearty shake of the hand with Edmond, Danglars and Caderousse took their places beside Fernand and old Dantès,—the latter of whom attracted universal notice.

The old man was attired in a suit of glistening watered silk, trimmed with steel buttons, beautifully cut and polished. His thin but wiry legs were arrayed in a pair of richly embroidered clocked stockings, evidently of English manufacture, while from his three-cornered hat depended a long streaming knot of white and blue ribbons. Thus he came along, supporting himself on a curiously carved stick, his aged countenance lit up with happiness, looking for all the world like one of the aged dandies of 1796, parading the newly opened gardens of the Luxembourg and Tuileries.

Beside him glided Caderousse, whose desire to partake of the good things provided for the wedding party had induced him to become reconciled to the Dantès, father and son, although there still lingered in his mind a faint and unperfect recollection of the events of the preceding night; just as the brain retains on waking in the morning the dim and misty outline of a dream.

0065m

As Danglars approached the disappointed lover, he cast on him a look of deep meaning, while Fernand, as he slowly paced behind the happy pair, who seemed, in their own unmixed content, to have entirely forgotten that such a being as himself existed, was pale and abstracted; occasionally, however, a deep flush would overspread his countenance, and a nervous contraction distort his features, while, with an agitated and restless gaze, he would glance in the direction of Marseilles, like one who either anticipated or foresaw some great and important event.

Dantès himself was simply, but becomingly, clad in the dress peculiar to the merchant service—a costume somewhat between a military and a civil garb; and with his fine countenance, radiant with joy and happiness, a more perfect specimen of manly beauty could scarcely be imagined.

Lovely as the Greek girls of Cyprus or Chios, Mercédès boasted the same bright flashing eyes of jet, and ripe, round, coral lips. She moved with the light, free step of an Arlesienne or an Andalusian. One more practiced in the arts of great cities would have hid her blushes beneath a veil, or, at least, have cast down her thickly fringed lashes, so as to have concealed the liquid lustre of her animated eyes; but, on the contrary, the delighted girl looked around her with a smile that seemed to say: “If you are my friends, rejoice with me, for I am very happy.”

As soon as the bridal party came in sight of La Réserve, M. Morrel descended and came forth to meet it, followed by the soldiers and sailors there assembled, to whom he had repeated the promise already given, that Dantès should be the successor to the late Captain Leclere. Edmond, at the approach of his patron, respectfully placed the arm of his affianced bride within that of M. Morrel, who, forthwith conducting her up the flight of wooden steps leading to the chamber in which the feast was prepared, was gayly followed by the guests, beneath whose heavy tread the slight structure creaked and groaned for the space of several minutes.

“Father,” said Mercédès, stopping when she had reached the centre of the table, “sit, I pray you, on my right hand; on my left I will place him who has ever been as a brother to me,” pointing with a soft and gentle smile to Fernand; but her words and look seemed to inflict the direst torture on him, for his lips became ghastly pale, and even beneath the dark hue of his complexion the blood might be seen retreating as though some sudden pang drove it back to the heart.

During this time, Dantès, at the opposite side of the table, had been occupied in similarly placing his most honored guests. M. Morrel was seated at his right hand, Danglars at his left; while, at a sign from Edmond, the rest of the company ranged themselves as they found it most agreeable.

Then they began to pass around the dusky, piquant, Arlesian sausages, and lobsters in their dazzling red cuirasses, prawns of large size and brilliant color, the echinus with its prickly outside and dainty morsel within, the clovis, esteemed by the epicures of the South as more than rivalling the exquisite flavor of the oyster, North. All the delicacies, in fact, that are cast up by the wash of waters on the sandy beach, and styled by the grateful fishermen “fruits of the sea.”

“A pretty silence truly!” said the old father of the bridegroom, as he carried to his lips a glass of wine of the hue and brightness of the topaz, and which had just been placed before Mercédès herself. “Now, would anybody think that this room contained a happy, merry party, who desire nothing better than to laugh and

dance the hours away?"

"Ah," sighed Caderousse, "a man cannot always feel happy because he is about to be married."

"The truth is," replied Dantès, "that I am too happy for noisy mirth; if that is what you meant by your observation, my worthy friend, you are right; joy takes a strange effect at times, it seems to oppress us almost the same as sorrow."

Danglars looked towards Fernand, whose excitable nature received and betrayed each fresh impression.

"Why, what ails you?" asked he of Edmond. "Do you fear any approaching evil? I should say that you were the happiest man alive at this instant."

"And that is the very thing that alarms me," returned Dantès. "Man does not appear to me to be intended to enjoy felicity so unmixed; happiness is like the enchanted palaces we read of in our childhood, where fierce, fiery dragons defend the entrance and approach; and monsters of all shapes and kinds, requiring to be overcome ere victory is ours. I own that I am lost in wonder to find myself promoted to an honor of which I feel myself unworthy—that of being the husband of Mercédès."

"Nay, nay!" cried Caderousse, smiling, "you have not attained that honor yet. Mercédès is not yet your wife. Just assume the tone and manner of a husband, and see how she will remind you that your hour is not yet come!"

The bride blushed, while Fernand, restless and uneasy, seemed to start at every fresh sound, and from time to time wiped away the large drops of perspiration that gathered on his brow.

"Well, never mind that, neighbor Caderousse; it is not worthwhile to contradict me for such a trifle as that. 'Tis true that Mercédès is not actually my wife; but," added he, drawing out his watch, "in an hour and a half she will be."

A general exclamation of surprise ran round the table, with the exception of the elder Dantès, whose laugh displayed the still perfect beauty of his large white teeth. Mercédès looked pleased and gratified, while Fernand grasped the handle of his knife with a convulsive clutch.

"In an hour?" inquired Danglars, turning pale. "How is that, my friend?"

"Why, thus it is," replied Dantès. "Thanks to the influence of M. Morrel, to whom, next to my father, I owe every blessing I enjoy, every difficulty has been removed. We have purchased permission to waive the usual delay; and at half-past two o'clock the Mayor of Marseilles will be waiting for us at the city hall. Now, as a quarter-past one has already struck, I do not consider I have asserted

too much in saying, that, in another hour and thirty minutes Mercédès will have become Madame Dantès."

0069m

Fernand closed his eyes, a burning sensation passed across his brow, and he was compelled to support himself by the table to prevent his falling from his chair; but in spite of all his efforts, he could not refrain from uttering a deep groan, which, however, was lost amid the noisy felicitations of the company.

"Upon my word," cried the old man, "you make short work of this kind of affair. Arrived here only yesterday morning, and married today at three o'clock! Commend me to a sailor for going the quick way to work!"

"But," asked Danglars, in a timid tone, "how did you manage about the other formalities—the contract—the settlement?"

"The contract," answered Dantès, laughingly, "it didn't take long to fix that. Mercédès has no fortune; I have none to settle on her. So, you see, our papers were quickly written out, and certainly do not come very expensive." This joke elicited a fresh burst of applause.

"So that what we presumed to be merely the betrothal feast turns out to be the actual wedding dinner!" said Danglars.

"No, no," answered Dantès; "don't imagine I am going to put you off in that shabby manner. Tomorrow morning I start for Paris; four days to go, and the same to return, with one day to discharge the commission entrusted to me, is all the time I shall be absent. I shall be back here by the first of March, and on the second I give my real marriage feast."

This prospect of fresh festivity redoubled the hilarity of the guests to such a degree, that the elder Dantès, who, at the commencement of the repast, had commented upon the silence that prevailed, now found it difficult, amid the general din of voices, to obtain a moment's tranquillity in which to drink to the health and prosperity of the bride and bridegroom.

Dantès, perceiving the affectionate eagerness of his father, responded by a look of grateful pleasure; while Mercédès glanced at the clock and made an expressive gesture to Edmond.

Around the table reigned that noisy hilarity which usually prevails at such a time among people sufficiently free from the demands of social position not to feel the trammels of etiquette. Such as at the commencement of the repast had not been able to seat themselves according to their inclination rose unceremoniously, and sought out more agreeable companions. Everybody talked

at once, without waiting for a reply and each one seemed to be contented with expressing his or her own thoughts.

Fernand's paleness appeared to have communicated itself to Danglars. As for Fernand himself, he seemed to be enduring the tortures of the damned; unable to rest, he was among the first to quit the table, and, as though seeking to avoid the hilarious mirth that rose in such deafening sounds, he continued, in utter silence, to pace the farther end of the salon.

Caderousse approached him just as Danglars, whom Fernand seemed most anxious to avoid, had joined him in a corner of the room.

"Upon my word," said Caderousse, from whose mind the friendly treatment of Dantès, united with the effect of the excellent wine he had partaken of, had effaced every feeling of envy or jealousy at Dantès' good fortune,—"upon my word, Dantès is a downright good fellow, and when I see him sitting there beside his pretty wife that is so soon to be. I cannot help thinking it would have been a great pity to have served him that trick you were planning yesterday."

"Oh, there was no harm meant," answered Danglars; "at first I certainly did feel somewhat uneasy as to what Fernand might be tempted to do; but when I saw how completely he had mastered his feelings, even so far as to become one of his rival's attendants, I knew there was no further cause for apprehension." Caderousse looked full at Fernand—he was ghastly pale.

"Certainly," continued Danglars, "the sacrifice was no trifling one, when the beauty of the bride is concerned. Upon my soul, that future captain of mine is a lucky dog! Gad! I only wish he would let me take his place."

"Shall we not set forth?" asked the sweet, silvery voice of Mercédès; "two o'clock has just struck, and you know we are expected in a quarter of an hour."

0071m

"To be sure!—to be sure!" cried Dantès, eagerly quitting the table; "let us go directly!"

His words were re-echoed by the whole party, with vociferous cheers.

At this moment Danglars, who had been incessantly observing every change in Fernand's look and manner, saw him stagger and fall back, with an almost convulsive spasm, against a seat placed near one of the open windows. At the same instant his ear caught a sort of indistinct sound on the stairs, followed by the measured tread of soldiery, with the clanking of swords and military accoutrements; then came a hum and buzz as of many voices, so as to deaden even the noisy mirth of the bridal party, among whom a vague feeling of

curiosity and apprehension quelled every disposition to talk, and almost instantaneously the most deathlike stillness prevailed.

The sounds drew nearer. Three blows were struck upon the panel of the door. The company looked at each other in consternation.

“I demand admittance,” said a loud voice outside the room, “in the name of the law!” As no attempt was made to prevent it, the door was opened, and a magistrate, wearing his official scarf, presented himself, followed by four soldiers and a corporal. Uneasiness now yielded to the most extreme dread on the part of those present.

“May I venture to inquire the reason of this unexpected visit?” said M. Morrel, addressing the magistrate, whom he evidently knew; “there is doubtless some mistake easily explained.”

“If it be so,” replied the magistrate, “rely upon every reparation being made; meanwhile, I am the bearer of an order of arrest, and although I most reluctantly perform the task assigned me, it must, nevertheless, be fulfilled. Who among the persons here assembled answers to the name of Edmond Dantès?”

Every eye was turned towards the young man who, spite of the agitation he could not but feel, advanced with dignity, and said, in a firm voice:

“I am he; what is your pleasure with me?”

“Edmond Dantès,” replied the magistrate, “I arrest you in the name of the law!”

“Me!” repeated Edmond, slightly changing color, “and wherefore, I pray?”

“I cannot inform you, but you will be duly acquainted with the reasons that have rendered such a step necessary at the preliminary examination.”

M. Morrel felt that further resistance or remonstrance was useless. He saw before him an officer delegated to enforce the law, and perfectly well knew that it would be as unavailing to seek pity from a magistrate decked with his official scarf, as to address a petition to some cold marble effigy. Old Dantès, however, sprang forward. There are situations which the heart of a father or a mother cannot be made to understand. He prayed and supplicated in terms so moving, that even the officer was touched, and, although firm in his duty, he kindly said, “My worthy friend, let me beg of you to calm your apprehensions. Your son has probably neglected some prescribed form or attention in registering his cargo, and it is more than probable he will be set at liberty directly he has given the information required, whether touching the health of his crew, or the value of his freight.”

"What is the meaning of all this?" inquired Caderousse, frowningly, of Danglars, who had assumed an air of utter surprise.

0073m

"How can I tell you?" replied he; "I am, like yourself, utterly bewildered at all that is going on, and cannot in the least make out what it is about." Caderousse then looked around for Fernand, but he had disappeared.

The scene of the previous night now came back to his mind with startling clearness. The painful catastrophe he had just witnessed appeared effectually to have rent away the veil which the intoxication of the evening before had raised between himself and his memory.

"So, so," said he, in a hoarse and choking voice, to Danglars, "this, then, I suppose, is a part of the trick you were concerting yesterday? All I can say is, that if it be so, 'tis an ill turn, and well deserves to bring double evil on those who have projected it."

"Nonsense," returned Danglars, "I tell you again I have nothing whatever to do with it; besides, you know very well that I tore the paper to pieces."

"No, you did not!" answered Caderousse, "you merely threw it by—I saw it lying in a corner."

"Hold your tongue, you fool!—what should you know about it?—why, you were drunk!"

"Where is Fernand?" inquired Caderousse.

"How do I know?" replied Danglars; "gone, as every prudent man ought to be, to look after his own affairs, most likely. Never mind where he is, let you and I go and see what is to be done for our poor friends."

During this conversation, Dantès, after having exchanged a cheerful shake of the hand with all his sympathizing friends, had surrendered himself to the officer sent to arrest him, merely saying, "Make yourselves quite easy, my good fellows, there is some little mistake to clear up, that's all, depend upon it; and very likely I may not have to go so far as the prison to effect that."

0075m

"Oh, to be sure!" responded Danglars, who had now approached the group, "nothing more than a mistake, I feel quite certain."

Dantès descended the staircase, preceded by the magistrate, and followed by the soldiers. A carriage awaited him at the door; he got in, followed by two soldiers and the magistrate, and the vehicle drove off towards Marseilles.

"Adieu, adieu, dearest Edmond!" cried Mercédès, stretching out her arms to him from the balcony.

The prisoner heard the cry, which sounded like the sob of a broken heart, and leaning from the coach he called out, "Good-bye, Mercédès—we shall soon meet again!" Then the vehicle disappeared round one of the turnings of Fort Saint Nicholas.

"Wait for me here, all of you!" cried M. Morrel; "I will take the first conveyance I find, and hurry to Marseilles, whence I will bring you word how all is going on."

"That's right!" exclaimed a multitude of voices, "go, and return as quickly as you can!"

This second departure was followed by a long and fearful state of terrified silence on the part of those who were left behind. The old father and Mercédès remained for some time apart, each absorbed in grief; but at length the two poor victims of the same blow raised their eyes, and with a simultaneous burst of feeling rushed into each other's arms.

Meanwhile Fernand made his appearance, poured out for himself a glass of water with a trembling hand; then hastily swallowing it, went to sit down at the first vacant place, and this was, by mere chance, placed next to the seat on which poor Mercédès had fallen half fainting, when released from the warm and affectionate embrace of old Dantès. Instinctively Fernand drew back his chair.

"He is the cause of all this misery—I am quite sure of it," whispered Caderousse, who had never taken his eyes off Fernand, to Danglars.

"I don't think so," answered the other; "he's too stupid to imagine such a scheme. I only hope the mischief will fall upon the head of whoever wrought it."

"You don't mention those who aided and abetted the deed," said Caderousse.

"Surely," answered Danglars, "one cannot be held responsible for every chance arrow shot into the air."

"You can, indeed, when the arrow lights point downward on somebody's head."

Meantime the subject of the arrest was being canvassed in every different form.

"What think you, Danglars," said one of the party, turning towards him, "of this event?"

"Why," replied he, "I think it just possible Dantès may have been detected with some trifling article on board ship considered here as contraband."

"But how could he have done so without your knowledge, Danglars, since you are the ship's supercargo?"

"Why, as for that, I could only know what I was told respecting the merchandise with which the vessel was laden. I know she was loaded with cotton, and that she took in her freight at Alexandria from Pastret's warehouse, and at Smyrna from Pascal's; that is all I was obliged to know, and I beg I may not be asked for any further particulars."

"Now I recollect," said the afflicted old father; "my poor boy told me yesterday he had got a small case of coffee, and another of tobacco for me!"

"There, you see," exclaimed Danglars. "Now the mischief is out; depend upon it the custom-house people went rummaging about the ship in our absence, and discovered poor Dantès' hidden treasures."

Mercédès, however, paid no heed to this explanation of her lover's arrest. Her grief, which she had hitherto tried to restrain, now burst out in a violent fit of hysterical sobbing.

"Come, come," said the old man, "be comforted, my poor child; there is still hope!"

"Hope!" repeated Danglars.

"Hope!" faintly murmured Fernand, but the word seemed to die away on his pale agitated lips, and a convulsive spasm passed over his countenance.

"Good news! good news!" shouted forth one of the party stationed in the balcony on the lookout. "Here comes M. Morrel back. No doubt, now, we shall hear that our friend is released!"

Mercédès and the old man rushed to meet the shipowner and greeted him at the door. He was very pale.

"What news?" exclaimed a general burst of voices.

"Alas, my friends," replied M. Morrel, with a mournful shake of his head, "the thing has assumed a more serious aspect than I expected."

"Oh, indeed—indeed, sir, he is innocent!" sobbed forth Mercédès.

"That I believe!" answered M. Morrel; "but still he is charged——"

"With what?" inquired the elder Dantès.

"With being an agent of the Bonapartist faction!" Many of our readers may be able to recollect how formidable such an accusation became in the period at which our story is dated.

A despairing cry escaped the pale lips of Mercédès; the old man sank into a

chair.

“Ah, Danglars!” whispered Caderousse, “you have deceived me—the trick you spoke of last night has been played; but I cannot suffer a poor old man or an innocent girl to die of grief through your fault. I am determined to tell them all about it.”

“Be silent, you simpleton!” cried Danglars, grasping him by the arm, “or I will not answer even for your own safety. Who can tell whether Dantès be innocent or guilty? The vessel did touch at Elba, where he quitted it, and passed a whole day in the island. Now, should any letters or other documents of a compromising character be found upon him, will it not be taken for granted that all who uphold him are his accomplices?”

With the rapid instinct of selfishness, Caderousse readily perceived the solidity of this mode of reasoning; he gazed, doubtfully, wistfully, on Danglars, and then caution supplanted generosity.

“Suppose we wait a while, and see what comes of it,” said he, casting a bewildered look on his companion.

“To be sure!” answered Danglars. “Let us wait, by all means. If he be innocent, of course he will be set at liberty; if guilty, why, it is no use involving ourselves in a conspiracy.”

“Let us go, then. I cannot stay here any longer.”

“With all my heart!” replied Danglars, pleased to find the other so tractable. “Let us take ourselves out of the way, and leave things for the present to take their course.”

After their departure, Fernand, who had now again become the friend and protector of Mercédès, led the girl to her home, while some friends of Dantès conducted his father, nearly lifeless, to the Allées de Meilhan.

The rumor of Edmond’s arrest as a Bonapartist agent was not slow in circulating throughout the city.

“Could you ever have credited such a thing, my dear Danglars?” asked M. Morrel, as, on his return to the port for the purpose of gleaning fresh tidings of Dantès, from M. de Villefort, the assistant procureur, he overtook his supercargo and Caderousse. “Could you have believed such a thing possible?”

“Why, you know I told you,” replied Danglars, “that I considered the circumstance of his having anchored at the Island of Elba as a very suspicious circumstance.”

“And did you mention these suspicions to any person beside myself?”

“Certainly not!” returned Danglars. Then added in a low whisper, “You understand that, on account of your uncle, M. Policar Morrel, who served under the *other* government, and who does not altogether conceal what he thinks on the subject, you are strongly suspected of regretting the abdication of Napoleon. I should have feared to injure both Edmond and yourself, had I divulged my own apprehensions to a soul. I am too well aware that though a subordinate, like myself, is bound to acquaint the shipowner with everything that occurs, there are many things he ought most carefully to conceal from all else.”

“‘Tis well, Danglars—‘tis well!” replied M. Morrel. “You are a worthy fellow; and I had already thought of your interests in the event of poor Edmond having become captain of the *Pharaon*. ”

“Is it possible you were so kind?”

“Yes, indeed; I had previously inquired of Dantès what was his opinion of you, and if he should have any reluctance to continue you in your post, for somehow I have perceived a sort of coolness between you.”

“And what was his reply?”

“That he certainly did think he had given you offence in an affair which he merely referred to without entering into particulars, but that whoever possessed the good opinion and confidence of the ship’s owners would have his preference also.”

“The hypocrite!” murmured Danglars.

“Poor Dantès!” said Caderousse. “No one can deny his being a noble-hearted young fellow.”

“But meanwhile,” continued M. Morrel, “here is the *Pharaon* without a captain.”

“Oh,” replied Danglars, “since we cannot leave this port for the next three months, let us hope that ere the expiration of that period Dantès will be set at liberty.”

“No doubt; but in the meantime?”

“I am entirely at your service, M. Morrel,” answered Danglars. “You know that I am as capable of managing a ship as the most experienced captain in the service; and it will be so far advantageous to you to accept my services, that upon Edmond’s release from prison no further change will be requisite on board the *Pharaon* than for Dantès and myself each to resume our respective posts.”

“Thanks, Danglars—that will smooth over all difficulties. I fully authorize

you at once to assume the command of the *Pharaon*, and look carefully to the unloading of her freight. Private misfortunes must never be allowed to interfere with business."

"Be easy on that score, M. Morrel; but do you think we shall be permitted to see our poor Edmond?"

"I will let you know that directly I have seen M. de Villefort, whom I shall endeavor to interest in Edmond's favor. I am aware he is a furious royalist; but, in spite of that, and of his being king's attorney, he is a man like ourselves, and I fancy not a bad sort of one."

"Perhaps not," replied Danglars; "but I hear that he is ambitious, and that's rather against him."

"Well, well," returned M. Morrel, "we shall see. But now hasten on board, I will join you there ere long."

So saying, the worthy shipowner quitted the two allies, and proceeded in the direction of the Palais de Justice.

0081m

"You see," said Danglars, addressing Caderousse, "the turn things have taken. Do you still feel any desire to stand up in his defence?"

"Not the slightest, but yet it seems to me a shocking thing that a mere joke should lead to such consequences."

"But who perpetrated that joke, let me ask? neither you nor myself, but Fernand; you knew very well that I threw the paper into a corner of the room—indeed, I fancied I had destroyed it."

"Oh, no," replied Caderousse, "that I can answer for, you did not. I only wish I could see it now as plainly as I saw it lying all crushed and crumpled in a corner of the arbor."

"Well, then, if you did, depend upon it, Fernand picked it up, and either copied it or caused it to be copied; perhaps, even, he did not take the trouble of recopying it. And now I think of it, by Heavens, he may have sent the letter itself! Fortunately, for me, the handwriting was disguised."

"Then you were aware of Dantès being engaged in a conspiracy?"

"Not I. As I before said, I thought the whole thing was a joke, nothing more. It seems, however, that I have unconsciously stumbled upon the truth."

"Still," argued Caderousse, "I would give a great deal if nothing of the kind had happened; or, at least, that I had had no hand in it. You will see, Danglars,

that it will turn out an unlucky job for both of us."

"Nonsense! If any harm come of it, it should fall on the guilty person; and that, you know, is Fernand. How can we be implicated in any way? All we have got to do is, to keep our own counsel, and remain perfectly quiet, not breathing a word to any living soul; and you will see that the storm will pass away without in the least affecting us."

"Amen!" responded Caderousse, waving his hand in token of adieu to Danglars, and bending his steps towards the Allées de Meilhan, moving his head to and fro, and muttering as he went, after the manner of one whose mind was overcharged with one absorbing idea.

"So far, then," said Danglars, mentally, "all has gone as I would have it. I am, temporarily, commander of the *Pharaon*, with the certainty of being permanently so, if that fool of a Caderousse can be persuaded to hold his tongue. My only fear is the chance of Dantès being released. But, there, he is in the hands of Justice; and," added he with a smile, "she will take her own." So saying, he leaped into a boat, desiring to be rowed on board the *Pharaon*, where M. Morrel had agreed to meet him.

Chapter 6. The Deputy Procureur du Roi

In one of the aristocratic mansions built by Puget in the Rue du Grand Cours opposite the Medusa fountain, a second marriage feast was being celebrated, almost at the same hour with the nuptial repast given by Dantès. In this case, however, although the occasion of the entertainment was similar, the company was strikingly dissimilar. Instead of a rude mixture of sailors, soldiers, and those belonging to the humblest grade of life, the present assembly was composed of the very flower of Marseilles society,—magistrates who had resigned their office during the usurper's reign; officers who had deserted from the imperial army and joined forces with Condé; and younger members of families, brought up to hate and execrate the man whom five years of exile would convert into a martyr, and fifteen of restoration elevate to the rank of a god.

The guests were still at table, and the heated and energetic conversation that prevailed betrayed the violent and vindictive passions that then agitated each dweller of the South, where unhappily, for five centuries religious strife had long given increased bitterness to the violence of party feeling.

The emperor, now king of the petty Island of Elba, after having held sovereign sway over one-half of the world, counting as his subjects a small population of five or six thousand souls,—after having been accustomed to hear the “*Vive Napoléons*” of a hundred and twenty millions of human beings, uttered in ten different languages,—was looked upon here as a ruined man, separated forever from any fresh connection with France or claim to her throne.

The magistrates freely discussed their political views; the military part of the company talked unreservedly of Moscow and Leipsic, while the women commented on the divorce of Josephine. It was not over the downfall of the man, but over the defeat of the Napoleonic idea, that they rejoiced, and in this they foresaw for themselves the bright and cheering prospect of a revivified political existence.

An old man, decorated with the cross of Saint Louis, now rose and proposed the health of King Louis XVIII. It was the Marquis de Saint-Méran. This toast, recalling at once the patient exile of Hartwell and the peace-loving King of France, excited universal enthusiasm; glasses were elevated in the air à

l'Anglaise, and the ladies, snatching their bouquets from their fair bosoms, strewed the table with their floral treasures. In a word, an almost poetical fervor prevailed.

“Ah,” said the Marquise de Saint-Méran, a woman with a stern, forbidding eye, though still noble and distinguished in appearance, despite her fifty years —“ah, these revolutionists, who have driven us from those very possessions they afterwards purchased for a mere trifle during the Reign of Terror, would be compelled to own, were they here, that all true devotion was on our side, since we were content to follow the fortunes of a falling monarch, while they, on the contrary, made their fortune by worshipping the rising sun; yes, yes, they could not help admitting that the king, for whom we sacrificed rank, wealth, and station was truly our ‘Louis the well-beloved,’ while their wretched usurper has been, and ever will be, to them their evil genius, their ‘Napoleon the accursed.’ Am I not right, Villefort?”

“I beg your pardon, madame. I really must pray you to excuse me, but—in truth—I was not attending to the conversation.”

“Marquise, marquise!” interposed the old nobleman who had proposed the toast, “let the young people alone; let me tell you, on one’s wedding day there are more agreeable subjects of conversation than dry politics.”

“Never mind, dearest mother,” said a young and lovely girl, with a profusion of light brown hair, and eyes that seemed to float in liquid crystal, “’tis all my fault for seizing upon M. de Villefort, so as to prevent his listening to what you said. But there—now take him—he is your own for as long as you like. M. Villefort, I beg to remind you my mother speaks to you.”

“If the marquise will deign to repeat the words I but imperfectly caught, I shall be delighted to answer,” said M. de Villefort.

“Never mind, Renée,” replied the marquise, with a look of tenderness that seemed out of keeping with her harsh dry features; but, however all other feelings may be withered in a woman’s nature, there is always one bright smiling spot in the desert of her heart, and that is the shrine of maternal love. “I forgive you. What I was saying, Villefort, was, that the Bonapartists had not our sincerity, enthusiasm, or devotion.”

“They had, however, what supplied the place of those fine qualities,” replied the young man, “and that was fanaticism. Napoleon is the Mahomet of the West, and is worshipped by his commonplace but ambitious followers, not only as a leader and lawgiver, but also as the personification of equality.”

“He!” cried the marquise: “Napoleon the type of equality! For mercy’s sake,

then, what would you call Robespierre? Come, come, do not strip the latter of his just rights to bestow them on the Corsican, who, to my mind, has usurped quite enough."

0085m

"Nay, madame; I would place each of these heroes on his right pedestal—that of Robespierre on his scaffold in the Place Louis Quinze; that of Napoleon on the column of the Place Vendôme. The only difference consists in the opposite character of the equality advocated by these two men; one is the equality that elevates, the other is the equality that degrades; one brings a king within reach of the guillotine, the other elevates the people to a level with the throne. Observe," said Villefort, smiling, "I do not mean to deny that both these men were revolutionary scoundrels, and that the 9th Thermidor and the 4th of April, in the year 1814, were lucky days for France, worthy of being gratefully remembered by every friend to monarchy and civil order; and that explains how it comes to pass that, fallen, as I trust he is forever, Napoleon has still retained a train of parasitical satellites. Still, marquise, it has been so with other usurpers—Cromwell, for instance, who was not half so bad as Napoleon, had his partisans and advocates."

"Do you know, Villefort, that you are talking in a most dreadfully revolutionary strain? But I excuse it, it is impossible to expect the son of a Girondin to be free from a small spice of the old leaven." A deep crimson suffused the countenance of Villefort.

"'Tis true, madame," answered he, "that my father was a Girondin, but he was not among the number of those who voted for the king's death; he was an equal sufferer with yourself during the Reign of Terror, and had well-nigh lost his head on the same scaffold on which your father perished."

"True," replied the marquise, without wincing in the slightest degree at the tragic remembrance thus called up; "but bear in mind, if you please, that our respective parents underwent persecution and proscription from diametrically opposite principles; in proof of which I may remark, that while my family remained among the staunchest adherents of the exiled princes, your father lost no time in joining the new government; and that while the Citizen Noirtier was a Girondin, the Count Noirtier became a senator."

"Dear mother," interposed Renée, "you know very well it was agreed that all these disagreeable reminiscences should forever be laid aside."

"Suffer me, also, madame," replied Villefort, "to add my earnest request to Mademoiselle de Saint-Méran's, that you will kindly allow the veil of oblivion

to cover and conceal the past. What avails recrimination over matters wholly past recall? For my own part, I have laid aside even the name of my father, and altogether disown his political principles. He was—nay, probably may still be—a Bonapartist, and is called Noirtier; I, on the contrary, am a staunch royalist, and style myself de Villefort. Let what may remain of revolutionary sap exhaust itself and die away with the old trunk, and condescend only to regard the young shoot which has started up at a distance from the parent tree, without having the power, any more than the wish, to separate entirely from the stock from which it sprung."

"Bravo, Villefort!" cried the marquis; "excellently well said! Come, now, I have hopes of obtaining what I have been for years endeavoring to persuade the marquise to promise; namely, a perfect amnesty and forgetfulness of the past."

"With all my heart," replied the marquise; "let the past be forever forgotten. I promise you it affords *me* as little pleasure to revive it as it does you. All I ask is, that Villefort will be firm and inflexible for the future in his political principles. Remember, also, Villefort, that we have pledged ourselves to his majesty for your fealty and strict loyalty, and that at our recommendation the king consented to forget the past, as I do" (and here she extended to him her hand)—"as I now do at your entreaty. But bear in mind, that should there fall in your way anyone guilty of conspiring against the government, you will be so much the more bound to visit the offence with rigorous punishment, as it is known you belong to a suspected family."

"Alas, madame," returned Villefort, "my profession, as well as the times in which we live, compels me to be severe. I have already successfully conducted several public prosecutions, and brought the offenders to merited punishment. But we have not done with the thing yet."

0087m

"Do you, indeed, think so?" inquired the marquise.

"I am, at least, fearful of it. Napoleon, in the Island of Elba, is too near France, and his proximity keeps up the hopes of his partisans. Marseilles is filled with half-pay officers, who are daily, under one frivolous pretext or other, getting up quarrels with the royalists; from hence arise continual and fatal duels among the higher classes of persons, and assassinations in the lower."

"You have heard, perhaps," said the Comte de Salvieux, one of M. de Saint-Méran's oldest friends, and chamberlain to the Comte d'Artois, "that the Holy Alliance purpose removing him from thence?"

"Yes; they were talking about it when we left Paris," said M. de Saint-Méran;

“and where is it decided to transfer him?”

“To Saint Helena.”

“For heaven’s sake, where is that?” asked the marquise.

“An island situated on the other side of the equator, at least two thousand leagues from here,” replied the count.

“So much the better. As Villefort observes, it is a great act of folly to have left such a man between Corsica, where he was born, and Naples, of which his brother-in-law is king, and face to face with Italy, the sovereignty of which he coveted for his son.”

“Unfortunately,” said Villefort, “there are the treaties of 1814, and we cannot molest Napoleon without breaking those compacts.”

“Oh, well, we shall find some way out of it,” responded M. de Salvieux. “There wasn’t any trouble over treaties when it was a question of shooting the poor Duc d’Enghien.”

“Well,” said the marquise, “it seems probable that, by the aid of the Holy Alliance, we shall be rid of Napoleon; and we must trust to the vigilance of M. de Villefort to purify Marseilles of his partisans. The king is either a king or no king; if he be acknowledged as sovereign of France, he should be upheld in peace and tranquillity; and this can best be effected by employing the most inflexible agents to put down every attempt at conspiracy—’tis the best and surest means of preventing mischief.”

“Unfortunately, madame,” answered Villefort, “the strong arm of the law is not called upon to interfere until the evil has taken place.”

“Then all he has got to do is to endeavor to repair it.”

“Nay, madame, the law is frequently powerless to effect this; all it can do is to avenge the wrong done.”

“Oh, M. de Villefort,” cried a beautiful young creature, daughter to the Comte de Salvieux, and the cherished friend of Mademoiselle de Saint-Méran, “do try and get up some famous trial while we are at Marseilles. I never was in a law-court; I am told it is so very amusing!”

“Amusing, certainly,” replied the young man, “inasmuch as, instead of shedding tears as at the fictitious tale of woe produced at a theatre, you behold in a law-court a case of real and genuine distress—a drama of life. The prisoner whom you there see pale, agitated, and alarmed, instead of—as is the case when a curtain falls on a tragedy—going home to sup peacefully with his family, and then retiring to rest, that he may recommence his mimic woes on the morrow,—

is removed from your sight merely to be reconducted to his prison and delivered up to the executioner. I leave you to judge how far your nerves are calculated to bear you through such a scene. Of this, however, be assured, that should any favorable opportunity present itself, I will not fail to offer you the choice of being present."

"For shame, M. de Villefort!" said Renée, becoming quite pale; "don't you see how you are frightening us?—and yet you laugh."

"What would you have? 'Tis like a duel. I have already recorded sentence of death, five or six times, against the movers of political conspiracies, and who can say how many daggers may be ready sharpened, and only waiting a favorable opportunity to be buried in my heart?"

"Gracious heavens, M. de Villefort," said Renée, becoming more and more terrified; "you surely are not in earnest."

"Indeed I am," replied the young magistrate with a smile; "and in the interesting trial that young lady is anxious to witness, the case would only be still more aggravated. Suppose, for instance, the prisoner, as is more than probable, to have served under Napoleon—well, can you expect for an instant, that one accustomed, at the word of his commander, to rush fearlessly on the very bayonets of his foe, will scruple more to drive a stiletto into the heart of one he knows to be his personal enemy, than to slaughter his fellow-creatures, merely because bidden to do so by one he is bound to obey? Besides, one requires the excitement of being hateful in the eyes of the accused, in order to lash one's self into a state of sufficient vehemence and power. I would not choose to see the man against whom I pleaded smile, as though in mockery of my words. No; my pride is to see the accused pale, agitated, and as though beaten out of all composure by the fire of my eloquence." Renée uttered a smothered exclamation.

"Bravo!" cried one of the guests; "that is what I call talking to some purpose."

"Just the person we require at a time like the present," said a second.

"What a splendid business that last case of yours was, my dear Villefort!" remarked a third; "I mean the trial of the man for murdering his father. Upon my word, you killed him ere the executioner had laid his hand upon him."

"Oh, as for parricides, and such dreadful people as that," interposed Renée, "it matters very little what is done to them; but as regards poor unfortunate creatures whose only crime consists in having mixed themselves up in political intrigues——"

"Why, that is the very worst offence they could possibly commit; for, don't

you see, Renée, the king is the father of his people, and he who shall plot or contrive aught against the life and safety of the parent of thirty-two millions of souls, is a parricide upon a fearfully great scale?"

"I don't know anything about that," replied Renée; "but, M. de Villefort, you have promised me—have you not?—always to show mercy to those I plead for."

"Make yourself quite easy on that point," answered Villefort, with one of his sweetest smiles; "you and I will always consult upon our verdicts."

"My love," said the marquise, "attend to your doves, your lap-dogs, and embroidery, but do not meddle with what you do not understand. Nowadays the military profession is in abeyance and the magisterial robe is the badge of honor. There is a wise Latin proverb that is very much in point."

"*Cedant arma togæ,*" said Villefort with a bow.

"I cannot speak Latin," responded the marquise.

"Well," said Renée, "I cannot help regretting you had not chosen some other profession than your own—a physician, for instance. Do you know I always felt a shudder at the idea of even a *destroying angel*?"

"Dear, good Renée," whispered Villefort, as he gazed with unutterable tenderness on the lovely speaker.

"Let us hope, my child," cried the marquis, "that M. de Villefort may prove the moral and political physician of this province; if so, he will have achieved a noble work."

"And one which will go far to efface the recollection of his father's conduct," added the incorrigible marquise.

"Madame," replied Villefort, with a mournful smile, "I have already had the honor to observe that my father has—at least, I hope so—abjured his past errors, and that he is, at the present moment, a firm and zealous friend to religion and order—a better royalist, possibly, than his son; for he has to atone for past dereliction, while I have no other impulse than warm, decided preference and conviction." Having made this well-turned speech, Villefort looked carefully around to mark the effect of his oratory, much as he would have done had he been addressing the bench in open court.

"Do you know, my dear Villefort," cried the Comte de Salvieux, "that is exactly what I myself said the other day at the Tuilleries, when questioned by his majesty's principal chamberlain touching the singularity of an alliance between the son of a Girondin and the daughter of an officer of the Duc de Condé; and I assure you he seemed fully to comprehend that this mode of reconciling political

differences was based upon sound and excellent principles. Then the king, who, without our suspecting it, had overheard our conversation, interrupted us by saying, ‘Villefort’—observe that the king did not pronounce the word Noirtier, but, on the contrary, placed considerable emphasis on that of Villefort —‘Villefort,’ said his majesty, ‘is a young man of great judgment and discretion, who will be sure to make a figure in his profession; I like him much, and it gave me great pleasure to hear that he was about to become the son-in-law of the Marquis and Marquise de Saint-Méran. I should myself have recommended the match, had not the noble marquis anticipated my wishes by requesting my consent to it.’”

“Is it possible the king could have condescended so far as to express himself so favorably of me?” asked the enraptured Villefort.

“I give you his very words; and if the marquis chooses to be candid, he will confess that they perfectly agree with what his majesty said to him, when he went six months ago to consult him upon the subject of your espousing his daughter.”

0091m

“That is true,” answered the marquis.

“How much do I owe this gracious prince! What is there I would not do to evince my earnest gratitude!”

“That is right,” cried the marquise. “I love to see you thus. Now, then, were a conspirator to fall into your hands, he would be most welcome.”

“For my part, dear mother,” interposed Renée, “I trust your wishes will not prosper, and that Providence will only permit petty offenders, poor debtors, and miserable cheats to fall into M. de Villefort’s hands,—then I shall be contented.”

“Just the same as though you prayed that a physician might only be called upon to prescribe for headaches, measles, and the stings of wasps, or any other slight affection of the epidermis. If you wish to see me the king’s attorney, you must desire for me some of those violent and dangerous diseases from the cure of which so much honor redounds to the physician.”

At this moment, and as though the utterance of Villefort’s wish had sufficed to effect its accomplishment, a servant entered the room, and whispered a few words in his ear. Villefort immediately rose from table and quitted the room upon the plea of urgent business; he soon, however, returned, his whole face beaming with delight. Renée regarded him with fond affection; and certainly his handsome features, lit up as they then were with more than usual fire and

animation, seemed formed to excite the innocent admiration with which she gazed on her graceful and intelligent lover.

“You were wishing just now,” said Villefort, addressing her, “that I were a doctor instead of a lawyer. Well, I at least resemble the disciples of Esculapius in one thing [people spoke in this style in 1815], that of not being able to call a day my own, not even that of my betrothal.”

“And wherefore were you called away just now?” asked Mademoiselle de Saint-Méran, with an air of deep interest.

“For a very serious matter, which bids fair to make work for the executioner.”

“How dreadful!” exclaimed Renée, turning pale.

“Is it possible?” burst simultaneously from all who were near enough to the magistrate to hear his words.

“Why, if my information prove correct, a sort of Bonapartist conspiracy has just been discovered.”

“Can I believe my ears?” cried the marquise.

“I will read you the letter containing the accusation, at least,” said Villefort:

“The king’s attorney is informed by a friend to the throne and the religious institutions of his country, that one named Edmond Dantès, mate of the ship *Pharaon*, this day arrived from Smyrna, after having touched at Naples and Porto-Ferrajo, has been the bearer of a letter from Murat to the usurper, and again taken charge of another letter from the usurper to the Bonapartist club in Paris. Ample corroboration of this statement may be obtained by arresting the above-mentioned Edmond Dantès, who either carries the letter for Paris about with him, or has it at his father’s abode. Should it not be found in the possession of father or son, then it will assuredly be discovered in the cabin belonging to the said Dantès on board the *Pharaon*. ”

“But,” said Renée, “this letter, which, after all, is but an anonymous scrawl, is not even addressed to you, but to the king’s attorney.”

0093m

“True; but that gentleman being absent, his secretary, by his orders, opened his letters; thinking this one of importance, he sent for me, but not finding me, took upon himself to give the necessary orders for arresting the accused party.”

“Then the guilty person is absolutely in custody?” said the marquise.

“Nay, dear mother, say the accused person. You know we cannot yet pronounce him guilty.”

"He is in safe custody," answered Villefort; "and rely upon it, if the letter is found, he will not be likely to be trusted abroad again, unless he goes forth under the especial protection of the headsman."

"And where is the unfortunate being?" asked Renée.

"He is at my house."

"Come, come, my friend," interrupted the marquise, "do not neglect your duty to linger with us. You are the king's servant, and must go wherever that service calls you."

"Oh, Villefort!" cried Renée, clasping her hands, and looking towards her lover with piteous earnestness, "be merciful on this the day of our betrothal."

The young man passed round to the side of the table where the fair pleader sat, and leaning over her chair said tenderly:

"To give you pleasure, my sweet Renée, I promise to show all the lenity in my power; but if the charges brought against this Bonapartist hero prove correct, why, then, you really must give me leave to order his head to be cut off."

Renée shuddered at the word *cut*, for the growth in question had a head.

"Never mind that foolish girl, Villefort," said the marquise. "She will soon get over these things." So saying, Madame de Saint-Méran extended her dry bony hand to Villefort, who, while imprinting a son-in-law's respectful salute on it, looked at Renée, as much as to say, "I must try and fancy 'tis your dear hand I kiss, as it should have been."

"These are mournful auspices to accompany a betrothal," sighed poor Renée.

"Upon my word, child!" exclaimed the angry marquise, "your folly exceeds all bounds. I should be glad to know what connection there can possibly be between your sickly sentimentality and the affairs of the state!"

"Oh, mother!" murmured Renée.

"Nay, madame, I pray you pardon this little traitor. I promise you that to make up for her want of loyalty, I will be most inflexibly severe;" then casting an expressive glance at his betrothed, which seemed to say, "Fear not, for your dear sake my justice shall be tempered with mercy," and receiving a sweet and approving smile in return, Villefort departed with paradise in his heart.

Chapter 7. The Examination

No sooner had Villefort left the salon, than he assumed the grave air of a man who holds the balance of life and death in his hands. Now, in spite of the nobility of his countenance, the command of which, like a finished actor, he had carefully studied before the glass, it was by no means easy for him to assume an air of judicial severity. Except the recollection of the line of politics his father had adopted, and which might interfere, unless he acted with the greatest prudence, with his own career, Gérard de Villefort was as happy as a man could be. Already rich, he held a high official situation, though only twenty-seven. He was about to marry a young and charming woman, whom he loved, not passionately, but reasonably, as became a deputy attorney of the king; and besides her personal attractions, which were very great, Mademoiselle de Saint-Méran's family possessed considerable political influence, which they would, of course, exert in his favor. The dowry of his wife amounted to fifty thousand crowns, and he had, besides, the prospect of seeing her fortune increased to half a million at her father's death. These considerations naturally gave Villefort a feeling of such complete felicity that his mind was fairly dazzled in its contemplation.

At the door he met the commissary of police, who was waiting for him. The sight of this officer recalled Villefort from the third heaven to earth; he composed his face, as we have before described, and said, "I have read the letter, sir, and you have acted rightly in arresting this man; now inform me what you have discovered concerning him and the conspiracy."

"We know nothing as yet of the conspiracy, monsieur; all the papers found have been sealed up and placed on your desk. The prisoner himself is named Edmond Dantès, mate on board the three-master the *Pharaon*, trading in cotton with Alexandria and Smyrna, and belonging to Morrel & Son, of Marseilles."

"Before he entered the merchant service, had he ever served in the marines?"

"Oh, no, monsieur, he is very young."

"How old?"

"Nineteen or twenty at the most."

At this moment, and as Villefort had arrived at the corner of the Rue des Conseils, a man, who seemed to have been waiting for him, approached; it was

M. Morrel.

“Ah, M. de Villefort,” cried he, “I am delighted to see you. Some of your people have committed the strangest mistake—they have just arrested Edmond Dantès, mate of my vessel.”

“I know it, monsieur,” replied Villefort, “and I am now going to examine him.”

“Oh,” said Morrel, carried away by his friendship, “you do not know him, and I do. He is the most estimable, the most trustworthy creature in the world, and I will venture to say, there is not a better seaman in all the merchant service. Oh, M. de Villefort, I beseech your indulgence for him.”

Villefort, as we have seen, belonged to the aristocratic party at Marseilles, Morrel to the plebeian; the first was a royalist, the other suspected of Bonapartism. Villefort looked disdainfully at Morrel, and replied coldly:

“You are aware, monsieur, that a man may be estimable and trustworthy in private life, and the best seaman in the merchant service, and yet be, politically speaking, a great criminal. Is it not true?”

The magistrate laid emphasis on these words, as if he wished to apply them to the owner himself, while his eyes seemed to plunge into the heart of one who, interceding for another, had himself need of indulgence. Morrel reddened, for his own conscience was not quite clear on politics; besides, what Dantès had told him of his interview with the grand-marshall, and what the emperor had said to him, embarrassed him. He replied, however, in a tone of deep interest:

“I entreat you, M. de Villefort, be, as you always are, kind and equitable, and give him back to us soon.” This *give us* sounded revolutionary in the deputy’s ears.

“Ah, ah,” murmured he, “is Dantès then a member of some Carbonari society, that his protector thus employs the collective form? He was, if I recollect, arrested in a tavern, in company with a great many others.” Then he added, “Monsieur, you may rest assured I shall perform my duty impartially, and that if he be innocent you shall not have appealed to me in vain; should he, however, be guilty, in this present epoch, impunity would furnish a dangerous example, and I must do my duty.”

0097m

As he had now arrived at the door of his own house, which adjoined the Palais de Justice, he entered, after having, coldly saluted the shipowner, who stood, as if petrified, on the spot where Villefort had left him. The antechamber was full of

police agents and gendarmes, in the midst of whom, carefully watched, but calm and smiling, stood the prisoner. Villefort traversed the antechamber, cast a side glance at Dantès, and taking a packet which a gendarme offered him, disappeared, saying, "Bring in the prisoner."

Rapid as had been Villefort's glance, it had served to give him an idea of the man he was about to interrogate. He had recognized intelligence in the high forehead, courage in the dark eye and bent brow, and frankness in the thick lips that showed a set of pearly teeth. Villefort's first impression was favorable; but he had been so often warned to mistrust first impulses, that he applied the maxim to the impression, forgetting the difference between the two words. He stifled, therefore, the feelings of compassion that were rising, composed his features, and sat down, grim and sombre, at his desk. An instant after Dantès entered. He was pale, but calm and collected, and saluting his judge with easy politeness, looked round for a seat, as if he had been in M. Morrel's salon. It was then that he encountered for the first time Villefort's look,—that look peculiar to the magistrate, who, while seeming to read the thoughts of others, betrays nothing of his own.

"Who and what are you?" demanded Villefort, turning over a pile of papers, containing information relative to the prisoner, that a police agent had given to him on his entry, and that, already, in an hour's time, had swelled to voluminous proportions, thanks to the corrupt espionage of which "the accused" is always made the victim.

"My name is Edmond Dantès," replied the young man calmly; "I am mate of the *Pharaon*, belonging to Messrs. Morrel & Son."

"Your age?" continued Villefort.

"Nineteen," returned Dantès.

"What were you doing at the moment you were arrested?"

"I was at the festival of my marriage, monsieur," said the young man, his voice slightly tremulous, so great was the contrast between that happy moment and the painful ceremony he was now undergoing; so great was the contrast between the sombre aspect of M. de Villefort and the radiant face of Mercédès.

"You were at the festival of your marriage?" said the deputy, shuddering in spite of himself.

"Yes, monsieur; I am on the point of marrying a young girl I have been attached to for three years." Villefort, impassive as he was, was struck with this coincidence; and the tremulous voice of Dantès, surprised in the midst of his happiness, struck a sympathetic chord in his own bosom—he also was on the

point of being married, and he was summoned from his own happiness to destroy that of another. “This philosophic reflection,” thought he, “will make a great sensation at M. de Saint-Méran’s;” and he arranged mentally, while Dantès awaited further questions, the antithesis by which orators often create a reputation for eloquence. When this speech was arranged, Villefort turned to Dantès.

0099m

“Go on, sir,” said he.

“What would you have me say?”

“Give all the information in your power.”

“Tell me on which point you desire information, and I will tell all I know; only,” added he, with a smile, “I warn you I know very little.”

“Have you served under the usurper?”

“I was about to be mustered into the Royal Marines when he fell.”

“It is reported your political opinions are extreme,” said Villefort, who had never heard anything of the kind, but was not sorry to make this inquiry, as if it were an accusation.

“My political opinions!” replied Dantès. “Alas, sir, I never had any opinions. I am hardly nineteen; I know nothing; I have no part to play. If I obtain the situation I desire, I shall owe it to M. Morrel. Thus all my opinions—I will not say public, but private—are confined to these three sentiments,—I love my father, I respect M. Morrel, and I adore Mercédès. This, sir, is all I can tell you, and you see how uninteresting it is.” As Dantès spoke, Villefort gazed at his ingenuous and open countenance, and recollecting the words of Renée, who, without knowing who the culprit was, had besought his indulgence for him. With the deputy’s knowledge of crime and criminals, every word the young man uttered convinced him more and more of his innocence. This lad, for he was scarcely a man,—simple, natural, eloquent with that eloquence of the heart never found when sought for; full of affection for everybody, because he was happy, and because happiness renders even the wicked good—extended his affection even to his judge, spite of Villefort’s severe look and stern accent. Dantès seemed full of kindness.

“*Pardieu!*” said Villefort, “he is a noble fellow. I hope I shall gain Renée’s favor easily by obeying the first command she ever imposed on me. I shall have at least a pressure of the hand in public, and a sweet kiss in private.” Full of this idea, Villefort’s face became so joyous, that when he turned to Dantès, the latter,

who had watched the change on his physiognomy, was smiling also.

“Sir,” said Villefort, “have you any enemies, at least, that you know.”

“I have enemies?” replied Dantès; “my position is not sufficiently elevated for that. As for my disposition, that is, perhaps, somewhat too hasty; but I have striven to repress it. I have had ten or twelve sailors under me, and if you question them, they will tell you that they love and respect me, not as a father, for I am too young, but as an elder brother.”

“But you may have excited jealousy. You are about to become captain at nineteen—an elevated post; you are about to marry a pretty girl, who loves you; and these two pieces of good fortune may have excited the envy of someone.”

“You are right; you know men better than I do, and what you say may possibly be the case, I confess; but if such persons are among my acquaintances I prefer not to know it, because then I should be forced to hate them.”

“You are wrong; you should always strive to see clearly around you. You seem a worthy young man; I will depart from the strict line of my duty to aid you in discovering the author of this accusation. Here is the paper; do you know the writing?” As he spoke, Villefort drew the letter from his pocket, and presented it to Dantès. Dantès read it. A cloud passed over his brow as he said:

“No, monsieur, I do not know the writing, and yet it is tolerably plain. Whoever did it writes well. I am very fortunate,” added he, looking gratefully at Villefort, “to be examined by such a man as you; for this envious person is a real enemy.” And by the rapid glance that the young man’s eyes shot forth, Villefort saw how much energy lay hid beneath this mildness.

“Now,” said the deputy, “answer me frankly, not as a prisoner to a judge, but as one man to another who takes an interest in him, what truth is there in the accusation contained in this anonymous letter?” And Villefort threw disdainfully on his desk the letter Dantès had just given back to him.

“None at all. I will tell you the real facts. I swear by my honor as a sailor, by my love for Mercédès, by the life of my father——”

“Speak, monsieur,” said Villefort. Then, internally, “If Renée could see me, I hope she would be satisfied, and would no longer call me a decapitator.”

“Well, when we quitted Naples, Captain Leclere was attacked with a brain fever. As we had no doctor on board, and he was so anxious to arrive at Elba, that he would not touch at any other port, his disorder rose to such a height, that at the end of the third day, feeling he was dying, he called me to him. ‘My dear Dantès,’ said he, ‘swear to perform what I am going to tell you, for it is a matter

of the deepest importance.'

"I swear, captain," replied I.

"Well, as after my death the command devolves on you as mate, assume the command, and bear up for the Island of Elba, disembark at Porto-Ferrajo, ask for the grand-marshall, give him this letter—perhaps they will give you another letter, and charge you with a commission. You will accomplish what I was to have done, and derive all the honor and profit from it."

"I will do it, captain; but perhaps I shall not be admitted to the grand-marshall's presence as easily as you expect?"

"Here is a ring that will obtain audience of him, and remove every difficulty," said the captain. At these words he gave me a ring. It was time—two hours after he was delirious; the next day he died."

"And what did you do then?"

"What I ought to have done, and what everyone would have done in my place. Everywhere the last requests of a dying man are sacred; but with a sailor the last requests of his superior are commands. I sailed for the Island of Elba, where I arrived the next day; I ordered everybody to remain on board, and went on shore alone. As I had expected, I found some difficulty in obtaining access to the grand-marshall; but I sent the ring I had received from the captain to him, and was instantly admitted. He questioned me concerning Captain Leclere's death; and, as the latter had told me, gave me a letter to carry on to a person in Paris. I undertook it because it was what my captain had bade me do. I landed here, regulated the affairs of the vessel, and hastened to visit my affianced bride, whom I found more lovely than ever. Thanks to M. Morrel, all the forms were got over; in a word I was, as I told you, at my marriage feast; and I should have been married in an hour, and tomorrow I intended to start for Paris, had I not been arrested on this charge which you as well as I now see to be unjust."

"Ah," said Villefort, "this seems to me the truth. If you have been culpable, it was imprudence, and this imprudence was in obedience to the orders of your captain. Give up this letter you have brought from Elba, and pass your word you will appear should you be required, and go and rejoin your friends."

"I am free, then, sir?" cried Dantès joyfully.

"Yes; but first give me this letter."

"You have it already, for it was taken from me with some others which I see in that packet."

"Stop a moment," said the deputy, as Dantès took his hat and gloves. "To

whom is it addressed?"

"*To Monsieur Noirtier, Rue Coq-Héron, Paris.*" Had a thunderbolt fallen into the room, Villefort could not have been more stupefied. He sank into his seat, and hastily turning over the packet, drew forth the fatal letter, at which he glanced with an expression of terror.

"M. Noirtier, Rue Coq-Héron, No. 13," murmured he, growing still paler.

"Yes," said Dantès; "do you know him?"

"No," replied Villefort; "a faithful servant of the king does not know conspirators."

0103m

"It is a conspiracy, then?" asked Dantès, who after believing himself free, now began to feel a tenfold alarm. "I have, however, already told you, sir, I was entirely ignorant of the contents of the letter."

"Yes; but you knew the name of the person to whom it was addressed," said Villefort.

"I was forced to read the address to know to whom to give it."

"Have you shown this letter to anyone?" asked Villefort, becoming still more pale.

"To no one, on my honor."

"Everybody is ignorant that you are the bearer of a letter from the Island of Elba, and addressed to M. Noirtier?"

"Everybody, except the person who gave it to me."

"And that was too much, far too much," murmured Villefort. Villefort's brow darkened more and more, his white lips and clenched teeth filled Dantès with apprehension. After reading the letter, Villefort covered his face with his hands.

"Oh," said Dantès timidly, "what is the matter?" Villefort made no answer, but raised his head at the expiration of a few seconds, and again perused the letter.

"And you say that you are ignorant of the contents of this letter?"

"I give you my word of honor, sir," said Dantès; "but what is the matter? You are ill—shall I ring for assistance?—shall I call?"

"No," said Villefort, rising hastily; "stay where you are. It is for me to give orders here, and not you."

"Monsieur," replied Dantès proudly, "it was only to summon assistance for you."

"I want none; it was a temporary indisposition. Attend to yourself; answer me." Dantès waited, expecting a question, but in vain. Villefort fell back on his chair, passed his hand over his brow, moist with perspiration, and, for the third time, read the letter.

"Oh, if he knows the contents of this!" murmured he, "and that Noirtier is the father of Villefort, I am lost!" And he fixed his eyes upon Edmond as if he would have penetrated his thoughts.

"Oh, it is impossible to doubt it," cried he, suddenly.

"In heaven's name!" cried the unhappy young man, "if you doubt me, question me; I will answer you." Villefort made a violent effort, and in a tone he strove to render firm:

"Sir," said he, "I am no longer able, as I had hoped, to restore you immediately to liberty; before doing so, I must consult the trial justice; what my own feeling is you already know."

"Oh, monsieur," cried Dantès, "you have been rather a friend than a judge."

0105m

"Well, I must detain you some time longer, but I will strive to make it as short as possible. The principal charge against you is this letter, and you see——" Villefort approached the fire, cast it in, and waited until it was entirely consumed.

"You see, I destroy it?"

"Oh," exclaimed Dantès, "you are goodness itself."

"Listen," continued Villefort; "you can now have confidence in me after what I have done."

"Oh, command, and I will obey."

"Listen; this is not a command, but advice I give you."

"Speak, and I will follow your advice."

"I shall detain you until this evening in the Palais de Justice. Should anyone else interrogate you, say to him what you have said to me, but do not breathe a word of this letter."

"I promise." It was Villefort who seemed to entreat, and the prisoner who reassured him.

"You see," continued he, glancing toward the grate, where fragments of burnt paper fluttered in the flames, "the letter is destroyed; you and I alone know of its existence; should you, therefore, be questioned, deny all knowledge of it—deny

it boldly, and you are saved.”

“Be satisfied; I will deny it.”

“It was the only letter you had?”

“It was.”

“Swear it.”

“I swear it.”

Villefort rang. A police agent entered. Villefort whispered some words in his ear, to which the officer replied by a motion of his head.

“Follow him,” said Villefort to Dantès. Dantès saluted Villefort and retired. Hardly had the door closed when Villefort threw himself half-fainting into a chair.

“Alas, alas,” murmured he, “if the procureur himself had been at Marseilles I should have been ruined. This accursed letter would have destroyed all my hopes. Oh, my father, must your past career always interfere with my successes?” Suddenly a light passed over his face, a smile played round his set mouth, and his haggard eyes were fixed in thought.

“This will do,” said he, “and from this letter, which might have ruined me, I will make my fortune. Now to the work I have in hand.” And after having assured himself that the prisoner was gone, the deputy procureur hastened to the house of his betrothed.

Chapter 8. The Château d'If

The commissary of police, as he traversed the antechamber, made a sign to two gendarmes, who placed themselves one on Dantès' right and the other on his left. A door that communicated with the Palais de Justice was opened, and they went through a long range of gloomy corridors, whose appearance might have made even the boldest shudder. The Palais de Justice communicated with the prison,—a sombre edifice, that from its grated windows looks on the clock-tower of the Accoules. After numberless windings, Dantès saw a door with an iron wicket. The commissary took up an iron mallet and knocked thrice, every blow seeming to Dantès as if struck on his heart. The door opened, the two gendarmes gently pushed him forward, and the door closed with a loud sound behind him. The air he inhaled was no longer pure, but thick and mephitic,—he was in prison.

He was conducted to a tolerably neat chamber, but grated and barred, and its appearance, therefore, did not greatly alarm him; besides, the words of Villefort, who seemed to interest himself so much, resounded still in his ears like a promise of freedom. It was four o'clock when Dantès was placed in this chamber. It was, as we have said, the 1st of March, and the prisoner was soon buried in darkness. The obscurity augmented the acuteness of his hearing; at the slightest sound he rose and hastened to the door, convinced they were about to liberate him, but the sound died away, and Dantès sank again into his seat. At last, about ten o'clock, and just as Dantès began to despair, steps were heard in the corridor, a key turned in the lock, the bolts creaked, the massy oaken door flew open, and a flood of light from two torches pervaded the apartment.

By the torchlight Dantès saw the glittering sabres and carbines of four gendarmes. He had advanced at first, but stopped at the sight of this display of force.

“Are you come to fetch me?” asked he.

“Yes,” replied a gendarme.

“By the orders of the deputy procureur?”

“I believe so.” The conviction that they came from M. de Villefort relieved all Dantès' apprehensions; he advanced calmly, and placed himself in the centre of the escort. A carriage waited at the door, the coachman was on the box, and a

police officer sat beside him.

“Is this carriage for me?” said Dantès.

“It is for you,” replied a gendarme.

Dantès was about to speak; but feeling himself urged forward, and having neither the power nor the intention to resist, he mounted the steps, and was in an instant seated inside between two gendarmes; the two others took their places opposite, and the carriage rolled heavily over the stones.

The prisoner glanced at the windows—they were grated; he had changed his prison for another that was conveying him he knew not whither. Through the grating, however, Dantès saw they were passing through the Rue Caisserie, and by the Rue Saint-Laurent and the Rue Taramis, to the quay. Soon he saw the lights of La Consigne.

The carriage stopped, the officer descended, approached the guardhouse, a dozen soldiers came out and formed themselves in order; Dantès saw the reflection of their muskets by the light of the lamps on the quay.

“Can all this force be summoned on my account?” thought he.

The officer opened the door, which was locked, and, without speaking a word, answered Dantès’ question; for he saw between the ranks of the soldiers a passage formed from the carriage to the port. The two gendarmes who were opposite to him descended first, then he was ordered to alight and the gendarmes on each side of him followed his example. They advanced towards a boat, which a custom-house officer held by a chain, near the quay.

The soldiers looked at Dantès with an air of stupid curiosity. In an instant he was placed in the stern-sheets of the boat, between the gendarmes, while the officer stationed himself at the bow; a shove sent the boat adrift, and four sturdy oarsmen impelled it rapidly towards the Pilon. At a shout from the boat, the chain that closes the mouth of the port was lowered and in a second they were, as Dantès knew, in the Frioul and outside the inner harbor.

The prisoner’s first feeling was of joy at again breathing the pure air—for air is freedom; but he soon sighed, for he passed before La Réserve, where he had that morning been so happy, and now through the open windows came the laughter and revelry of a ball. Dantès folded his hands, raised his eyes to heaven, and prayed fervently.

0111m

The boat continued her voyage. They had passed the Tête de Mort, were now off the Anse du Pharo, and about to double the battery. This manœuvre was

incomprehensible to Dantès.

"Whither are you taking me?" asked he.

"You will soon know."

"But still——"

"We are forbidden to give you any explanation." Dantès, trained in discipline, knew that nothing would be more absurd than to question subordinates, who were forbidden to reply; and so he remained silent.

The most vague and wild thoughts passed through his mind. The boat they were in could not make a long voyage; there was no vessel at anchor outside the harbor; he thought, perhaps, they were going to leave him on some distant point. He was not bound, nor had they made any attempt to handcuff him; this seemed a good augury. Besides, had not the deputy, who had been so kind to him, told him that provided he did not pronounce the dreaded name of Noirtier, he had nothing to apprehend? Had not Villefort in his presence destroyed the fatal letter, the only proof against him?

He waited silently, striving to pierce through the darkness.

They had left the Ile Ratonneau, where the lighthouse stood, on the right, and were now opposite the Point des Catalans. It seemed to the prisoner that he could distinguish a feminine form on the beach, for it was there Mercédès dwelt. How was it that a presentiment did not warn Mercédès that her lover was within three hundred yards of her?

One light alone was visible; and Dantès saw that it came from Mercédès' chamber. Mercédès was the only one awake in the whole settlement. A loud cry could be heard by her. But pride restrained him and he did not utter it. What would his guards think if they heard him shout like a madman?

He remained silent, his eyes fixed upon the light; the boat went on, but the prisoner thought only of Mercédès. An intervening elevation of land hid the light. Dantès turned and perceived that they had got out to sea. While he had been absorbed in thought, they had shipped their oars and hoisted sail; the boat was now moving with the wind.

In spite of his repugnance to address the guards, Dantès turned to the nearest gendarme, and taking his hand,

"Comrade," said he, "I adjure you, as a Christian and a soldier, to tell me where we are going. I am Captain Dantès, a loyal Frenchman, thought accused of treason; tell me where you are conducting me, and I promise you on my honor I will submit to my fate."

The gendarme looked irresolutely at his companion, who returned for answer a sign that said, "I see no great harm in telling him now," and the gendarme replied:

"You are a native of Marseilles, and a sailor, and yet you do not know where you are going?"

"On my honor, I have no idea."

"Have you no idea whatever?"

"None at all."

"That is impossible."

"I swear to you it is true. Tell me, I entreat."

"But my orders."

"Your orders do not forbid your telling me what I must know in ten minutes, in half an hour, or an hour. You see I cannot escape, even if I intended."

"Unless you are blind, or have never been outside the harbor, you must know."

"I do not."

"Look round you then." Dantès rose and looked forward, when he saw rise within a hundred yards of him the black and frowning rock on which stands the Château d'If. This gloomy fortress, which has for more than three hundred years furnished food for so many wild legends, seemed to Dantès like a scaffold to a malefactor.

"The Château d'If?" cried he, "what are we going there for?"

The gendarme smiled.

"I am not going there to be imprisoned," said Dantès; "it is only used for political prisoners. I have committed no crime. Are there any magistrates or judges at the Château d'If?"

"There are only," said the gendarme, "a governor, a garrison, turnkeys, and good thick walls. Come, come, do not look so astonished, or you will make me think you are laughing at me in return for my good nature."

Dantès pressed the gendarme's hand as though he would crush it.

"You think, then," said he, "that I am taken to the Château d'If to be imprisoned there?"

"It is probable; but there is no occasion to squeeze so hard."

"Without any inquiry, without any formality?"

"All the formalities have been gone through; the inquiry is already made."

“And so, in spite of M. de Villefort’s promises?”

“I do not know what M. de Villefort promised you,” said the gendarme, “but I know we are taking you to the Château d’If. But what are you doing? Help, comrades, help!”

By a rapid movement, which the gendarme’s practiced eye had perceived, Dantès sprang forward to precipitate himself into the sea; but four vigorous arms seized him as his feet quitted the bottom of the boat. He fell back cursing with rage.

“Good!” said the gendarme, placing his knee on his chest; “this is the way you keep your word as a sailor! Believe soft-spoken gentlemen again! Hark ye, my friend, I have disobeyed my first order, but I will not disobey the second; and if you move, I will blow your brains out.” And he levelled his carbine at Dantès, who felt the muzzle against his temple.

For a moment the idea of struggling crossed his mind, and of so ending the unexpected evil that had overtaken him. But he bethought him of M. de Villefort’s promise; and, besides, death in a boat from the hand of a gendarme seemed too terrible. He remained motionless, but gnashing his teeth and wringing his hands with fury.

At this moment the boat came to a landing with a violent shock. One of the sailors leaped on shore, a cord creaked as it ran through a pulley, and Dantès guessed they were at the end of the voyage, and that they were mooring the boat.

His guards, taking him by the arms and coat-collar, forced him to rise, and dragged him towards the steps that lead to the gate of the fortress, while the police officer carrying a musket with fixed bayonet followed behind.

Dantès made no resistance; he was like a man in a dream; he saw soldiers drawn up on the embankment; he knew vaguely that he was ascending a flight of steps; he was conscious that he passed through a door, and that the door closed behind him; but all this indistinctly as through a mist. He did not even see the ocean, that terrible barrier against freedom, which the prisoners look upon with utter despair.

They halted for a minute, during which he strove to collect his thoughts. He looked around; he was in a court surrounded by high walls; he heard the measured tread of sentinels, and as they passed before the light he saw the barrels of their muskets shine.

They waited upwards of ten minutes. Certain Dantès could not escape, the gendarmes released him. They seemed awaiting orders. The orders came.

“Where is the prisoner?” said a voice.

“Here,” replied the gendarmes.

“Let him follow me; I will take him to his cell.”

“Go!” said the gendarmes, thrusting Dantès forward.

The prisoner followed his guide, who led him into a room almost under ground, whose bare and reeking walls seemed as though impregnated with tears; a lamp placed on a stool illuminated the apartment faintly, and showed Dantès the features of his conductor, an under-jailer, ill-clothed, and of sullen appearance.

0113m

“Here is your chamber for tonight,” said he. “It is late, and the governor is asleep. Tomorrow, perhaps, he may change you. In the meantime there is bread, water, and fresh straw; and that is all a prisoner can wish for. Goodnight.” And before Dantès could open his mouth—before he had noticed where the jailer placed his bread or the water—before he had glanced towards the corner where the straw was, the jailer disappeared, taking with him the lamp and closing the door, leaving stamped upon the prisoner’s mind the dim reflection of the dripping walls of his dungeon.

Dantès was alone in darkness and in silence—cold as the shadows that he felt breathe on his burning forehead. With the first dawn of day the jailer returned, with orders to leave Dantès where he was. He found the prisoner in the same position, as if fixed there, his eyes swollen with weeping. He had passed the night standing, and without sleep. The jailer advanced; Dantès appeared not to perceive him. He touched him on the shoulder. Edmond started.

“Have you not slept?” said the jailer.

“I do not know,” replied Dantès. The jailer stared.

“Are you hungry?” continued he.

“I do not know.”

“Do you wish for anything?”

“I wish to see the governor.”

The jailer shrugged his shoulders and left the chamber.

Dantès followed him with his eyes, and stretched forth his hands towards the open door; but the door closed. All his emotion then burst forth; he cast himself on the ground, weeping bitterly, and asking himself what crime he had committed that he was thus punished.

The day passed thus; he scarcely tasted food, but walked round and round the

cell like a wild beast in its cage. One thought in particular tormented him: namely, that during his journey hither he had sat so still, whereas he might, a dozen times, have plunged into the sea, and, thanks to his powers of swimming, for which he was famous, have gained the shore, concealed himself until the arrival of a Genoese or Spanish vessel, escaped to Spain or Italy, where Mercédès and his father could have joined him. He had no fears as to how he should live—good seamen are welcome everywhere. He spoke Italian like a Tuscan, and Spanish like a Castilian; he would have been free, and happy with Mercédès and his father, whereas he was now confined in the Château d'If, that impregnable fortress, ignorant of the future destiny of his father and Mercédès; and all this because he had trusted to Villefort's promise. The thought was maddening, and Dantès threw himself furiously down on his straw. The next morning at the same hour, the jailer came again.

"Well," said the jailer, "are you more reasonable today?" Dantès made no reply.

"Come, cheer up; is there anything that I can do for you?"

"I wish to see the governor."

"I have already told you it was impossible."

"Why so?"

"Because it is against prison rules, and prisoners must not even ask for it."

"What is allowed, then?"

"Better fare, if you pay for it, books, and leave to walk about."

"I do not want books, I am satisfied with my food, and do not care to walk about; but I wish to see the governor."

"If you worry me by repeating the same thing, I will not bring you any more to eat."

"Well, then," said Edmond, "if you do not, I shall die of hunger—that is all."

The jailer saw by his tone he would be happy to die; and as every prisoner is worth ten sous a day to his jailer, he replied in a more subdued tone.

"What you ask is impossible; but if you are very well behaved you will be allowed to walk about, and some day you will meet the governor, and if he chooses to reply, that is his affair."

"But," asked Dantès, "how long shall I have to wait?"

"Ah, a month—six months—a year."

"It is too long a time. I wish to see him at once."

“Ah,” said the jailer, “do not always brood over what is impossible, or you will be mad in a fortnight.”

“You think so?”

“Yes; we have an instance here; it was by always offering a million of francs to the governor for his liberty that an abbé became mad, who was in this chamber before you.”

0119m

“How long has he left it?”

“Two years.”

“Was he liberated, then?”

“No; he was put in a dungeon.”

“Listen!” said Dantès. “I am not an abbé, I am not mad; perhaps I shall be, but at present, unfortunately, I am not. I will make you another offer.”

“What is that?”

“I do not offer you a million, because I have it not; but I will give you a hundred crowns if, the first time you go to Marseilles, you will seek out a young girl named Mercédès, at the Catalans, and give her two lines from me.”

0120m

“If I took them, and were detected, I should lose my place, which is worth two thousand francs a year; so that I should be a great fool to run such a risk for three hundred.”

“Well,” said Dantès, “mark this; if you refuse at least to tell Mercédès I am here, I will some day hide myself behind the door, and when you enter I will dash out your brains with this stool.”

“Threats!” cried the jailer, retreating and putting himself on the defensive; “you are certainly going mad. The abbé began like you, and in three days you will be like him, mad enough to tie up; but, fortunately, there are dungeons here.”

Dantès whirled the stool round his head.

“All right, all right,” said the jailer; “all right, since you will have it so. I will send word to the governor.”

“Very well,” returned Dantès, dropping the stool and sitting on it as if he were in reality mad. The jailer went out, and returned in an instant with a corporal and four soldiers.

"By the governor's orders," said he, "conduct the prisoner to the tier beneath."

"To the dungeon, then," said the corporal.

"Yes; we must put the madman with the madmen." The soldiers seized Dantès, who followed passively.

He descended fifteen steps, and the door of a dungeon was opened, and he was thrust in. The door closed, and Dantès advanced with outstretched hands until he touched the wall; he then sat down in the corner until his eyes became accustomed to the darkness. The jailer was right; Dantès wanted but little of being utterly mad.

Chapter 9. The Evening of the Betrothal

Villefort had, as we have said, hastened back to Madame de Saint-Méran's in the Place du Grand Cours, and on entering the house found that the guests whom he had left at table were taking coffee in the salon. Renée was, with all the rest of the company, anxiously awaiting him, and his entrance was followed by a general exclamation.

"Well, Decapitator, Guardian of the State, Royalist, Brutus, what is the matter?" said one. "Speak out."

"Are we threatened with a fresh Reign of Terror?" asked another.

"Has the Corsican ogre broken loose?" cried a third.

"Marquise," said Villefort, approaching his future mother-in-law, "I request your pardon for thus leaving you. Will the marquis honor me by a few moments' private conversation?"

"Ah, it is really a serious matter, then?" asked the marquis, remarking the cloud on Villefort's brow.

"So serious that I must take leave of you for a few days; so," added he, turning to Renée, "judge for yourself if it be not important."

"You are going to leave us?" cried Renée, unable to hide her emotion at this unexpected announcement.

"Alas," returned Villefort, "I must!"

"Where, then, are you going?" asked the marquise.

"That, madame, is an official secret; but if you have any commissions for Paris, a friend of mine is going there tonight, and will with pleasure undertake them." The guests looked at each other.

"You wish to speak to me alone?" said the marquis.

"Yes, let us go to the library, please." The marquis took his arm, and they left the salon.

"Well," asked he, as soon as they were by themselves, "tell me what it is?"

"An affair of the greatest importance, that demands my immediate presence in Paris. Now, excuse the indiscretion, marquis, but have you any landed

property?"

"All my fortune is in the funds; seven or eight hundred thousand francs."

"Then sell out—sell out, marquis, or you will lose it all."

0123m

"But how can I sell out here?"

"You have a broker, have you not?"

"Yes."

"Then give me a letter to him, and tell him to sell out without an instant's delay, perhaps even now I shall arrive too late."

"The deuce you say!" replied the marquis, "let us lose no time, then!"

And, sitting down, he wrote a letter to his broker, ordering him to sell out at the market price.

"Now, then," said Villefort, placing the letter in his pocketbook, "I must have another!"

"To whom?"

"To the king."

"To the king?"

"Yes."

"I dare not write to his majesty."

"I do not ask you to write to his majesty, but ask M. de Salvieux to do so. I want a letter that will enable me to reach the king's presence without all the formalities of demanding an audience; that would occasion a loss of precious time."

"But address yourself to the keeper of the seals; he has the right of entry at the Tuileries, and can procure you audience at any hour of the day or night."

"Doubtless; but there is no occasion to divide the honors of my discovery with him. The keeper would leave me in the background, and take all the glory to himself. I tell you, marquis, my fortune is made if I only reach the Tuileries the first, for the king will not forget the service I do him."

"In that case go and get ready. I will call Salvieux and make him write the letter."

"Be as quick as possible, I must be on the road in a quarter of an hour."

"Tell your coachman to stop at the door."

"You will present my excuses to the marquise and Mademoiselle Renée,

whom I leave on such a day with great regret.”

“You will find them both here, and can make your farewells in person.”

“A thousand thanks—and now for the letter.”

The marquis rang, a servant entered.

“Say to the Comte de Salvieux that I would like to see him.”

“Now, then, go,” said the marquis.

“I shall be gone only a few moments.”

Villefort hastily quitted the apartment, but reflecting that the sight of the deputy procureur running through the streets would be enough to throw the whole city into confusion, he resumed his ordinary pace. At his door he perceived a figure in the shadow that seemed to wait for him. It was Mercédès, who, hearing no news of her lover, had come unobserved to inquire after him.

As Villefort drew near, she advanced and stood before him. Dantès had spoken of Mercédès, and Villefort instantly recognized her. Her beauty and high bearing surprised him, and when she inquired what had become of her lover, it seemed to him that she was the judge, and he the accused.

“The young man you speak of,” said Villefort abruptly, “is a great criminal, and I can do nothing for him, mademoiselle.” Mercédès burst into tears, and, as Villefort strove to pass her, again addressed him.

“But, at least, tell me where he is, that I may know whether he is alive or dead,” said she.

0125m

“I do not know; he is no longer in my hands,” replied Villefort.

And desirous of putting an end to the interview, he pushed by her, and closed the door, as if to exclude the pain he felt. But remorse is not thus banished; like Virgil’s wounded hero, he carried the arrow in his wound, and, arrived at the salon, Villefort uttered a sigh that was almost a sob, and sank into a chair.

Then the first pangs of an unending torture seized upon his heart. The man he sacrificed to his ambition, that innocent victim immolated on the altar of his father’s faults, appeared to him pale and threatening, leading his affianced bride by the hand, and bringing with him remorse, not such as the ancients figured, furious and terrible, but that slow and consuming agony whose pangs are intensified from hour to hour up to the very moment of death. Then he had a moment’s hesitation. He had frequently called for capital punishment on criminals, and owing to his irresistible eloquence they had been condemned, and

yet the slightest shadow of remorse had never clouded Villefort's brow, because they were guilty; at least, he believed so; but here was an innocent man whose happiness he had destroyed. In this case he was not the judge, but the executioner.

As he thus reflected, he felt the sensation we have described, and which had hitherto been unknown to him, arise in his bosom, and fill him with vague apprehensions. It is thus that a wounded man trembles instinctively at the approach of the finger to his wound until it be healed, but Villefort's was one of those that never close, or if they do, only close to reopen more agonizing than ever. If at this moment the sweet voice of Renée had sounded in his ears pleading for mercy, or the fair Mercédès had entered and said, "In the name of God, I conjure you to restore me my affianced husband," his cold and trembling hands would have signed his release; but no voice broke the stillness of the chamber, and the door was opened only by Villefort's valet, who came to tell him that the travelling carriage was in readiness.

Villefort rose, or rather sprang, from his chair, hastily opened one of the drawers of his desk, emptied all the gold it contained into his pocket, stood motionless an instant, his hand pressed to his head, muttered a few inarticulate sounds, and then, perceiving that his servant had placed his cloak on his shoulders, he sprang into the carriage, ordering the postilions to drive to M. de Saint-Méran's. The hapless Dantès was doomed.

As the marquis had promised, Villefort found the marquise and Renée in waiting. He started when he saw Renée, for he fancied she was again about to plead for Dantès. Alas, her emotions were wholly personal: she was thinking only of Villefort's departure.

She loved Villefort, and he left her at the moment he was about to become her husband. Villefort knew not when he should return, and Renée, far from pleading for Dantès, hated the man whose crime separated her from her lover.

0127m

Meanwhile what of Mercédès? She had met Fernand at the corner of the Rue de la Loge; she had returned to the Catalans, and had despairingly cast herself on her couch. Fernand, kneeling by her side, took her hand, and covered it with kisses that Mercédès did not even feel. She passed the night thus. The lamp went out for want of oil, but she paid no heed to the darkness, and dawn came, but she knew not that it was day. Grief had made her blind to all but one object—that was Edmond.

"Ah, you are there," said she, at length, turning towards Fernand.

"I have not quitted you since yesterday," returned Fernand sorrowfully.

M. Morrel had not readily given up the fight. He had learned that Dantès had been taken to prison, and he had gone to all his friends, and the influential persons of the city; but the report was already in circulation that Dantès was arrested as a Bonapartist agent; and as the most sanguine looked upon any attempt of Napoleon to remount the throne as impossible, he met with nothing but refusal, and had returned home in despair, declaring that the matter was serious and that nothing more could be done.

Caderousse was equally restless and uneasy, but instead of seeking, like M. Morrel, to aid Dantès, he had shut himself up with two bottles of black currant brandy, in the hope of drowning reflection. But he did not succeed, and became too intoxicated to fetch any more drink, and yet not so intoxicated as to forget what had happened. With his elbows on the table he sat between the two empty bottles, while spectres danced in the light of the unsnuffed candle—spectres such as Hoffmann strews over his punch-drenched pages, like black, fantastic dust.

Danglars alone was content and joyous—he had got rid of an enemy and made his own situation on the *Pharaon* secure. Danglars was one of those men born with a pen behind the ear, and an inkstand in place of a heart. Everything with him was multiplication or subtraction. The life of a man was to him of far less value than a numeral, especially when, by taking it away, he could increase the sum total of his own desires. He went to bed at his usual hour, and slept in peace.

Villefort, after having received M. de Salvieux's letter, embraced Renée, kissed the marquise's hand, and shaken that of the marquis, started for Paris along the Aix road.

Old Dantès was dying with anxiety to know what had become of Edmond. But we know very well what had become of Edmond.

Chapter 10. The King's Closet at the Tuilleries

We will leave Villefort on the road to Paris, travelling—thanks to trebled fees—with all speed, and passing through two or three apartments, enter at the Tuilleries the little room with the arched window, so well known as having been the favorite closet of Napoleon and Louis XVIII., and now of Louis Philippe.

There, seated before a walnut table he had brought with him from Hartwell, and to which, from one of those fancies not uncommon to great people, he was particularly attached, the king, Louis XVIII., was carelessly listening to a man of fifty or fifty-two years of age, with gray hair, aristocratic bearing, and exceedingly gentlemanly attire, and meanwhile making a marginal note in a volume of Gryphius's rather inaccurate, but much sought-after, edition of Horace—a work which was much indebted to the sagacious observations of the philosophical monarch.

"You say, sir——" said the king.

"That I am exceedingly disquieted, sire."

"Really, have you had a vision of the seven fat kine and the seven lean kine?"

"No, sire, for that would only betoken for us seven years of plenty and seven years of scarcity; and with a king as full of foresight as your majesty, scarcity is not a thing to be feared."

"Then of what other scourge are you afraid, my dear Blacas?"

"Sire, I have every reason to believe that a storm is brewing in the south."

"Well, my dear duke," replied Louis XVIII., "I think you are wrongly informed, and know positively that, on the contrary, it is very fine weather in that direction." Man of ability as he was, Louis XVIII. liked a pleasant jest.

"Sire," continued M. de Blacas, "if it only be to reassure a faithful servant, will your majesty send into Languedoc, Provence, and Dauphiné, trusty men, who will bring you back a faithful report as to the feeling in these three provinces?"

"*Canimus surdis,*" replied the king, continuing the annotations in his Horace.

"Sire," replied the courtier, laughing, in order that he might seem to comprehend the quotation, "your majesty may be perfectly right in relying on

the good feeling of France, but I fear I am not altogether wrong in dreading some desperate attempt."

"By whom?"

"By Bonaparte, or, at least, by his adherents."

"My dear Blacas," said the king, "you with your alarms prevent me from working."

"And you, sire, prevent me from sleeping with your security."

"Wait, my dear sir, wait a moment; for I have such a delightful note on the *Pastor quum traheret*—wait, and I will listen to you afterwards."

There was a brief pause, during which Louis XVIII. wrote, in a hand as small as possible, another note on the margin of his Horace, and then looking at the duke with the air of a man who thinks he has an idea of his own, while he is only commenting upon the idea of another, said:

"Go on, my dear duke, go on—I listen."

"Sire," said Blacas, who had for a moment the hope of sacrificing Villefort to his own profit, "I am compelled to tell you that these are not mere rumors destitute of foundation which thus disquiet me; but a serious-minded man, deserving all my confidence, and charged by me to watch over the south" (the duke hesitated as he pronounced these words), "has arrived by post to tell me that a great peril threatens the king, and so I hastened to you, sire."

"*Mala ducis avi domum*," continued Louis XVIII., still annotating.

"Does your majesty wish me to drop the subject?"

"By no means, my dear duke; but just stretch out your hand."

"Which?"

"Whichever you please—there to the left."

"Here, sire?"

"I tell you to the left, and you are looking to the right; I mean on my left—yes, there. You will find yesterday's report of the minister of police. But here is M. Dandr  himself;" and M. Dandr , announced by the chamberlain-in-waiting, entered.

"Come in," said Louis XVIII., with repressed smile, "come in, Baron, and tell the duke all you know—the latest news of M. de Bonaparte; do not conceal anything, however serious,—let us see, the Island of Elba is a volcano, and we may expect to have issuing thence flaming and bristling war—*bella, horrida bella.*"

M. Dandré leaned very respectfully on the back of a chair with his two hands, and said:

“Has your majesty perused yesterday’s report?”

“Yes, yes; but tell the duke himself, who cannot find anything, what the report contains—give him the particulars of what the usurper is doing in his islet.”

“Monsieur,” said the baron to the duke, “all the servants of his majesty must approve of the latest intelligence which we have from the Island of Elba. Bonaparte——”

M. Dandré looked at Louis XVIII., who, employed in writing a note, did not even raise his head. “Bonaparte,” continued the baron, “is mortally wearied, and passes whole days in watching his miners at work at Porto-Longone.”

“And scratches himself for amusement,” added the king.

“Scratches himself?” inquired the duke, “what does your majesty mean?”

“Yes, indeed, my dear duke. Did you forget that this great man, this hero, this demigod, is attacked with a malady of the skin which worries him to death, *prurigo?*”

“And, moreover, my dear duke,” continued the minister of police, “we are almost assured that, in a very short time, the usurper will be insane.”

“Insane?”

“Raving mad; his head becomes weaker. Sometimes he weeps bitterly, sometimes laughs boisterously, at other time he passes hours on the seashore, flinging stones in the water and when the flint makes ‘duck-and-drake’ five or six times, he appears as delighted as if he had gained another Marengo or Austerlitz. Now, you must agree that these are indubitable symptoms of insanity.”

“Or of wisdom, my dear baron—or of wisdom,” said Louis XVIII., laughing; “the greatest captains of antiquity amused themselves by casting pebbles into the ocean—see Plutarch’s life of Scipio Africanus.”

M. de Blacas pondered deeply between the confident monarch and the truthful minister. Villefort, who did not choose to reveal the whole secret, lest another should reap all the benefit of the disclosure, had yet communicated enough to cause him the greatest uneasiness.

“Well, well, Dandré,” said Louis XVIII., “Blacas is not yet convinced; let us proceed, therefore, to the usurper’s conversion.” The minister of police bowed.

“The usurper’s conversion!” murmured the duke, looking at the king and Dandré, who spoke alternately, like Virgil’s shepherds. “The usurper converted!”

“Decidedly, my dear duke.”

“In what way converted?”

“To good principles. Tell him all about it, baron.”

“Why, this is the way of it,” said the minister, with the gravest air in the world: “Napoleon lately had a review, and as two or three of his old veterans expressed a desire to return to France, he gave them their dismissal, and exhorted them to ‘serve the good king.’ These were his own words, of that I am certain.”

“Well, Blacas, what think you of this?” inquired the king triumphantly, and pausing for a moment from the voluminous scholiast before him.

“I say, sire, that the minister of police is greatly deceived or I am; and as it is impossible it can be the minister of police as he has the guardianship of the safety and honor of your majesty, it is probable that I am in error. However, sire, if I might advise, your majesty will interrogate the person of whom I spoke to you, and I will urge your majesty to do him this honor.”

“Most willingly, duke; under your auspices I will receive any person you please, but you must not expect me to be too confiding. Baron, have you any report more recent than this, dated the 20th February, and this is the 3rd of March?”

“No, sire, but I am hourly expecting one; it may have arrived since I left my office.”

“Go thither, and if there be none—well, well,” continued Louis XVIII., “make one; that is the usual way, is it not?” and the king laughed facetiously.

“Oh, sire,” replied the minister, “we have no occasion to invent any; every day our desks are loaded with most circumstantial denunciations, coming from hosts of people who hope for some return for services which they seek to render, but cannot; they trust to fortune, and rely upon some unexpected event in some way to justify their predictions.”

“Well, sir, go”; said Louis XVIII., “and remember that I am waiting for you.”

“I will but go and return, sire; I shall be back in ten minutes.”

“And I, sire,” said M. de Blacas, “will go and find my messenger.”

“Wait, sir, wait,” said Louis XVIII. “Really, M. de Blacas, I must change your armorial bearings; I will give you an eagle with outstretched wings, holding in its claws a prey which tries in vain to escape, and bearing this device—*Tenax*.”

“Sire, I listen,” said De Blacas, biting his nails with impatience.

“I wish to consult you on this passage, ‘*Molli fugiens anhelitu*,’ you know it refers to a stag flying from a wolf. Are you not a sportsman and a great wolf-hunter? Well, then, what do you think of the *molli anhelitu*? ”

“Admirable, sire; but my messenger is like the stag you refer to, for he has posted two hundred and twenty leagues in scarcely three days.”

“Which is undergoing great fatigue and anxiety, my dear duke, when we have a telegraph which transmits messages in three or four hours, and that without getting in the least out of breath.”

“Ah, sire, you recompense but badly this poor young man, who has come so far, and with so much ardor, to give your majesty useful information. If only for the sake of M. de Salvieux, who recommends him to me, I entreat your majesty to receive him graciously.”

“M. de Salvieux, my brother’s chamberlain?”

“Yes, sire.”

“He is at Marseilles.”

“And writes me thence.”

“Does he speak to you of this conspiracy?”

“No; but strongly recommends M. de Villefort, and begs me to present him to your majesty.”

“M. de Villefort!” cried the king, “is the messenger’s name M. de Villefort?”

“Yes, sire.”

“And he comes from Marseilles?”

“In person.”

“Why did you not mention his name at once?” replied the king, betraying some uneasiness.

“Sire, I thought his name was unknown to your majesty.”

“No, no, Blacas; he is a man of strong and elevated understanding, ambitious, too, and, *pardieu!* you know his father’s name!”

“His father?”

“Yes, Noirtier.”

“Noirtier the Girondin?—Noirtier the senator?”

“He himself.”

“And your majesty has employed the son of such a man?”

“Blacas, my friend, you have but limited comprehension. I told you Villefort was ambitious, and to attain this ambition Villefort would sacrifice everything, even his father.”

“Then, sire, may I present him?”

“This instant, duke! Where is he?”

“Waiting below, in my carriage.”

“Seek him at once.”

“I hasten to do so.”

The duke left the royal presence with the speed of a young man; his really sincere royalism made him youthful again. Louis XVIII. remained alone, and turning his eyes on his half-opened Horace, muttered:

“Justum et tenacem propositi virum.”

M. de Blacas returned as speedily as he had departed, but in the antechamber he was forced to appeal to the king’s authority. Villefort’s dusty garb, his costume, which was not of courtly cut, excited the susceptibility of M. de Brezé, who was all astonishment at finding that this young man had the audacity to enter before the king in such attire. The duke, however, overcame all difficulties with a word—his majesty’s order; and, in spite of the protestations which the master of ceremonies made for the honor of his office and principles, Villefort was introduced.

The king was seated in the same place where the duke had left him. On opening the door, Villefort found himself facing him, and the young magistrate’s first impulse was to pause.

“Come in, M. de Villefort,” said the king, “come in.”

Villefort bowed, and advancing a few steps, waited until the king should interrogate him.

“M. de Villefort,” said Louis XVIII., “the Duc de Blacas assures me you have some interesting information to communicate.”

“Sire, the duke is right, and I believe your majesty will think it equally important.”

0137m

“In the first place, and before everything else, sir, is the news as bad in your opinion as I am asked to believe?”

“Sire, I believe it to be most urgent, but I hope, by the speed I have used, that it is not irreparable.”

"Speak as fully as you please, sir," said the king, who began to give way to the emotion which had showed itself in Blacas's face and affected Villefort's voice. "Speak, sir, and pray begin at the beginning; I like order in everything."

"Sire," said Villefort, "I will render a faithful report to your majesty, but I must entreat your forgiveness if my anxiety leads to some obscurity in my language." A glance at the king after this discreet and subtle exordium, assured Villefort of the benignity of his august auditor, and he went on:

"Sire, I have come as rapidly to Paris as possible, to inform your majesty that I have discovered, in the exercise of my duties, not a commonplace and insignificant plot, such as is every day got up in the lower ranks of the people and in the army, but an actual conspiracy—a storm which menaces no less than your majesty's throne. Sire, the usurper is arming three ships, he meditates some project, which, however mad, is yet, perhaps, terrible. At this moment he will have left Elba, to go whither I know not, but assuredly to attempt a landing either at Naples, or on the coast of Tuscany, or perhaps on the shores of France. Your majesty is well aware that the sovereign of the Island of Elba has maintained his relations with Italy and France?"

"I am, sir," said the king, much agitated; "and recently we have had information that the Bonapartist clubs have had meetings in the Rue Saint-Jacques. But proceed, I beg of you. How did you obtain these details?"

"Sire, they are the results of an examination which I have made of a man of Marseilles, whom I have watched for some time, and arrested on the day of my departure. This person, a sailor, of turbulent character, and whom I suspected of Bonapartism, has been secretly to the Island of Elba. There he saw the grand-marshall, who charged him with an oral message to a Bonapartist in Paris, whose name I could not extract from him; but this mission was to prepare men's minds for a return (it is the man who says this, sire)—a return which will soon occur."

"And where is this man?"

"In prison, sire."

"And the matter seems serious to you?"

"So serious, sire, that when the circumstance surprised me in the midst of a family festival, on the very day of my betrothal, I left my bride and friends, postponing everything, that I might hasten to lay at your majesty's feet the fears which impressed me, and the assurance of my devotion."

"True," said Louis XVIII., "was there not a marriage engagement between you and Mademoiselle de Saint-Méran?"

“Daughter of one of your majesty’s most faithful servants.”

“Yes, yes; but let us talk of this plot, M. de Villefort.”

“Sire, I fear it is more than a plot; I fear it is a conspiracy.”

“A conspiracy in these times,” said Louis XVIII., smiling, “is a thing very easy to meditate, but more difficult to conduct to an end, inasmuch as, re-established so recently on the throne of our ancestors, we have our eyes open at once upon the past, the present, and the future. For the last ten months my ministers have redoubled their vigilance, in order to watch the shore of the Mediterranean. If Bonaparte landed at Naples, the whole coalition would be on foot before he could even reach Piombino; if he land in Tuscany, he will be in an unfriendly territory; if he land in France, it must be with a handful of men, and the result of that is easily foretold, execrated as he is by the population. Take courage, sir; but at the same time rely on our royal gratitude.”

“Ah, here is M. Dandré!” cried de Blacas. At this instant the minister of police appeared at the door, pale, trembling, and as if ready to faint. Villefort was about to retire, but M. de Blacas, taking his hand, restrained him.

Chapter 11. The Corsican Ogre

At the sight of this agitation Louis XVIII. pushed from him violently the table at which he was sitting.

“What ails you, baron?” he exclaimed. “You appear quite aghast. Has your uneasiness anything to do with what M. de Blacas has told me, and M. de Villefort has just confirmed?” M. de Blacas moved suddenly towards the baron, but the fright of the courtier pleaded for the forbearance of the statesman; and besides, as matters were, it was much more to his advantage that the prefect of police should triumph over him than that he should humiliate the prefect.

“Sire,—” stammered the baron.

“Well, what is it?” asked Louis XVIII. The minister of police, giving way to an impulse of despair, was about to throw himself at the feet of Louis XVIII., who retreated a step and frowned.

“Will you speak?” he said.

“Oh, sire, what a dreadful misfortune! I am, indeed, to be pitied. I can never forgive myself!”

“Monsieur,” said Louis XVIII., “I command you to speak.”

“Well, sire, the usurper left Elba on the 26th February, and landed on the 1st of March.”

“And where? In Italy?” asked the king eagerly.

“In France, sire,—at a small port, near Antibes, in the Gulf of Juan.”

“The usurper landed in France, near Antibes, in the Gulf of Juan, two hundred and fifty leagues from Paris, on the 1st of March, and you only acquired this information today, the 3rd of March! Well, sir, what you tell me is impossible. You must have received a false report, or you have gone mad.”

“Alas, sire, it is but too true!” Louis made a gesture of indescribable anger and alarm, and then drew himself up as if this sudden blow had struck him at the same moment in heart and countenance.

“In France!” he cried, “the usurper in France! Then they did not watch over this man. Who knows? they were, perhaps, in league with him.”

"Oh, sire," exclaimed the Duc de Blacas, "M. Dandré is not a man to be accused of treason! Sire, we have all been blind, and the minister of police has shared the general blindness, that is all."

"But——" said Villefort, and then suddenly checking himself, he was silent; then he continued, "Your pardon, sire," he said, bowing, "my zeal carried me away. Will your majesty deign to excuse me?"

"Speak, sir, speak boldly," replied Louis. "You alone forewarned us of the evil; now try and aid us with the remedy."

"Sire," said Villefort, "the usurper is detested in the south; and it seems to me that if he ventured into the south, it would be easy to raise Languedoc and Provence against him."

"Yes, assuredly," replied the minister; "but he is advancing by Gap and Sisteron."

"Advancing—he is advancing!" said Louis XVIII. "Is he then advancing on Paris?" The minister of police maintained a silence which was equivalent to a complete avowal.

"And Dauphiné, sir?" inquired the king, of Villefort. "Do you think it possible to rouse that as well as Provence?"

"Sire, I am sorry to tell your majesty a cruel fact; but the feeling in Dauphiné is quite the reverse of that in Provence or Languedoc. The mountaineers are Bonapartists, sire."

"Then," murmured Louis, "he was well informed. And how many men had he with him?"

"I do not know, sire," answered the minister of police.

"What, you do not know! Have you neglected to obtain information on that point? Of course it is of no consequence," he added, with a withering smile.

"Sire, it was impossible to learn; the despatch simply stated the fact of the landing and the route taken by the usurper."

"And how did this despatch reach you?" inquired the king. The minister bowed his head, and while a deep color overspread his cheeks, he stammered out:

"By the telegraph, sire." Louis XVIII. advanced a step, and folded his arms over his chest as Napoleon would have done.

armies overthrew that man. A miracle of heaven replaced me on the throne of my fathers after five-and-twenty years of exile. I have, during those five-and-twenty years, spared no pains to understand the people of France and the interests which were confided to me; and now, when I see the fruition of my wishes almost within reach, the power I hold in my hands bursts and shatters me to atoms!"

"Sire, it is fatality!" murmured the minister, feeling that the pressure of circumstances, however light a thing to destiny, was too much for any human strength to endure.

"What our enemies say of us is then true. We have learnt nothing, forgotten nothing! If I were betrayed as he was, I would console myself; but to be in the midst of persons elevated by myself to places of honor, who ought to watch over me more carefully than over themselves,—for my fortune is theirs—before me they were nothing—after me they will be nothing, and perish miserably from incapacity—ineptitude! Oh, yes, sir, you are right—it is fatality!"

The minister quailed before this outburst of sarcasm. M. de Blacas wiped the moisture from his brow. Villefort smiled within himself, for he felt his increased importance.

"To fall," continued King Louis, who at the first glance had sounded the abyss on which the monarchy hung suspended,—"to fall, and learn of that fall by telegraph! Oh, I would rather mount the scaffold of my brother, Louis XVI., than thus descend the staircase at the Tuilleries driven away by ridicule. Ridicule, sir—why, you know not its power in France, and yet you ought to know it!"

"Sire, sire," murmured the minister, "for pity's——"

"Approach, M. de Villefort," resumed the king, addressing the young man, who, motionless and breathless, was listening to a conversation on which depended the destiny of a kingdom. "Approach, and tell monsieur that it is possible to know beforehand all that he has not known."

"Sire, it was really impossible to learn secrets which that man concealed from all the world."

"Really impossible! Yes—that is a great word, sir. Unfortunately, there are great words, as there are great men; I have measured them. Really impossible for a minister who has an office, agents, spies, and fifteen hundred thousand francs for secret service money, to know what is going on at sixty leagues from the coast of France! Well, then, see, here is a gentleman who had none of these resources at his disposal—a gentleman, only a simple magistrate, who learned more than you with all your police, and who would have saved my crown, if,

like you, he had the power of directing a telegraph." The look of the minister of police was turned with concentrated spite on Villefort, who bent his head in modest triumph.

"I do not mean that for you, Blacas," continued Louis XVIII.; "for if you have discovered nothing, at least you have had the good sense to persevere in your suspicions. Any other than yourself would have considered the disclosure of M. de Villefort insignificant, or else dictated by venal ambition." These words were an allusion to the sentiments which the minister of police had uttered with so much confidence an hour before.

Villefort understood the king's intent. Any other person would, perhaps, have been overcome by such an intoxicating draught of praise; but he feared to make for himself a mortal enemy of the police minister, although he saw that Dandré was irrevocably lost. In fact, the minister, who, in the plenitude of his power, had been unable to unearth Napoleon's secret, might in despair at his own downfall interrogate Dantès and so lay bare the motives of Villefort's plot. Realizing this, Villefort came to the rescue of the crest-fallen minister, instead of aiding to crush him.

"Sire," said Villefort, "the suddenness of this event must prove to your majesty that the issue is in the hands of Providence; what your majesty is pleased to attribute to me as profound perspicacity is simply owing to chance, and I have profited by that chance, like a good and devoted servant—that's all. Do not attribute to me more than I deserve, sire, that your majesty may never have occasion to recall the first opinion you have been pleased to form of me." The minister of police thanked the young man by an eloquent look, and Villefort understood that he had succeeded in his design; that is to say, that without forfeiting the gratitude of the king, he had made a friend of one on whom, in case of necessity, he might rely.

"'Tis well," resumed the king. "And now, gentlemen," he continued, turning towards M. de Blacas and the minister of police, "I have no further occasion for you, and you may retire; what now remains to do is in the department of the minister of war."

"Fortunately, sire," said M. de Blacas, "we can rely on the army; your majesty knows how every report confirms their loyalty and attachment."

"Do not mention reports, duke, to me, for I know now what confidence to place in them. Yet, speaking of reports, baron, what have you learned with regard to the affair in the Rue Saint-Jacques?"

"The affair in the Rue Saint-Jacques!" exclaimed Villefort, unable to repress

an exclamation. Then, suddenly pausing, he added, "Your pardon, sire, but my devotion to your majesty has made me forget, not the respect I have, for that is too deeply engraved in my heart, but the rules of etiquette."

"Go on, go on, sir," replied the king; "you have today earned the right to make inquiries here."

"Sire," interposed the minister of police, "I came a moment ago to give your majesty fresh information which I had obtained on this head, when your majesty's attention was attracted by the terrible event that has occurred in the gulf, and now these facts will cease to interest your majesty."

"On the contrary, sir,—on the contrary," said Louis XVIII., "this affair seems to me to have a decided connection with that which occupies our attention, and the death of General Quesnel will, perhaps, put us on the direct track of a great internal conspiracy." At the name of General Quesnel, Villefort trembled.

"Everything points to the conclusion, sire," said the minister of police, "that death was not the result of suicide, as we first believed, but of assassination. General Quesnel, it appears, had just left a Bonapartist club when he disappeared. An unknown person had been with him that morning, and made an appointment with him in the Rue Saint-Jacques; unfortunately, the general's valet, who was dressing his hair at the moment when the stranger entered, heard the street mentioned, but did not catch the number." As the police minister related this to the king, Villefort, who looked as if his very life hung on the speaker's lips, turned alternately red and pale. The king looked towards him.

"Do you not think with me, M. de Villefort, that General Quesnel, whom they believed attached to the usurper, but who was really entirely devoted to me, has perished the victim of a Bonapartist ambush?"

"It is probable, sire," replied Villefort. "But is this all that is known?"

"They are on the track of the man who appointed the meeting with him."

"On his track?" said Villefort.

"Yes, the servant has given his description. He is a man of from fifty to fifty-two years of age, dark, with black eyes covered with shaggy eyebrows, and a thick moustache. He was dressed in a blue frock-coat, buttoned up to the chin, and wore at his button-hole the rosette of an officer of the Legion of Honor. Yesterday a person exactly corresponding with this description was followed, but he was lost sight of at the corner of the Rue de la Jussienne and the Rue Coq-Héron." Villefort leaned on the back of an armchair, for as the minister of police went on speaking he felt his legs bend under him; but when he learned that the unknown had escaped the vigilance of the agent who followed him, he breathed

again.

“Continue to seek for this man, sir,” said the king to the minister of police; “for if, as I am all but convinced, General Quesnel, who would have been so useful to us at this moment, has been murdered, his assassins, Bonapartists or not, shall be cruelly punished.” It required all Villefort’s coolness not to betray the terror with which this declaration of the king inspired him.

“How strange,” continued the king, with some asperity; “the police think that they have disposed of the whole matter when they say, ‘A murder has been committed,’ and especially so when they can add, ‘And we are on the track of the guilty persons.’”

“Sire, your majesty will, I trust, be amply satisfied on this point at least.”

“We shall see. I will no longer detain you, M. de Villefort, for you must be fatigued after so long a journey; go and rest. Of course you stopped at your father’s?” A feeling of faintness came over Villefort.

0145m

“No, sire,” he replied, “I alighted at the Hotel de Madrid, in the Rue de Tournon.”

“But you have seen him?”

“Sire, I went straight to the Duc de Blacas.”

“But you will see him, then?”

“I think not, sire.”

“Ah, I forgot,” said Louis, smiling in a manner which proved that all these questions were not made without a motive; “I forgot you and M. Noirtier are not on the best terms possible, and that is another sacrifice made to the royal cause, and for which you should be recompensed.”

“Sire, the kindness your majesty deigns to evince towards me is a recompense which so far surpasses my utmost ambition that I have nothing more to ask for.”

“Never mind, sir, we will not forget you; make your mind easy. In the meanwhile” (the king here detached the cross of the Legion of Honor which he usually wore over his blue coat, near the cross of St. Louis, above the order of Notre-Dame-du-Mont-Carmel and St. Lazare, and gave it to Villefort)—“in the meanwhile take this cross.”

“Sire,” said Villefort, “your majesty mistakes; this is an officer’s cross.”

“*Ma foi!*” said Louis XVIII., “take it, such as it is, for I have not the time to procure you another. Blacas, let it be your care to see that the brevet is made out

and sent to M. de Villefort.” Villefort’s eyes were filled with tears of joy and pride; he took the cross and kissed it.

“And now,” he said, “may I inquire what are the orders with which your majesty deigns to honor me?”

“Take what rest you require, and remember that if you are not able to serve me here in Paris, you may be of the greatest service to me at Marseilles.”

“Sire,” replied Villefort, bowing, “in an hour I shall have quitted Paris.”

“Go, sir,” said the king; “and should I forget you (kings’ memories are short), do not be afraid to bring yourself to my recollection. Baron, send for the minister of war. Blacas, remain.”

“Ah, sir,” said the minister of police to Villefort, as they left the Tuileries, “you entered by luck’s door—your fortune is made.”

“Will it be long first?” muttered Villefort, saluting the minister, whose career was ended, and looking about him for a hackney-coach. One passed at the moment, which he hailed; he gave his address to the driver, and springing in, threw himself on the seat, and gave loose to dreams of ambition.

Ten minutes afterwards Villefort reached his hotel, ordered horses to be ready in two hours, and asked to have his breakfast brought to him. He was about to begin his repast when the sound of the bell rang sharp and loud. The valet opened the door, and Villefort heard someone speak his name.

0147m

“Who could know that I was here already?” said the young man. The valet entered.

“Well,” said Villefort, “what is it?—Who rang?—Who asked for me?”

“A stranger who will not send in his name.”

“A stranger who will not send in his name! What can he want with me?”

“He wishes to speak to you.”

“To me?”

“Yes.”

“Did he mention my name?”

“Yes.”

“What sort of person is he?”

“Why, sir, a man of about fifty.”

“Short or tall?”

“About your own height, sir.”

“Dark or fair?”

“Dark,—very dark; with black eyes, black hair, black eyebrows.”

“And how dressed?” asked Villefort quickly.

“In a blue frock-coat, buttoned up close, decorated with the Legion of Honor.”

“It is he!” said Villefort, turning pale.

0148m

“Eh, *pardieu!*” said the individual whose description we have twice given, entering the door, “what a great deal of ceremony! Is it the custom in Marseilles for sons to keep their 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 Gérard, 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 Gérard,” 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 Gérard, 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 Robespierre’s 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 o'clock 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." Villefort's 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 didn't 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, that's 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 usurper’s 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 Gérard, 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-Héron.”

“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 son’s, 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, Gérard; 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 Gérard, 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 Gérard, 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 king's 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 Villefort's influence barely enabled him to stifle the secret Dantès had so nearly divulged. The king's 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 Dantès.

Villefort retained his place, but his marriage was put off until a more favorable

opportunity. If the emperor remained on the throne, Gérard required a different alliance to aid his career; if Louis XVIII. returned, the influence of M. de Saint-Méran, 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 king's 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 Villefort's 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?”

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

“Edmond Dantès.”

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.

“Dantès,” repeated he, “Edmond Dantès.”

“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 other’s 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-Marguérite 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 man’s 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. Dantès 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. Dantès must be crushed to gratify Villefort’s ambition.

Villefort dictated a petition, in which, from an excellent intention, no doubt, Dantès’ patriotic services were exaggerated, and he was made out one of the most active agents of Napoleon’s 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 Dantès that he would soon see his son.

As for Villefort, instead of sending to Paris, he carefully preserved the petition that so fearfully compromised Dantès, in the hopes of an event that seemed not unlikely,—that is, a second restoration. Dantès 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 king’s procureur at Toulouse, and a fortnight afterwards he married Mademoiselle de Saint-Méran, whose father now stood higher at court than ever.

And so Dantès, 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 Dantès; 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 Dantès' 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 Napoleon's return. He then left for Madrid, and was no more heard of.

Fernand understood nothing except that Dantès 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 Mercédès 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. Fernand's mind was made up; he would shoot Dantès, 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 Mercédès. Had Fernand really meant to kill himself, he would have done so when he parted from Mercédès. His devotion, and the compassion he showed for her misfortunes, produced the effect they always produce on noble minds—Mercédès 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 Fernand's heart. Should Dantès not return, Mercédès might one day be his.

0165m

Mercédès 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 Dantès, who was only sustained by hope, lost all hope at Napoleon's downfall. Five months after he had been separated from his son, and almost at the hour of his arrest, he breathed his last in Mercédès' 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 Dantès, 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. Dantès 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 inspector's 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, Dantès, 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. Dantès 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 don't know; it's 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 Dantès. "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 Dantès, "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 Dantès, "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 Dantès, "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."

Dantès fell on his knees, and prayed earnestly. The door closed; but this time a fresh inmate was left with Dantès—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 Abbé 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 abbé*, 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 abbé 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 abbé; "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 Abbé 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 Abbé 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 Cæsar 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 abbé, “although you have disturbed me in a most important calculation, which, if it succeeded, would possibly change Newton’s 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 abbé, “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 abbé, “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 abbé's eyes glistened; he seized the inspector's 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 abbé'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 abbé. "You will not accept my gold; I will keep it for myself. You refuse me my liberty; God will give it me." And the abbé, 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 Abbé 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 Abbé Faria, gone mad in prison, condemned him to perpetual captivity.

The inspector kept his word with Dantès; he examined the register, and found the following note concerning him:

Edmond Dantès:

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 Dantès; 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—Dantès 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 Dantès began to fancy the inspector's 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 Dantès' 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 Dantès—he was now number 34.

Chapter 15. Number 34 and Number 27

Dantès 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 governor's 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.

Dantès 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. Dantès 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, Dantès' 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 abbé. 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 Dantès wished to conspire or attempt an escape, and refused his request. Dantès had exhausted all human resources, and he then turned to God.

All the pious ideas that had been so long forgotten, returned; he recollect ed 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, Dantès remained a prisoner.

Then gloom settled heavily upon him. Dantès 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 Martin's 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 reconsidered this idea, devoured it (so to speak), as the implacable Ugolino devours the skull of Archbishop Roger in the Inferno of Dante.

Rage supplanted religious fervor. Dantès uttered blasphemies that made his jailer recoil with horror, dashed himself furiously against the walls of his prison, wreaked his anger upon everything, and chiefly upon himself, so that the least thing,—a grain of sand, a straw, or a breath of air that annoyed him, led to paroxysms of fury. Then the letter that Villefort had showed to him recurred to his mind, and every line gleamed forth in fiery letters on the wall like the *mene, mene, tekel upharsin* of Belshazzar. He told himself that it was the enmity of man, and not the vengeance of Heaven, that had thus plunged him into the deepest misery. He consigned his unknown persecutors to the most horrible tortures he could imagine, and found them all insufficient, because after torture came death, and after death, if not repose, at least the boon of unconsciousness.

By dint of constantly dwelling on the idea that tranquillity was death, and if punishment were the end in view other tortures than death must be invented, he began to reflect on suicide. Unhappy he, who, on the brink of misfortune, broods over ideas like these!

Before him is a dead sea that stretches in azure calm before the eye; but he who unwarily ventures within its embrace finds himself struggling with a monster that would drag him down to perdition. Once thus ensnared, unless the protecting hand of God snatch him thence, all is over, and his struggles but tend to hasten his destruction. This state of mental anguish is, however, less terrible than the sufferings that precede or the punishment that possibly will follow. There is a sort of consolation at the contemplation of the yawning abyss, at the bottom of which lie darkness and obscurity.

Edmond found some solace in these ideas. All his sorrows, all his sufferings, with their train of gloomy spectres, fled from his cell when the angel of death seemed about to enter. Dantès reviewed his past life with composure, and, looking forward with terror to his future existence, chose that middle line that seemed to afford him a refuge.

“Sometimes,” said he, “in my voyages, when I was a man and commanded other men, I have seen the heavens overcast, the sea rage and foam, the storm arise, and, like a monstrous bird, beating the two horizons with its wings. Then I felt that my vessel was a vain refuge, that trembled and shook before the tempest. Soon the fury of the waves and the sight of the sharp rocks announced the approach of death, and death then terrified me, and I used all my skill and intelligence as a man and a sailor to struggle against the wrath of God. But I did so because I was happy, because I had not courted death, because to be cast upon a bed of rocks and seaweed seemed terrible, because I was unwilling that I, a creature made for the service of God, should serve for food to the gulls and ravens. But now it is different; I have lost all that bound me to life, death smiles and invites me to repose; I die after my own manner, I die exhausted and broken-spirited, as I fall asleep when I have paced three thousand times round my cell, —that is thirty thousand steps, or about ten leagues.”

No sooner had this idea taken possession of him than he became more composed, arranged his couch to the best of his power, ate little and slept less, and found existence almost supportable, because he felt that he could throw it off at pleasure, like a worn-out garment. Two methods of self-destruction were at his disposal. He could hang himself with his handkerchief to the window bars, or refuse food and die of starvation. But the first was repugnant to him. Dantès had always entertained the greatest horror of pirates, who are hung up to the yard-arm; he would not die by what seemed an infamous death. He resolved to adopt the second, and began that day to carry out his resolve.

Nearly four years had passed away; at the end of the second he had ceased to mark the lapse of time. Dantès said, "I wish to die," and had chosen the manner of his death, and fearful of changing his mind, he had taken an oath to die. "When my morning and evening meals are brought," thought he, "I will cast them out of the window, and they will think that I have eaten them."

He kept his word; twice a day he cast out, through the barred aperture, the provisions his jailer brought him—at first gayly, then with deliberation, and at last with regret. Nothing but the recollection of his oath gave him strength to proceed. Hunger made viands once repugnant, now acceptable; he held the plate in his hand for an hour at a time, and gazed thoughtfully at the morsel of bad meat, of tainted fish, of black and mouldy bread. It was the last yearning for life contending with the resolution of despair; then his dungeon seemed less sombre, his prospects less desperate. He was still young—he was only four or five-and-twenty—he had nearly fifty years to live. What unforeseen events might not open his prison door, and restore him to liberty? Then he raised to his lips the repast that, like a voluntary Tantalus, he refused himself; but he thought of his oath, and he would not break it. He persisted until, at last, he had not sufficient strength to rise and cast his supper out of the loophole. The next morning he could not see or hear; the jailer feared he was dangerously ill. Edmond hoped he was dying.

Thus the day passed away. Edmond felt a sort of stupor creeping over him which brought with it a feeling almost of content; the gnawing pain at his stomach had ceased; his thirst had abated; when he closed his eyes he saw myriads of lights dancing before them like the will-o'-the-wisps that play about the marshes. It was the twilight of that mysterious country called Death!

Suddenly, about nine o'clock in the evening, Edmond heard a hollow sound in the wall against which he was lying.

So many loathsome animals inhabited the prison, that their noise did not, in general, awake him; but whether abstinence had quickened his faculties, or whether the noise was really louder than usual, Edmond raised his head and listened. It was a continual scratching, as if made by a huge claw, a powerful tooth, or some iron instrument attacking the stones.

Although weakened, the young man's brain instantly responded to the idea that haunts all prisoners—liberty! It seemed to him that heaven had at length taken pity on him, and had sent this noise to warn him on the very brink of the abyss. Perhaps one of those beloved ones he had so often thought of was thinking of him, and striving to diminish the distance that separated them.

No, no, doubtless he was deceived, and it was but one of those dreams that

forerun death!

Edmond still heard the sound. It lasted nearly three hours; he then heard a noise of something falling, and all was silent.

Some hours afterwards it began again, nearer and more distinct. Edmond was intensely interested. Suddenly the jailer entered.

For a week since he had resolved to die, and during the four days that he had been carrying out his purpose, Edmond had not spoken to the attendant, had not answered him when he inquired what was the matter with him, and turned his face to the wall when he looked too curiously at him; but now the jailer might hear the noise and put an end to it, and so destroy a ray of something like hope that soothed his last moments.

The jailer brought him his breakfast. Dantès raised himself up and began to talk about everything; about the bad quality of the food, about the coldness of his dungeon, grumbling and complaining, in order to have an excuse for speaking louder, and wearying the patience of his jailer, who out of kindness of heart had brought broth and white bread for his prisoner.

Fortunately, he fancied that Dantès was delirious; and placing the food on the rickety table, he withdrew. Edmond listened, and the sound became more and more distinct.

"There can be no doubt about it," thought he; "it is some prisoner who is striving to obtain his freedom. Oh, if I were only there to help him!"

Suddenly another idea took possession of his mind, so used to misfortune, that it was scarcely capable of hope—the idea that the noise was made by workmen the governor had ordered to repair the neighboring dungeon.

It was easy to ascertain this; but how could he risk the question? It was easy to call his jailer's attention to the noise, and watch his countenance as he listened; but might he not by this means destroy hopes far more important than the short-lived satisfaction of his own curiosity? Unfortunately, Edmond's brain was still so feeble that he could not bend his thoughts to anything in particular. He saw but one means of restoring lucidity and clearness to his judgment. He turned his eyes towards the soup which the jailer had brought, rose, staggered towards it, raised the vessel to his lips, and drank off the contents with a feeling of indescribable pleasure.

He had the resolution to stop with this. He had often heard that shipwrecked persons had died through having eagerly devoured too much food. Edmond replaced on the table the bread he was about to devour, and returned to his couch—he did not wish to die. He soon felt that his ideas became again collected—he

could think, and strengthen his thoughts by reasoning. Then he said to himself:

"I must put this to the test, but without compromising anybody. If it is a workman, I need but knock against the wall, and he will cease to work, in order to find out who is knocking, and why he does so; but as his occupation is sanctioned by the governor, he will soon resume it. If, on the contrary, it is a prisoner, the noise I make will alarm him, he will cease, and not begin again until he thinks everyone is asleep."

Edmond rose again, but this time his legs did not tremble, and his sight was clear; he went to a corner of his dungeon, detached a stone, and with it knocked against the wall where the sound came. He struck thrice.

At the first blow the sound ceased, as if by magic.

Edmond listened intently; an hour passed, two hours passed, and no sound was heard from the wall—all was silent there.

Full of hope, Edmond swallowed a few mouthfuls of bread and water, and, thanks to the vigor of his constitution, found himself well-nigh recovered.

The day passed away in utter silence—night came without recurrence of the noise.

"It is a prisoner," said Edmond joyfully. His brain was on fire, and life and energy returned.

The night passed in perfect silence. Edmond did not close his eyes.

In the morning the jailer brought him fresh provisions—he had already devoured those of the previous day; he ate these listening anxiously for the sound, walking round and round his cell, shaking the iron bars of the loophole, restoring vigor and agility to his limbs by exercise, and so preparing himself for his future destiny. At intervals he listened to learn if the noise had not begun again, and grew impatient at the prudence of the prisoner, who did not guess he had been disturbed by a captive as anxious for liberty as himself.

Three days passed—seventy-two long tedious hours which he counted off by minutes!

At length one evening, as the jailer was visiting him for the last time that night, Dantès, with his ear for the hundredth time at the wall, fancied he heard an almost imperceptible movement among the stones. He moved away, walked up and down his cell to collect his thoughts, and then went back and listened.

The matter was no longer doubtful. Something was at work on the other side of the wall; the prisoner had discovered the danger, and had substituted a lever for a chisel.

Encouraged by this discovery, Edmond determined to assist the indefatigable laborer. He began by moving his bed, and looked around for anything with which he could pierce the wall, penetrate the moist cement, and displace a stone.

He saw nothing, he had no knife or sharp instrument, the window grating was of iron, but he had too often assured himself of its solidity. All his furniture consisted of a bed, a chair, a table, a pail, and a jug. The bed had iron clamps, but they were screwed to the wood, and it would have required a screw-driver to take them off. The table and chair had nothing, the pail had once possessed a handle, but that had been removed.

0189m

Dantès had but one resource, which was to break the jug, and with one of the sharp fragments attack the wall. He let the jug fall on the floor, and it broke in pieces.

Dantès concealed two or three of the sharpest fragments in his bed, leaving the rest on the floor. The breaking of his jug was too natural an accident to excite suspicion. Edmond had all the night to work in, but in the darkness he could not do much, and he soon felt that he was working against something very hard; he pushed back his bed, and waited for day.

All night he heard the subterranean workman, who continued to mine his way. Day came, the jailer entered. Dantès told him that the jug had fallen from his hands while he was drinking, and the jailer went grumblingly to fetch another, without giving himself the trouble to remove the fragments of the broken one. He returned speedily, advised the prisoner to be more careful, and departed.

Dantès heard joyfully the key grate in the lock; he listened until the sound of steps died away, and then, hastily displacing his bed, saw by the faint light that penetrated into his cell, that he had labored uselessly the previous evening in attacking the stone instead of removing the plaster that surrounded it.

The damp had rendered it friable, and Dantès was able to break it off—in small morsels, it is true, but at the end of half an hour he had scraped off a handful; a mathematician might have calculated that in two years, supposing that the rock was not encountered, a passage twenty feet long and two feet broad, might be formed.

The prisoner reproached himself with not having thus employed the hours he had passed in vain hopes, prayer, and despondency. During the six years that he had been imprisoned, what might he not have accomplished?

This idea imparted new energy, and in three days he had succeeded, with the

utmost precaution, in removing the cement, and exposing the stone-work. The wall was built of rough stones, among which, to give strength to the structure, blocks of hewn stone were at intervals imbedded. It was one of these he had uncovered, and which he must remove from its socket.

Dantès strove to do this with his nails, but they were too weak. The fragments of the jug broke, and after an hour of useless toil, Dantès paused with anguish on his brow.

Was he to be thus stopped at the beginning, and was he to wait inactive until his fellow workman had completed his task? Suddenly an idea occurred to him —he smiled, and the perspiration dried on his forehead.

The jailer always brought Dantès' soup in an iron saucepan; this saucepan contained soup for both prisoners, for Dantès had noticed that it was either quite full, or half empty, according as the turnkey gave it to him or to his companion first.

The handle of this saucepan was of iron; Dantès would have given ten years of his life in exchange for it.

0191m

The jailer was accustomed to pour the contents of the saucepan into Dantès' plate, and Dantès, after eating his soup with a wooden spoon, washed the plate, which thus served for every day. Now when evening came Dantès put his plate on the ground near the door; the jailer, as he entered, stepped on it and broke it.

This time he could not blame Dantès. He was wrong to leave it there, but the jailer was wrong not to have looked before him. The jailer, therefore, only grumbled. Then he looked about for something to pour the soup into; Dantès' entire dinner service consisted of one plate—there was no alternative.

“Leave the saucepan,” said Dantès; “you can take it away when you bring me my breakfast.”

This advice was to the jailer's taste, as it spared him the necessity of making another trip. He left the saucepan.

Dantès was beside himself with joy. He rapidly devoured his food, and after waiting an hour, lest the jailer should change his mind and return, he removed his bed, took the handle of the saucepan, inserted the point between the hewn stone and rough stones of the wall, and employed it as a lever. A slight oscillation showed Dantès that all went well. At the end of an hour the stone was extricated from the wall, leaving a cavity a foot and a half in diameter.

Dantès carefully collected the plaster, carried it into the corner of his cell, and

covered it with earth. Then, wishing to make the best use of his time while he had the means of labor, he continued to work without ceasing. At the dawn of day he replaced the stone, pushed his bed against the wall, and lay down. The breakfast consisted of a piece of bread; the jailer entered and placed the bread on the table.

“Well, don’t you intend to bring me another plate?” said Dantès.

“No,” replied the turnkey; “you destroy everything. First you break your jug, then you make me break your plate; if all the prisoners followed your example, the government would be ruined. I shall leave you the saucepan, and pour your soup into that. So for the future I hope you will not be so destructive.”

Dantès raised his eyes to heaven and clasped his hands beneath the coverlet. He felt more gratitude for the possession of this piece of iron than he had ever felt for anything. He had noticed, however, that the prisoner on the other side had ceased to labor; no matter, this was a greater reason for proceeding—if his neighbor would not come to him, he would go to his neighbor. All day he toiled on untiringly, and by the evening he had succeeded in extracting ten handfuls of plaster and fragments of stone. When the hour for his jailer’s visit arrived, Dantès straightened the handle of the saucepan as well as he could, and placed it in its accustomed place. The turnkey poured his ration of soup into it, together with the fish—for thrice a week the prisoners were deprived of meat. This would have been a method of reckoning time, had not Dantès long ceased to do so. Having poured out the soup, the turnkey retired.

Dantès wished to ascertain whether his neighbor had really ceased to work. He listened—all was silent, as it had been for the last three days. Dantès sighed; it was evident that his neighbor distrusted him. However, he toiled on all the night without being discouraged; but after two or three hours he encountered an obstacle. The iron made no impression, but met with a smooth surface; Dantès touched it, and found that it was a beam. This beam crossed, or rather blocked up, the hole Dantès had made; it was necessary, therefore, to dig above or under it. The unhappy young man had not thought of this.

“Oh, my God, my God!” murmured he, “I have so earnestly prayed to you, that I hoped my prayers had been heard. After having deprived me of my liberty, after having deprived me of death, after having recalled me to existence, my God, have pity on me, and do not let me die in despair!”

0193m

“Who talks of God and despair at the same time?” said a voice that seemed to come from beneath the earth, and, deadened by the distance, sounded hollow and

sepulchral in the young man's ears. Edmond's hair stood on end, and he rose to his knees.

"Ah," said he, "I hear a human voice." Edmond had not heard anyone speak save his jailer for four or five years; and a jailer is no man to a prisoner—he is a living door, a barrier of flesh and blood adding strength to restraints of oak and iron.

"In the name of Heaven," cried Dantès, "speak again, though the sound of your voice terrifies me. Who are you?"

"Who are you?" said the voice.

"An unhappy prisoner," replied Dantès, who made no hesitation in answering.

"Of what country?"

"A Frenchman."

"Your name?"

"Edmond Dantès."

"Your profession?"

"A sailor."

"How long have you been here?"

"Since the 28th of February, 1815."

"Your crime?"

"I am innocent."

"But of what are you accused?"

"Of having conspired to aid the emperor's return."

"What! For the emperor's return?—the emperor is no longer on the throne, then?"

"He abdicated at Fontainebleau in 1814, and was sent to the Island of Elba. But how long have you been here that you are ignorant of all this?"

"Since 1811."

Dantès shuddered; this man had been four years longer than himself in prison.

"Do not dig any more," said the voice; "only tell me how high up is your excavation?"

"On a level with the floor."

"How is it concealed?"

"Behind my bed."

“Has your bed been moved since you have been a prisoner?”

“No.”

“What does your chamber open on?”

“A corridor.”

“And the corridor?”

“On a court.”

“Alas!” murmured the voice.

“Oh, what is the matter?” cried Dantès.

“I have made a mistake owing to an error in my plans. I took the wrong angle, and have come out fifteen feet from where I intended. I took the wall you are mining for the outer wall of the fortress.”

“But then you would be close to the sea?”

“That is what I hoped.”

“And supposing you had succeeded?”

“I should have thrown myself into the sea, gained one of the islands near here—the Isle de Daume or the Isle de Tiboulen—and then I should have been safe.”

“Could you have swum so far?”

“Heaven would have given me strength; but now all is lost.”

“All?”

“Yes; stop up your excavation carefully, do not work any more, and wait until you hear from me.”

“Tell me, at least, who you are?”

“I am—I am No. 27.”

“You mistrust me, then,” said Dantès. Edmond fancied he heard a bitter laugh resounding from the depths.

“Oh, I am a Christian,” cried Dantès, guessing instinctively that this man meant to abandon him. “I swear to you by him who died for us that naught shall induce me to breathe one syllable to my jailers; but I conjure you do not abandon me. If you do, I swear to you, for I have got to the end of my strength, that I will dash my brains out against the wall, and you will have my death to reproach yourself with.”

“How old are you? Your voice is that of a young man.”

“I do not know my age, for I have not counted the years I have been here. All I do know is, that I was just nineteen when I was arrested, the 28th of February,

1815."

"Not quite twenty-six!" murmured the voice; "at that age he cannot be a traitor."

"Oh, no, no," cried Dantès. "I swear to you again, rather than betray you, I would allow myself to be hacked in pieces!"

"You have done well to speak to me, and ask for my assistance, for I was about to form another plan, and leave you; but your age reassures me. I will not forget you. Wait."

"How long?"

"I must calculate our chances; I will give you the signal."

"But you will not leave me; you will come to me, or you will let me come to you. We will escape, and if we cannot escape we will talk; you of those whom you love, and I of those whom I love. You must love somebody?"

"No, I am alone in the world."

"Then you will love me. If you are young, I will be your comrade; if you are old, I will be your son. I have a father who is seventy if he yet lives; I only love him and a young girl called Mercédès. My father has not yet forgotten me, I am sure, but God alone knows if she loves me still; I shall love you as I loved my father."

"It is well," returned the voice; "tomorrow."

These few words were uttered with an accent that left no doubt of his sincerity; Dantès rose, dispersed the fragments with the same precaution as before, and pushed his bed back against the wall. He then gave himself up to his happiness. He would no longer be alone. He was, perhaps, about to regain his liberty; at the worst, he would have a companion, and captivity that is shared is but half captivity. Plaints made in common are almost prayers, and prayers where two or three are gathered together invoke the mercy of heaven.

All day Dantès walked up and down his cell. He sat down occasionally on his bed, pressing his hand on his heart. At the slightest noise he bounded towards the door. Once or twice the thought crossed his mind that he might be separated from this unknown, whom he loved already; and then his mind was made up—when the jailer moved his bed and stooped to examine the opening, he would kill him with his water jug. He would be condemned to die, but he was about to die of grief and despair when this miraculous noise recalled him to life.

The jailer came in the evening. Dantès was on his bed. It seemed to him that thus he better guarded the unfinished opening. Doubtless there was a strange

expression in his eyes, for the jailer said, “Come, are you going mad again?”

Dantès did not answer; he feared that the emotion of his voice would betray him. The jailer went away shaking his head. Night came; Dantès hoped that his neighbor would profit by the silence to address him, but he was mistaken. The next morning, however, just as he removed his bed from the wall, he heard three knocks; he threw himself on his knees.

“Is it you?” said he; “I am here.”

“Is your jailer gone?”

“Yes,” said Dantès; “he will not return until the evening; so that we have twelve hours before us.”

“I can work, then?” said the voice.

“Oh, yes, yes; this instant, I entreat you.”

In a moment that part of the floor on which Dantès was resting his two hands, as he knelt with his head in the opening, suddenly gave way; he drew back smartly, while a mass of stones and earth disappeared in a hole that opened beneath the aperture he himself had formed. Then from the bottom of this passage, the depth of which it was impossible to measure, he saw appear, first the head, then the shoulders, and lastly the body of a man, who sprang lightly into his cell.

Chapter 16. A Learned Italian

Seizing in his arms the friend so long and ardently desired, Dantès almost carried him towards the window, in order to obtain a better view of his features by the aid of the imperfect light that struggled through the grating.

He was a man of small stature, with hair blanched rather by suffering and sorrow than by age. He had a deep-set, penetrating eye, almost buried beneath the thick gray eyebrow, and a long (and still black) beard reaching down to his breast. His thin face, deeply furrowed by care, and the bold outline of his strongly marked features, betokened a man more accustomed to exercise his mental faculties than his physical strength. Large drops of perspiration were now standing on his brow, while the garments that hung about him were so ragged that one could only guess at the pattern upon which they had originally been fashioned.

The stranger might have numbered sixty or sixty-five years; but a certain briskness and appearance of vigor in his movements made it probable that he was aged more from captivity than the course of time. He received the enthusiastic greeting of his young acquaintance with evident pleasure, as though his chilled affections were rekindled and invigorated by his contact with one so warm and ardent. He thanked him with grateful cordiality for his kindly welcome, although he must at that moment have been suffering bitterly to find another dungeon where he had fondly reckoned on discovering a means of regaining his liberty.

“Let us first see,” said he, “whether it is possible to remove the traces of my entrance here—our future tranquillity depends upon our jailers being entirely ignorant of it.”

Advancing to the opening, he stooped and raised the stone easily in spite of its weight; then, fitting it into its place, he said:

“You removed this stone very carelessly; but I suppose you had no tools to aid you.”

“Why,” exclaimed Dantès, with astonishment, “do you possess any?”

“I made myself some; and with the exception of a file, I have all that are necessary,—a chisel, pincers, and lever.”

"Oh, how I should like to see these products of your industry and patience."

"Well, in the first place, here is my chisel."

So saying, he displayed a sharp strong blade, with a handle made of beechwood.

"And with what did you contrive to make that?" inquired Dantès.

"With one of the clamps of my bedstead; and this very tool has sufficed me to hollow out the road by which I came hither, a distance of about fifty feet."

"Fifty feet!" responded Dantès, almost terrified.

"Do not speak so loud, young man—don't speak so loud. It frequently occurs in a state prison like this, that persons are stationed outside the doors of the cells purposely to overhear the conversation of the prisoners."

"But they believe I am shut up alone here."

"That makes no difference."

"And you say that you dug your way a distance of fifty feet to get here?"

"I do; that is about the distance that separates your chamber from mine; only, unfortunately, I did not curve aright; for want of the necessary geometrical instruments to calculate my scale of proportion, instead of taking an ellipsis of forty feet, I made it fifty. I expected, as I told you, to reach the outer wall, pierce through it, and throw myself into the sea; I have, however, kept along the corridor on which your chamber opens, instead of going beneath it. My labor is all in vain, for I find that the corridor looks into a courtyard filled with soldiers."

"That's true," said Dantès; "but the corridor you speak of only bounds *one* side of my cell; there are three others—do you know anything of their situation?"

"This one is built against the solid rock, and it would take ten experienced miners, duly furnished with the requisite tools, as many years to perforate it. This adjoins the lower part of the governor's apartments, and were we to work our way through, we should only get into some lock-up cellars, where we must necessarily be recaptured. The fourth and last side of your cell faces on—faces on—stop a minute, now where does it face?"

The wall of which he spoke was the one in which was fixed the loophole by which light was admitted to the chamber. This loophole, which gradually diminished in size as it approached the outside, to an opening through which a child could not have passed, was, for better security, furnished with three iron

bars, so as to quiet all apprehensions even in the mind of the most suspicious jailer as to the possibility of a prisoner's escape. As the stranger asked the question, he dragged the table beneath the window.

"Climb up," said he to Dantès.

The young man obeyed, mounted on the table, and, divining the wishes of his companion, placed his back securely against the wall and held out both hands. The stranger, whom as yet Dantès knew only by the number of his cell, sprang up with an agility by no means to be expected in a person of his years, and, light and steady on his feet as a cat or a lizard, climbed from the table to the outstretched hands of Dantès, and from them to his shoulders; then, bending double, for the ceiling of the dungeon prevented him from holding himself erect, he managed to slip his head between the upper bars of the window, so as to be able to command a perfect view from top to bottom.

An instant afterwards he hastily drew back his head, saying, "I thought so!" and sliding from the shoulders of Dantès as dexterously as he had ascended, he nimbly leaped from the table to the ground.

"What was it that you thought?" asked the young man anxiously, in his turn descending from the table.

The elder prisoner pondered the matter. "Yes," said he at length, "it is so. This side of your chamber looks out upon a kind of open gallery, where patrols are continually passing, and sentries keep watch day and night."

"Are you quite sure of that?"

"Certain. I saw the soldier's shape and the top of his musket; that made me draw in my head so quickly, for I was fearful he might also see me."

"Well?" inquired Dantès.

"You perceive then the utter impossibility of escaping through your dungeon?"

"Then——" pursued the young man eagerly.

"Then," answered the elder prisoner, "the will of God be done!" And as the old man slowly pronounced those words, an air of profound resignation spread itself over his careworn countenance. Dantès gazed on the man who could thus philosophically resign hopes so long and ardently nourished with an astonishment mingled with admiration.

"Tell me, I entreat of you, who and what you are?" said he at length. "Never have I met with so remarkable a person as yourself."

"Willingly," answered the stranger; "if, indeed, you feel any curiosity

respecting one, now, alas, powerless to aid you in any way.”

“Say not so; you can console and support me by the strength of your own powerful mind. Pray let me know who you really are?”

The stranger smiled a melancholy smile. “Then listen,” said he. “I am the Abbé Faria, and have been imprisoned as you know in this Château d’If since the year 1811; previously to which I had been confined for three years in the fortress of Fenestrelle. In the year 1811 I was transferred to Piedmont in France. It was at this period I learned that the destiny which seemed subservient to every wish formed by Napoleon, had bestowed on him a son, named king of Rome even in his cradle. I was very far then from expecting the change you have just informed me of; namely, that four years afterwards, this colossus of power would be overthrown. Then who reigns in France at this moment—Napoleon II.?”

“No, Louis XVIII.”

“The brother of Louis XVI.! How inscrutable are the ways of Providence—for what great and mysterious purpose has it pleased Heaven to abase the man once so elevated, and raise up him who was so abased?”

Dantès’ whole attention was riveted on a man who could thus forget his own misfortunes while occupying himself with the destinies of others.

“Yes, yes,” continued he, “Twill be the same as it was in England. After Charles I., Cromwell; after Cromwell, Charles II., and then James II., and then some son-in-law or relation, some Prince of Orange, a stadholder who becomes a king. Then new concessions to the people, then a constitution, then liberty. Ah, my friend!” said the abbé, turning towards Dantès, and surveying him with the kindling gaze of a prophet, “you are young, you will see all this come to pass.”

“Probably, if ever I get out of prison!”

“True,” replied Faria, “we are prisoners; but I forget this sometimes, and there are even moments when my mental vision transports me beyond these walls, and I fancy myself at liberty.”

“But wherefore are you here?”

“Because in 1807 I dreamed of the very plan Napoleon tried to realize in 1811; because, like Machiavelli, I desired to alter the political face of Italy, and instead of allowing it to be split up into a quantity of petty principalities, each held by some weak or tyrannical ruler, I sought to form one large, compact, and powerful empire; and, lastly, because I fancied I had found my Cæsar Borgia in a crowned simpleton, who feigned to enter into my views only to betray me. It was

the plan of Alexander VI. and Clement VII., but it will never succeed now, for they attempted it fruitlessly, and Napoleon was unable to complete his work. Italy seems fated to misfortune." And the old man bowed his head.

Dantès could not understand a man risking his life for such matters. Napoleon certainly he knew something of, inasmuch as he had seen and spoken with him; but of Clement VII. and Alexander VI. he knew nothing.

"Are you not," he asked, "the priest who here in the Château d'If is generally thought to be—ill?"

"Mad, you mean, don't you?"

"I did not like to say so," answered Dantès, smiling.

"Well, then," resumed Faria with a bitter smile, "let me answer your question in full, by acknowledging that I am the poor mad prisoner of the Château d'If, for many years permitted to amuse the different visitors with what is said to be my insanity; and, in all probability, I should be promoted to the honor of making sport for the children, if such innocent beings could be found in an abode devoted like this to suffering and despair."

Dantès remained for a short time mute and motionless; at length he said:

"Then you abandon all hope of escape?"

"I perceive its utter impossibility; and I consider it impious to attempt that which the Almighty evidently does not approve."

"Nay, be not discouraged. Would it not be expecting too much to hope to succeed at your first attempt? Why not try to find an opening in another direction from that which has so unfortunately failed?"

"Alas, it shows how little notion you can have of all it has cost me to effect a purpose so unexpectedly frustrated, that you talk of beginning over again. In the first place, I was four years making the tools I possess, and have been two years scraping and digging out earth, hard as granite itself; then what toil and fatigue has it not been to remove huge stones I should once have deemed impossible to loosen. Whole days have I passed in these Titanic efforts, considering my labor well repaid if, by night-time I had contrived to carry away a square inch of this hard-bound cement, changed by ages into a substance unyielding as the stones themselves; then to conceal the mass of earth and rubbish I dug up, I was compelled to break through a staircase, and throw the fruits of my labor into the hollow part of it; but the well is now so completely choked up, that I scarcely think it would be possible to add another handful of dust without leading to discovery. Consider also that I fully believed I had accomplished the end and

aim of my undertaking, for which I had so exactly husbanded my strength as to make it just hold out to the termination of my enterprise; and now, at the moment when I reckoned upon success, my hopes are forever dashed from me. No, I repeat again, that nothing shall induce me to renew attempts evidently at variance with the Almighty's pleasure."

Dantès held down his head, that the other might not see how joy at the thought of having a companion outweighed the sympathy he felt for the failure of the abbé's plans.

The abbé sank upon Edmond's bed, while Edmond himself remained standing. Escape had never once occurred to him. There are, indeed, some things which appear so impossible that the mind does not dwell on them for an instant. To undermine the ground for fifty feet—to devote three years to a labor which, if successful, would conduct you to a precipice overhanging the sea—to plunge into the waves from the height of fifty, sixty, perhaps a hundred feet, at the risk of being dashed to pieces against the rocks, should you have been fortunate enough to have escaped the fire of the sentinels; and even, supposing all these perils past, then to have to swim for your life a distance of at least three miles ere you could reach the shore—were difficulties so startling and formidable that Dantès had never even dreamed of such a scheme, resigning himself rather to death.

But the sight of an old man clinging to life with so desperate a courage, gave a fresh turn to his ideas, and inspired him with new courage. Another, older and less strong than he, had attempted what he had not had sufficient resolution to undertake, and had failed only because of an error in calculation. This same person, with almost incredible patience and perseverance, had contrived to provide himself with tools requisite for so unparalleled an attempt. Another had done all this; why, then, was it impossible to Dantès? Faria had dug his way through fifty feet, Dantès would dig a hundred; Faria, at the age of fifty, had devoted three years to the task; he, who was but half as old, would sacrifice six; Faria, a priest and savant, had not shrunk from the idea of risking his life by trying to swim a distance of three miles to one of the islands—Daume, Rattonneau, or Lemaire; should a hardy sailor, an experienced diver, like himself, shrink from a similar task; should he, who had so often for mere amusement's sake plunged to the bottom of the sea to fetch up the bright coral branch, hesitate to entertain the same project? He could do it in an hour, and how many times had he, for pure pastime, continued in the water for more than twice as long! At once Dantès resolved to follow the brave example of his energetic companion, and to remember that what has once been done may be done again.

After continuing some time in profound meditation, the young man suddenly exclaimed, “I have found what you were in search of!”

Faria started: “Have you, indeed?” cried he, raising his head with quick anxiety; “pray, let me know what it is you have discovered?”

“The corridor through which you have bored your way from the cell you occupy here, extends in the same direction as the outer gallery, does it not?”

0207m

“It does.”

“And is not above fifteen feet from it?”

“About that.”

“Well, then, I will tell you what we must do. We must pierce through the corridor by forming a side opening about the middle, as it were the top part of a cross. This time you will lay your plans more accurately; we shall get out into the gallery you have described; kill the sentinel who guards it, and make our escape. All we require to insure success is courage, and that you possess, and strength, which I am not deficient in; as for patience, you have abundantly proved yours—you shall now see me prove mine.”

“One instant, my dear friend,” replied the abbé; “it is clear you do not understand the nature of the courage with which I am endowed, and what use I intend making of my strength. As for patience, I consider that I have abundantly exercised that in beginning every morning the task of the night before, and every night renewing the task of the day. But then, young man (and I pray of you to give me your full attention), then I thought I could not be doing anything displeasing to the Almighty in trying to set an innocent being at liberty—one who had committed no offence, and merited not condemnation.”

“And have your notions changed?” asked Dantès with much surprise; “do you think yourself more guilty in making the attempt since you have encountered me?”

“No; neither do I wish to incur guilt. Hitherto I have fancied myself merely waging war against circumstances, not men. I have thought it no sin to bore through a wall, or destroy a staircase; but I cannot so easily persuade myself to pierce a heart or take away a life.”

A slight movement of surprise escaped Dantès.

“Is it possible,” said he, “that where your liberty is at stake you can allow any such scruple to deter you from obtaining it?”

“Tell me,” replied Faria, “what has hindered you from knocking down your

jailer with a piece of wood torn from your bedstead, dressing yourself in his clothes, and endeavoring to escape?"

"Simply the fact that the idea never occurred to me," answered Dantès.

"Because," said the old man, "the natural repugnance to the commission of such a crime prevented you from thinking of it; and so it ever is because in simple and allowable things our natural instincts keep us from deviating from the strict line of duty. The tiger, whose nature teaches him to delight in shedding blood, needs but the sense of smell to show him when his prey is within his reach, and by following this instinct he is enabled to measure the leap necessary to permit him to spring on his victim; but man, on the contrary, loathes the idea of blood—it is not alone that the laws of social life inspire him with a shrinking dread of taking life; his natural construction and physiological formation——"

Dantès was confused and silent at this explanation of the thoughts which had unconsciously been working in his mind, or rather soul; for there are two distinct sorts of ideas, those that proceed from the head and those that emanate from the heart.

0209m

"Since my imprisonment," said Faria, "I have thought over all the most celebrated cases of escape on record. They have rarely been successful. Those that have been crowned with full success have been long meditated upon, and carefully arranged; such, for instance, as the escape of the Duc de Beaufort from the Château de Vincennes, that of the Abbé Dubuquoi from For l'Evêque; of Latude from the Bastille. Then there are those for which chance sometimes affords opportunity, and those are the best of all. Let us, therefore, wait patiently for some favorable moment, and when it presents itself, profit by it."

"Ah," said Dantès, "you might well endure the tedious delay; you were constantly employed in the task you set yourself, and when weary with toil, you had your hopes to refresh and encourage you."

"I assure you," replied the old man, "I did not turn to that source for recreation or support."

"What did you do then?"

"I wrote or studied."

"Were you then permitted the use of pens, ink, and paper?"

"Oh, no," answered the abbé; "I had none but what I made for myself."

"You made paper, pens and ink?"

"Yes."

Dantès gazed with admiration, but he had some difficulty in believing. Faria saw this.

“When you pay me a visit in my cell, my young friend,” said he, “I will show you an entire work, the fruits of the thoughts and reflections of my whole life; many of them meditated over in the shades of the Colosseum at Rome, at the foot of St. Mark’s column at Venice, and on the borders of the Arno at Florence, little imagining at the time that they would be arranged in order within the walls of the Château d’If. The work I speak of is called *A Treatise on the Possibility of a General Monarchy in Italy*, and will make one large quarto volume.”

“And on what have you written all this?”

“On two of my shirts. I invented a preparation that makes linen as smooth and as easy to write on as parchment.”

“You are, then, a chemist?”

“Somewhat; I know Lavoisier, and was the intimate friend of Cabanis.”

“But for such a work you must have needed books—had you any?”

“I had nearly five thousand volumes in my library at Rome; but after reading them over many times, I found out that with one hundred and fifty well-chosen books a man possesses, if not a complete summary of all human knowledge, at least all that a man need really know. I devoted three years of my life to reading and studying these one hundred and fifty volumes, till I knew them nearly by heart; so that since I have been in prison, a very slight effort of memory has enabled me to recall their contents as readily as though the pages were open before me. I could recite you the whole of Thucydides, Xenophon, Plutarch, Titus Livius, Tacitus, Strada, Jornandes, Dante, Montaigne, Shakespeare, Spinoza, Machiavelli, and Bossuet. I name only the most important.”

“You are, doubtless, acquainted with a variety of languages, so as to have been able to read all these?”

“Yes, I speak five of the modern tongues—that is to say, German, French, Italian, English, and Spanish; by the aid of ancient Greek I learned modern Greek—I don’t speak it so well as I could wish, but I am still trying to improve myself.”

“Improve yourself!” repeated Dantès; “why, how can you manage to do so?”

“Why, I made a vocabulary of the words I knew; turned, returned, and arranged them, so as to enable me to express my thoughts through their medium. I know nearly one thousand words, which is all that is absolutely necessary, although I believe there are nearly one hundred thousand in the dictionaries. I

cannot hope to be very fluent, but I certainly should have no difficulty in explaining my wants and wishes; and that would be quite as much as I should ever require."

Stronger grew the wonder of Dantès, who almost fancied he had to do with one gifted with supernatural powers; still hoping to find some imperfection which might bring him down to a level with human beings, he added, "Then if you were not furnished with pens, how did you manage to write the work you speak of?"

"I made myself some excellent ones, which would be universally preferred to all others if once known. You are aware what huge whiting are served to us on *maigre* days. Well, I selected the cartilages of the heads of these fishes, and you can scarcely imagine the delight with which I welcomed the arrival of each Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday, as affording me the means of increasing my stock of pens; for I will freely confess that my historical labors have been my greatest solace and relief. While retracing the past, I forget the present; and traversing at will the path of history I cease to remember that I am myself a prisoner."

"But the ink," said Dantès; "of what did you make your ink?"

"There was formerly a fireplace in my dungeon," replied Faria, "but it was closed up long ere I became an occupant of this prison. Still, it must have been many years in use, for it was thickly covered with a coating of soot; this soot I dissolved in a portion of the wine brought to me every Sunday, and I assure you a better ink cannot be desired. For very important notes, for which closer attention is required, I pricked one of my fingers, and wrote with my own blood."

"And when," asked Dantès, "may I see all this?"

"Whenever you please," replied the abbé.

"Oh, then let it be directly!" exclaimed the young man.

"Follow me, then," said the abbé, as he re-entered the subterranean passage, in which he soon disappeared, followed by Dantès.

Chapter 17. The Abbé's Chamber

After having passed with tolerable ease through the subterranean passage, which, however, did not admit of their holding themselves erect, the two friends reached the further end of the corridor, into which the abbé's cell opened; from that point the passage became much narrower, and barely permitted one to creep through on hands and knees. The floor of the abbé's cell was paved, and it had been by raising one of the stones in the most obscure corner that Faria had been able to commence the laborious task of which Dantès had witnessed the completion.

As he entered the chamber of his friend, Dantès cast around one eager and searching glance in quest of the expected marvels, but nothing more than common met his view.

"It is well," said the abbé; "we have some hours before us—it is now just a quarter past twelve o'clock." Instinctively Dantès turned round to observe by what watch or clock the abbé had been able so accurately to specify the hour.

"Look at this ray of light which enters by my window," said the abbé, "and then observe the lines traced on the wall. Well, by means of these lines, which are in accordance with the double motion of the earth, and the ellipse it describes round the sun, I am enabled to ascertain the precise hour with more minuteness than if I possessed a watch; for that might be broken or deranged in its movements, while the sun and earth never vary in their appointed paths."

This last explanation was wholly lost upon Dantès, who had always imagined, from seeing the sun rise from behind the mountains and set in the Mediterranean, that it moved, and not the earth. A double movement of the globe he inhabited, and of which he could feel nothing, appeared to him perfectly impossible. Each word that fell from his companion's lips seemed fraught with the mysteries of science, as worthy of digging out as the gold and diamonds in the mines of Guzerat and Golconda, which he could just recollect having visited during a voyage made in his earliest youth.

"Come," said he to the abbé, "I am anxious to see your treasures."

The abbé smiled, and, proceeding to the disused fireplace, raised, by the help of his chisel, a long stone, which had doubtless been the hearth, beneath which

was a cavity of considerable depth, serving as a safe depository of the articles mentioned to Dantès.

0213m

“What do you wish to see first?” asked the abbé.

“Oh, your great work on the monarchy of Italy!”

Faria then drew forth from his hiding-place three or four rolls of linen, laid one over the other, like folds of papyrus. These rolls consisted of slips of cloth about four inches wide and eighteen long; they were all carefully numbered and closely covered with writing, so legible that Dantès could easily read it, as well as make out the sense—it being in Italian, a language he, as a Provençal, perfectly understood.

“There,” said he, “there is the work complete. I wrote the word *finis* at the end of the sixty-eighth strip about a week ago. I have torn up two of my shirts, and as many handkerchiefs as I was master of, to complete the precious pages. Should I ever get out of prison and find in all Italy a printer courageous enough to publish what I have composed, my literary reputation is forever secured.”

“I see,” answered Dantès. “Now let me behold the curious pens with which you have written your work.”

“Look!” said Faria, showing to the young man a slender stick about six inches long, and much resembling the size of the handle of a fine painting-brush, to the end of which was tied, by a piece of thread, one of those cartilages of which the abbé had before spoken to Dantès; it was pointed, and divided at the nib like an ordinary pen. Dantès examined it with intense admiration, then looked around to see the instrument with which it had been shaped so correctly into form.

“Ah, yes,” said Faria; “the penknife. That’s my masterpiece. I made it, as well as this larger knife, out of an old iron candlestick.” The penknife was sharp and keen as a razor; as for the other knife, it would serve a double purpose, and with it one could cut and thrust.

Dantès examined the various articles shown to him with the same attention that he had bestowed on the curiosities and strange tools exhibited in the shops at Marseilles as the works of the savages in the South Seas from whence they had been brought by the different trading vessels.

“As for the ink,” said Faria, “I told you how I managed to obtain that—and I only just make it from time to time, as I require it.”

“One thing still puzzles me,” observed Dantès, “and that is how you managed to do all this by daylight?”

“I worked at night also,” replied Faria.

“Night!—why, for Heaven’s sake, are your eyes like cats’, that you can see to work in the dark?”

“Indeed they are not; but God has supplied man with the intelligence that enables him to overcome the limitations of natural conditions. I furnished myself with a light.”

“You did? Pray tell me how.”

“I separated the fat from the meat served to me, melted it, and so made oil—here is my lamp.” So saying, the abbé exhibited a sort of torch very similar to those used in public illuminations.

“But how do you procure a light?”

“Oh, here are two flints and a piece of burnt linen.”

“And matches?”

“I pretended that I had a disorder of the skin, and asked for a little sulphur, which was readily supplied.”

Dantès laid the different things he had been looking at on the table, and stood with his head drooping on his breast, as though overwhelmed by the perseverance and strength of Faria’s mind.

0215m

“You have not seen all yet,” continued Faria, “for I did not think it wise to trust all my treasures in the same hiding-place. Let us shut this one up.” They put the stone back in its place; the abbé sprinkled a little dust over it to conceal the traces of its having been removed, rubbed his foot well on it to make it assume the same appearance as the other, and then, going towards his bed, he removed it from the spot it stood in. Behind the head of the bed, and concealed by a stone fitting in so closely as to defy all suspicion, was a hollow space, and in this space a ladder of cords between twenty-five and thirty feet in length. Dantès closely and eagerly examined it; he found it firm, solid, and compact enough to bear any weight.

“Who supplied you with the materials for making this wonderful work?”

“I tore up several of my shirts, and ripped out the seams in the sheets of my bed, during my three years’ imprisonment at Fenestrelle; and when I was removed to the Château d’If, I managed to bring the ravellings with me, so that I have been able to finish my work here.”

“And was it not discovered that your sheets were unhemmed?”

"Oh, no, for when I had taken out the thread I required, I hemmed the edges over again."

"With what?"

"With this needle," said the abbé, as, opening his ragged vestments, he showed Dantès a long, sharp fish-bone, with a small perforated eye for the thread, a small portion of which still remained in it.

"I once thought," continued Faria, "of removing these iron bars, and letting myself down from the window, which, as you see, is somewhat wider than yours, although I should have enlarged it still more preparatory to my flight; however, I discovered that I should merely have dropped into a sort of inner court, and I therefore renounced the project altogether as too full of risk and danger. Nevertheless, I carefully preserved my ladder against one of those unforeseen opportunities of which I spoke just now, and which sudden chance frequently brings about."

While affecting to be deeply engaged in examining the ladder, the mind of Dantès was, in fact, busily occupied by the idea that a person so intelligent, ingenious, and clear-sighted as the abbé might probably be able to solve the dark mystery of his own misfortunes, where he himself could see nothing.

"What are you thinking of?" asked the abbé smilingly, imputing the deep abstraction in which his visitor was plunged to the excess of his awe and wonder.

"I was reflecting, in the first place," replied Dantès, "upon the enormous degree of intelligence and ability you must have employed to reach the high perfection to which you have attained. What would you not have accomplished if you had been free?"

"Possibly nothing at all; the overflow of my brain would probably, in a state of freedom, have evaporated in a thousand follies; misfortune is needed to bring to light the treasures of the human intellect. Compression is needed to explode gunpowder. Captivity has brought my mental faculties to a focus; and you are well aware that from the collision of clouds electricity is produced—from electricity, lightning, from lightning, illumination."

"No," replied Dantès. "I know nothing. Some of your words are to me quite empty of meaning. You must be blessed indeed to possess the knowledge you have."

The abbé smiled. "Well," said he, "but you had another subject for your thoughts; did you not say so just now?"

"I did!"

“You have told me as yet but one of them—let me hear the other.”

“It was this,—that while you had related to me all the particulars of your past life, you were perfectly unacquainted with mine.”

“Your life, my young friend, has not been of sufficient length to admit of your having passed through any very important events.”

“It has been long enough to inflict on me a great and undeserved misfortune. I would fain fix the source of it on man that I may no longer vent reproaches upon Heaven.”

“Then you profess ignorance of the crime with which you are charged?”

“I do, indeed; and this I swear by the two beings most dear to me upon earth,—my father and Mercédès.”

“Come,” said the abbé, closing his hiding-place, and pushing the bed back to its original situation, “let me hear your story.”

Dantès obeyed, and commenced what he called his history, but which consisted only of the account of a voyage to India, and two or three voyages to the Levant, until he arrived at the recital of his last cruise, with the death of Captain Leclere, and the receipt of a packet to be delivered by himself to the grand marshal; his interview with that personage, and his receiving, in place of the packet brought, a letter addressed to a Monsieur Noirtier—his arrival at Marseilles, and interview with his father—his affection for Mercédès, and their nuptial feast—his arrest and subsequent examination, his temporary detention at the Palais de Justice, and his final imprisonment in the Château d’If. From this point everything was a blank to Dantès—he knew nothing more, not even the length of time he had been imprisoned. His recital finished, the abbé reflected long and earnestly.

“There is,” said he, at the end of his meditations, “a clever maxim, which bears upon what I was saying to you some little while ago, and that is, that unless wicked ideas take root in a naturally depraved mind, human nature, in a right and wholesome state, revolts at crime. Still, from an artificial civilization have originated wants, vices, and false tastes, which occasionally become so powerful as to stifle within us all good feelings, and ultimately to lead us into guilt and wickedness. From this view of things, then, comes the axiom that if you visit to discover the author of any bad action, seek first to discover the person to whom the perpetration of that bad action could be in any way advantageous. Now, to apply it in your case,—to whom could your disappearance have been serviceable?”

“To no one, by Heaven! I was a very insignificant person.”

“Do not speak thus, for your reply evinces neither logic nor philosophy; everything is relative, my dear young friend, from the king who stands in the way of his successor, to the employee who keeps his rival out of a place. Now, in the event of the king’s death, his successor inherits a crown,—when the employee dies, the supernumerary steps into his shoes, and receives his salary of twelve thousand livres. Well, these twelve thousand livres are his civil list, and are as essential to him as the twelve millions of a king. Everyone, from the highest to the lowest degree, has his place on the social ladder, and is beset by stormy passions and conflicting interests, as in Descartes’ theory of pressure and impulsion. But these forces increase as we go higher, so that we have a spiral which in defiance of reason rests upon the apex and not on the base. Now let us return to your particular world. You say you were on the point of being made captain of the *Pharaon*? ”

“Yes.”

“And about to become the husband of a young and lovely girl?”

“Yes.”

“Now, could anyone have had any interest in preventing the accomplishment of these two things? But let us first settle the question as to its being the interest of anyone to hinder you from being captain of the *Pharaon*. What say you?”

“I cannot believe such was the case. I was generally liked on board, and had the sailors possessed the right of selecting a captain themselves, I feel convinced their choice would have fallen on me. There was only one person among the crew who had any feeling of ill-will towards me. I had quarrelled with him some time previously, and had even challenged him to fight me; but he refused.”

“Now we are getting on. And what was this man’s name?”

“Danglars.”

“What rank did he hold on board?”

“He was supercargo.”

“And had you been captain, should you have retained him in his employment?”

“Not if the choice had remained with me, for I had frequently observed inaccuracies in his accounts.”

“Good again! Now then, tell me, was any person present during your last conversation with Captain Leclere?”

“No; we were quite alone.”

“Could your conversation have been overheard by anyone?”

"It might, for the cabin door was open—and—stay; now I recollect,—Danglars himself passed by just as Captain Leclere was giving me the packet for the grand marshal."

"That's better," cried the abbé; "now we are on the right scent. Did you take anybody with you when you put into the port of Elba?"

"Nobody."

"Somebody there received your packet, and gave you a letter in place of it, I think?"

"Yes; the grand marshal did."

"And what did you do with that letter?"

"Put it into my portfolio."

"You had your portfolio with you, then? Now, how could a sailor find room in his pocket for a portfolio large enough to contain an official letter?"

"You are right; it was left on board."

"Then it was not till your return to the ship that you put the letter in the portfolio?"

"No."

"And what did you do with this same letter while returning from Porto-Ferrajo to the vessel?"

"I carried it in my hand."

"So that when you went on board the *Pharaon*, everybody could see that you held a letter in your hand?"

"Yes."

"Danglars, as well as the rest?"

"Danglars, as well as others."

"Now, listen to me, and try to recall every circumstance attending your arrest. Do you recollect the words in which the information against you was formulated?"

"Oh yes, I read it over three times, and the words sank deeply into my memory."

"Repeat it to me."

Dantès paused a moment, then said, "This is it, word for word: 'The king's attorney is informed by a friend to the throne and religion, that one Edmond Dantès, mate on board the *Pharaon*, this day arrived from Smyrna, after having

touched at Naples and Porto-Ferrajo, has been intrusted by Murat with a packet for the usurper; again, by the usurper, with a letter for the Bonapartist Club in Paris. This proof of his guilt may be procured by his immediate arrest, as the letter will be found either about his person, at his father's residence, or in his cabin on board the *Pharaon*.”

The abbé shrugged his shoulders. “The thing is clear as day,” said he; “and you must have had a very confiding nature, as well as a good heart, not to have suspected the origin of the whole affair.”

“Do you really think so? Ah, that would indeed be infamous.”

“How did Danglars usually write?”

“In a handsome, running hand.”

“And how was the anonymous letter written?”

“Backhanded.”

Again the abbé smiled. “Disguised.”

“It was very boldly written, if disguised.”

“Stop a bit,” said the abbé, taking up what he called his pen, and, after dipping it into the ink, he wrote on a piece of prepared linen, with his left hand, the first two or three words of the accusation. Dantès drew back, and gazed on the abbé with a sensation almost amounting to terror.

“How very astonishing!” cried he at length. “Why your writing exactly resembles that of the accusation.”

“Simply because that accusation had been written with the left hand; and I have noticed that——”

“What?”

“That while the writing of different persons done with the right hand varies, that performed with the left hand is invariably uniform.”

“You have evidently seen and observed everything.”

“Let us proceed.”

“Oh, yes, yes!”

“Now as regards the second question.”

“I am listening.”

“Was there any person whose interest it was to prevent your marriage with Mercédès?”

“Yes; a young man who loved her.”

“And his name was——”

“Fernand.”

“That is a Spanish name, I think?”

“He was a Catalan.”

“You imagine him capable of writing the letter?”

“Oh, no; he would more likely have got rid of me by sticking a knife into me.”

“That is in strict accordance with the Spanish character; an assassination they will unhesitatingly commit, but an act of cowardice, never.”

“Besides,” said Dantès, “the various circumstances mentioned in the letter were wholly unknown to him.”

“You had never spoken of them yourself to anyone?”

“To no one.”

“Not even to your mistress?”

“No, not even to my betrothed.”

“Then it is Danglars.”

“I feel quite sure of it now.”

“Wait a little. Pray, was Danglars acquainted with Fernand?”

“No—yes, he was. Now I recollect——”

“What?”

“To have seen them both sitting at table together under an arbor at Père Pamphile’s the evening before the day fixed for my wedding. They were in earnest conversation. Danglars was joking in a friendly way, but Fernand looked pale and agitated.”

“Were they alone?”

“There was a third person with them whom I knew perfectly well, and who had, in all probability made their acquaintance; he was a tailor named Caderousse, but he was very drunk. Stay!—stay!—How strange that it should not have occurred to me before! Now I remember quite well, that on the table round which they were sitting were pens, ink, and paper. Oh, the heartless, treacherous scoundrels!” exclaimed Dantès, pressing his hand to his throbbing brows.

“Is there anything else I can assist you in discovering, besides the villany of your friends?” inquired the abbé with a laugh.

“Yes, yes,” replied Dantès eagerly; “I would beg of you, who see so

completely to the depths of things, and to whom the greatest mystery seems but an easy riddle, to explain to me how it was that I underwent no second examination, was never brought to trial, and, above all, was condemned without ever having had sentence passed on me?"

"That is altogether a different and more serious matter," responded the abbé. "The ways of justice are frequently too dark and mysterious to be easily penetrated. All we have hitherto done in the matter has been child's play. If you wish me to enter upon the more difficult part of the business, you must assist me by the most minute information on every point."

"Pray ask me whatever questions you please; for, in good truth, you see more clearly into my life than I do myself."

"In the first place, then, who examined you,—the king's attorney, his deputy, or a magistrate?"

"The deputy."

"Was he young or old?"

"About six or seven-and-twenty years of age, I should say."

"So," answered the abbé. "Old enough to be ambitious, but too young to be corrupt. And how did he treat you?"

"With more of mildness than severity."

"Did you tell him your whole story?"

"I did."

"And did his conduct change at all in the course of your examination?"

"He did appear much disturbed when he read the letter that had brought me into this scrape. He seemed quite overcome by my misfortune."

"By your misfortune?"

"Yes."

"Then you feel quite sure that it was your misfortune he deplored?"

"He gave me one great proof of his sympathy, at any rate."

"And that?"

"He burnt the sole evidence that could at all have criminated me."

"What? the accusation?"

"No; the letter."

"Are you sure?"

"I saw it done."

“That alters the case. This man might, after all, be a greater scoundrel than you have thought possible.”

“Upon my word,” said Dantès, “you make me shudder. Is the world filled with tigers and crocodiles?”

“Yes; and remember that two-legged tigers and crocodiles are more dangerous than the others.”

“Never mind; let us go on.”

“With all my heart! You tell me he burned the letter?”

“He did; saying at the same time, ‘You see I thus destroy the only proof existing against you.’”

“This action is somewhat too sublime to be natural.”

“You think so?”

“I am sure of it. To whom was this letter addressed?”

“To M. Noirtier, Rue Coq-Héron, No. 13, Paris.”

“Now can you conceive of any interest that your heroic deputy could possibly have had in the destruction of that letter?”

“Why, it is not altogether impossible he might have had, for he made me promise several times never to speak of that letter to anyone, assuring me he so advised me for my own interest; and, more than this, he insisted on my taking a solemn oath never to utter the name mentioned in the address.”

“Noirtier!” repeated the abbé; “Noirtier!—I knew a person of that name at the court of the Queen of Etruria,—a Noirtier, who had been a Girondin during the Revolution! What was your deputy called?”

“De Villefort!” The abbé burst into a fit of laughter, while Dantès gazed on him in utter astonishment.

“What ails you?” said he at length.

“Do you see that ray of sunlight?”

“I do.”

“Well, the whole thing is more clear to me than that sunbeam is to you. Poor fellow! poor young man! And you tell me this magistrate expressed great sympathy and commiseration for you?”

“He did.”

“And the worthy man destroyed your compromising letter?”

“Yes.”

“And then made you swear never to utter the name of Noirtier?”

“Yes.”

“Why, you poor short-sighted simpleton, can you not guess who this Noirtier was, whose very name he was so careful to keep concealed? This Noirtier was his father!”

Had a thunderbolt fallen at the feet of Dantès, or hell opened its yawning gulf before him, he could not have been more completely transfixed with horror than he was at the sound of these unexpected words. Starting up, he clasped his hands around his head as though to prevent his very brain from bursting, and exclaimed, “His father! his father!”

“Yes, his father,” replied the abbé; “his right name was Noirtier de Villefort.”

At this instant a bright light shot through the mind of Dantès, and cleared up all that had been dark and obscure before. The change that had come over Villefort during the examination, the destruction of the letter, the exacted promise, the almost supplicating tones of the magistrate, who seemed rather to implore mercy than to pronounce punishment,—all returned with a stunning force to his memory. He cried out, and staggered against the wall like a drunken man, then he hurried to the opening that led from the abbé’s cell to his own, and said, “I must be alone, to think over all this.”

When he regained his dungeon, he threw himself on his bed, where the turnkey found him in the evening visit, sitting with fixed gaze and contracted features, dumb and motionless as a statue. During these hours of profound meditation, which to him had seemed only minutes, he had formed a fearful resolution, and bound himself to its fulfilment by a solemn oath.

Dantès was at length roused from his reverie by the voice of Faria, who, having also been visited by his jailer, had come to invite his fellow-sufferer to share his supper. The reputation of being out of his mind, though harmlessly and even amusingly so, had procured for the abbé unusual privileges. He was supplied with bread of a finer, whiter quality than the usual prison fare, and even regaled each Sunday with a small quantity of wine. Now this was a Sunday, and the abbé had come to ask his young companion to share the luxuries with him.

Dantès followed him; his features were no longer contracted, and now wore their usual expression, but there was that in his whole appearance that bespoke one who had come to a fixed and desperate resolve. Faria bent on him his penetrating eye.

“I regret now,” said he, “having helped you in your late inquiries, or having given you the information I did.”

“Why so?” inquired Dantès.

“Because it has instilled a new passion in your heart—that of vengeance.”

Dantès smiled. “Let us talk of something else,” said he.

Again the abbé looked at him, then mournfully shook his head; but in accordance with Dantès’ request, he began to speak of other matters. The elder prisoner was one of those persons whose conversation, like that of all who have experienced many trials, contained many useful and important hints as well as sound information; but it was never egotistical, for the unfortunate man never alluded to his own sorrows. Dantès listened with admiring attention to all he said; some of his remarks corresponded with what he already knew, or applied to the sort of knowledge his nautical life had enabled him to acquire. A part of the good abbé’s words, however, were wholly incomprehensible to him; but, like the aurora which guides the navigator in northern latitudes, opened new vistas to the inquiring mind of the listener, and gave fantastic glimpses of new horizons, enabling him justly to estimate the delight an intellectual mind would have in following one so richly gifted as Faria along the heights of truth, where he was so much at home.

“You must teach me a small part of what you know,” said Dantès, “if only to prevent your growing weary of me. I can well believe that so learned a person as yourself would prefer absolute solitude to being tormented with the company of one as ignorant and uninformed as myself. If you will only agree to my request, I promise you never to mention another word about escaping.”

The abbé smiled.

“Alas, my boy,” said he, “human knowledge is confined within very narrow limits; and when I have taught you mathematics, physics, history, and the three or four modern languages with which I am acquainted, you will know as much as I do myself. Now, it will scarcely require two years for me to communicate to you the stock of learning I possess.”

“Two years!” exclaimed Dantès; “do you really believe I can acquire all these things in so short a time?”

“Not their application, certainly, but their principles you may; to learn is not to know; there are the learners and the learned. Memory makes the one, philosophy the other.”

“But cannot one learn philosophy?”

“Philosophy cannot be taught; it is the application of the sciences to truth; it is like the golden cloud in which the Messiah went up into heaven.”

“Well, then,” said Dantès, “What shall you teach me first? I am in a hurry to begin. I want to learn.”

“Everything,” said the abbé. And that very evening the prisoners sketched a plan of education, to be entered upon the following day. Dantès possessed a prodigious memory, combined with an astonishing quickness and readiness of conception; the mathematical turn of his mind rendered him apt at all kinds of calculation, while his naturally poetical feelings threw a light and pleasing veil over the dry reality of arithmetical computation, or the rigid severity of geometry. He already knew Italian, and had also picked up a little of the Romaic dialect during voyages to the East; and by the aid of these two languages he easily comprehended the construction of all the others, so that at the end of six months he began to speak Spanish, English, and German.

In strict accordance with the promise made to the abbé, Dantès spoke no more of escape. Perhaps the delight his studies afforded him left no room for such thoughts; perhaps the recollection that he had pledged his word (on which his sense of honor was keen) kept him from referring in any way to the possibilities of flight. Days, even months, passed by unheeded in one rapid and instructive course. At the end of a year Dantès was a new man. Dantès observed, however, that Faria, in spite of the relief his society afforded, daily grew sadder; one thought seemed incessantly to harass and distract his mind. Sometimes he would fall into long reveries, sigh heavily and involuntarily, then suddenly rise, and, with folded arms, begin pacing the confined space of his dungeon. One day he stopped all at once, and exclaimed:

“Ah, if there were no sentinel!”

“There shall not be one a minute longer than you please,” said Dantès, who had followed the working of his thoughts as accurately as though his brain were enclosed in crystal so clear as to display its minutest operations.

“I have already told you,” answered the abbé, “that I loathe the idea of shedding blood.”

“And yet the murder, if you choose to call it so, would be simply a measure of self-preservation.”

“No matter! I could never agree to it.”

“Still, you have thought of it?”

“Incessantly, alas!” cried the abbé.

“And you have discovered a means of regaining our freedom, have you not?” asked Dantès eagerly.

"I have; if it were only possible to place a deaf and blind sentinel in the gallery beyond us."

"He shall be both blind and deaf," replied the young man, with an air of determination that made his companion shudder.

"No, no," cried the abbé; "impossible!"

Dantès endeavored to renew the subject; the abbé shook his head in token of disapproval, and refused to make any further response. Three months passed away.

"Are you strong?" the abbé asked one day of Dantès. The young man, in reply, took up the chisel, bent it into the form of a horseshoe, and then as readily straightened it.

"And will you engage not to do any harm to the sentry, except as a last resort?"

"I promise on my honor."

"Then," said the abbé, "we may hope to put our design into execution."

"And how long shall we be in accomplishing the necessary work?"

"At least a year."

"And shall we begin at once?"

"At once."

"We have lost a year to no purpose!" cried Dantès.

"Do you consider the last twelve months to have been wasted?" asked the abbé.

"Forgive me!" cried Edmond, blushing deeply.

"Tut, tut!" answered the abbé, "man is but man after all, and you are about the best specimen of the genus I have ever known. Come, let me show you my plan."

The abbé then showed Dantès the sketch he had made for their escape. It consisted of a plan of his own cell and that of Dantès, with the passage which united them. In this passage he proposed to drive a level as they do in mines; this level would bring the two prisoners immediately beneath the gallery where the sentry kept watch; once there, a large excavation would be made, and one of the flag-stones with which the gallery was paved be so completely loosened that at the desired moment it would give way beneath the feet of the soldier, who, stunned by his fall, would be immediately bound and gagged by Dantès before he had power to offer any resistance. The prisoners were then to make their way

through one of the gallery windows, and to let themselves down from the outer walls by means of the abbé's ladder of cords.

Dantès' eyes sparkled with joy, and he rubbed his hands with delight at the idea of a plan so simple, yet apparently so certain to succeed. That very day the miners began their labors, with a vigor and alacrity proportionate to their long rest from fatigue and their hopes of ultimate success. Nothing interrupted the progress of the work except the necessity that each was under of returning to his cell in anticipation of the turnkey's visits. They had learned to distinguish the almost imperceptible sound of his footsteps as he descended towards their dungeons, and happily, never failed of being prepared for his coming. The fresh earth excavated during their present work, and which would have entirely blocked up the old passage, was thrown, by degrees and with the utmost precaution, out of the window in either Faria's or Dantès' cell, the rubbish being first pulverized so finely that the night wind carried it far away without permitting the smallest trace to remain.

More than a year had been consumed in this undertaking, the only tools for which had been a chisel, a knife, and a wooden lever; Faria still continuing to instruct Dantès by conversing with him, sometimes in one language, sometimes in another; at others, relating to him the history of nations and great men who from time to time have risen to fame and trodden the path of glory. The abbé was a man of the world, and had, moreover, mixed in the first society of the day; he wore an air of melancholy dignity which Dantès, thanks to the imitative powers bestowed on him by nature, easily acquired, as well as that outward polish and politeness he had before been wanting in, and which is seldom possessed except by those who have been placed in constant intercourse with persons of high birth and breeding.

At the end of fifteen months the level was finished, and the excavation completed beneath the gallery, and the two workmen could distinctly hear the measured tread of the sentinel as he paced to and fro over their heads. Compelled, as they were, to await a night sufficiently dark to favor their flight, they were obliged to defer their final attempt till that auspicious moment should arrive; their greatest dread now was lest the stone through which the sentry was doomed to fall should give way before its right time, and this they had in some measure provided against by propping it up with a small beam which they had discovered in the walls through which they had worked their way. Dantès was occupied in arranging this piece of wood when he heard Faria, who had remained in Edmond's cell for the purpose of cutting a peg to secure their rope-ladder, call to him in a tone indicative of great suffering. Dantès hastened to his

dungeon, where he found him standing in the middle of the room, pale as death, his forehead streaming with perspiration, and his hands clenched tightly together.

“Gracious heavens!” exclaimed Dantès, “what is the matter? what has happened?”

“Quick! quick!” returned the abbé, “listen to what I have to say.”

Dantès looked in fear and wonder at the livid countenance of Faria, whose eyes, already dull and sunken, were surrounded by purple circles, while his lips were white as those of a corpse, and his very hair seemed to stand on end.

“Tell me, I beseech you, what ails you?” cried Dantès, letting his chisel fall to the floor.

“Alas,” faltered out the abbé, “all is over with me. I am seized with a terrible, perhaps mortal illness; I can feel that the paroxysm is fast approaching. I had a similar attack the year previous to my imprisonment. This malady admits but of one remedy; I will tell you what that is. Go into my cell as quickly as you can; draw out one of the feet that support the bed; you will find it has been hollowed out for the purpose of containing a small phial you will see there half-filled with a red-looking fluid. Bring it to me—or rather—no, no!—I may be found here, therefore help me back to my room while I have the strength to drag myself along. Who knows what may happen, or how long the attack may last?”

In spite of the magnitude of the misfortune which thus suddenly frustrated his hopes, Dantès did not lose his presence of mind, but descended into the passage, dragging his unfortunate companion with him; then, half-carrying, half-supporting him, he managed to reach the abbé’s chamber, when he immediately laid the sufferer on his bed.

“Thanks,” said the poor abbé, shivering as though his veins were filled with ice. “I am about to be seized with a fit of catalepsy; when it comes to its height I shall probably lie still and motionless as though dead, uttering neither sigh nor groan. On the other hand, the symptoms may be much more violent, and cause me to fall into fearful convulsions, foam at the mouth, and cry out loudly. Take care my cries are not heard, for if they are it is more than probable I should be removed to another part of the prison, and we be separated forever. When I become quite motionless, cold, and rigid as a corpse, then, and not before,—be careful about this,—force open my teeth with the knife, pour from eight to ten drops of the liquor contained in the phial down my throat, and I may perhaps revive.”

“Perhaps!” exclaimed Dantès in grief-stricken tones.

“Help! help!” cried the abbé, “I—I—die—I——”

So sudden and violent was the fit that the unfortunate prisoner was unable to complete the sentence; a violent convulsion shook his whole frame, his eyes started from their sockets, his mouth was drawn on one side, his cheeks became purple, he struggled, foamed, dashed himself about, and uttered the most dreadful cries, which, however, Dantès prevented from being heard by covering his head with the blanket. The fit lasted two hours; then, more helpless than an infant, and colder and paler than marble, more crushed and broken than a reed trampled under foot, he fell back, doubled up in one last convulsion, and became as rigid as a corpse.

Edmond waited till life seemed extinct in the body of his friend, then, taking up the knife, he with difficulty forced open the closely fixed jaws, carefully administered the appointed number of drops, and anxiously awaited the result. An hour passed away and the old man gave no sign of returning animation. Dantès began to fear he had delayed too long ere he administered the remedy, and, thrusting his hands into his hair, continued gazing on the lifeless features of his friend. At length a slight color tinged the livid cheeks, consciousness returned to the dull, open eyeballs, a faint sigh issued from the lips, and the sufferer made a feeble effort to move.

“He is saved! he is saved!” cried Dantès in a paroxysm of delight.

The sick man was not yet able to speak, but he pointed with evident anxiety towards the door. Dantès listened, and plainly distinguished the approaching steps of the jailer. It was therefore near seven o’clock; but Edmond’s anxiety had put all thoughts of time out of his head.

The young man sprang to the entrance, darted through it, carefully drawing the stone over the opening, and hurried to his cell. He had scarcely done so before the door opened, and the jailer saw the prisoner seated as usual on the side of his bed. Almost before the key had turned in the lock, and before the departing steps of the jailer had died away in the long corridor he had to traverse, Dantès, whose restless anxiety concerning his friend left him no desire to touch the food brought him, hurried back to the abbé’s chamber, and raising the stone by pressing his head against it, was soon beside the sick man’s couch. Faria had now fully regained his consciousness, but he still lay helpless and exhausted on his miserable bed.

“I did not expect to see you again,” said he feebly, to Dantès.

“And why not?” asked the young man. “Did you fancy yourself dying?”

“No, I had no such idea; but, knowing that all was ready for flight, I thought

you might have made your escape."

The deep glow of indignation suffused the cheeks of Dantès.

"Without you? Did you really think me capable of that?"

"At least," said the abbé, "I now see how wrong such an opinion would have been. Alas, alas! I am fearfully exhausted and debilitated by this attack."

"Be of good cheer," replied Dantès; "your strength will return." And as he spoke he seated himself near the bed beside Faria, and took his hands. The abbé shook his head.

"The last attack I had," said he, "lasted but half an hour, and after it I was hungry, and got up without help; now I can move neither my right arm nor leg, and my head seems uncomfortable, which shows that there has been a suffusion of blood on the brain. The third attack will either carry me off, or leave me paralyzed for life."

"No, no," cried Dantès; "you are mistaken—you will not die! And your third attack (if, indeed, you should have another) will find you at liberty. We shall save you another time, as we have done this, only with a better chance of success, because we shall be able to command every requisite assistance."

"My good Edmond," answered the abbé, "be not deceived. The attack which has just passed away, condemns me forever to the walls of a prison. None can fly from a dungeon who cannot walk."

"Well, we will wait,—a week, a month, two months, if need be,—and meanwhile your strength will return. Everything is in readiness for our flight, and we can select any time we choose. As soon as you feel able to swim we will go."

"I shall never swim again," replied Faria. "This arm is paralyzed; not for a time, but forever. Lift it, and judge if I am mistaken."

The young man raised the arm, which fell back by its own weight, perfectly inanimate and helpless. A sigh escaped him.

"You are convinced now, Edmond, are you not?" asked the abbé. "Depend upon it, I know what I say. Since the first attack I experienced of this malady, I have continually reflected on it. Indeed, I expected it, for it is a family inheritance; both my father and grandfather died of it in a third attack. The physician who prepared for me the remedy I have twice successfully taken, was no other than the celebrated Cabanis, and he predicted a similar end for me."

arm, what difference will that make? I can take you on my shoulders, and swim for both of us."

"My son," said the abbé, "you, who are a sailor and a swimmer, must know as well as I do that a man so loaded would sink before he had done fifty strokes. Cease, then, to allow yourself to be duped by vain hopes, that even your own excellent heart refuses to believe in. Here I shall remain till the hour of my deliverance arrives, and that, in all human probability, will be the hour of my death. As for you, who are young and active, delay not on my account, but fly—go—I give you back your promise."

"It is well," said Dantès. "Then I shall also remain." Then, rising and extending his hand with an air of solemnity over the old man's head, he slowly added, "By the blood of Christ I swear never to leave you while you live."

Faria gazed fondly on his noble-minded, single-hearted, high-principled young friend, and read in his countenance ample confirmation of the sincerity of his devotion and the loyalty of his purpose.

"Thanks," murmured the invalid, extending one hand. "I accept. You may one of these days reap the reward of your disinterested devotion. But as I cannot, and you will not, quit this place, it becomes necessary to fill up the excavation beneath the soldier's gallery; he might, by chance, hear the hollow sound of his footsteps, and call the attention of his officer to the circumstance. That would bring about a discovery which would inevitably lead to our being separated. Go, then, and set about this work, in which, unhappily, I can offer you no assistance; keep at it all night, if necessary, and do not return here tomorrow till after the jailer has visited me. I shall have something of the greatest importance to communicate to you."

Dantès took the hand of the abbé in his, and affectionately pressed it. Faria smiled encouragingly on him, and the young man retired to his task, in the spirit of obedience and respect which he had sworn to show towards his aged friend.

Chapter 18. The Treasure

When Dantès returned next morning to the chamber of his companion in captivity, he found Faria seated and looking composed. In the ray of light which entered by the narrow window of his cell, he held open in his left hand, of which alone, it will be recollected, he retained the use, a sheet of paper, which, from being constantly rolled into a small compass, had the form of a cylinder, and was not easily kept open. He did not speak, but showed the paper to Dantès.

“What is that?” he inquired.

“Look at it,” said the abbé with a smile.

“I have looked at it with all possible attention,” said Dantès, “and I only see a half-burnt paper, on which are traces of Gothic characters inscribed with a peculiar kind of ink.”

“This paper, my friend,” said Faria, “I may now avow to you, since I have the proof of your fidelity—this paper is my treasure, of which, from this day forth, one-half belongs to you.”

The sweat started forth on Dantès’ brow. Until this day and for how long a time!—he had refrained from talking of the treasure, which had brought upon the abbé the accusation of madness. With his instinctive delicacy Edmond had preferred avoiding any touch on this painful chord, and Faria had been equally silent. He had taken the silence of the old man for a return to reason; and now these few words uttered by Faria, after so painful a crisis, seemed to indicate a serious relapse into mental alienation.

“Your treasure?” stammered Dantès. Faria smiled.

“Yes,” said he. “You have, indeed, a noble nature, Edmond, and I see by your paleness and agitation what is passing in your heart at this moment. No, be assured, I am not mad. This treasure exists, Dantès, and if I have not been allowed to possess it, you will. Yes—you. No one would listen or believe me, because everyone thought me mad; but you, who must know that I am not, listen to me, and believe me so afterwards if you will.”

“Alas,” murmured Edmond to himself, “this is a terrible relapse! There was only this blow wanting.” Then he said aloud, “My dear friend, your attack has,

perhaps, fatigued you; had you not better repose awhile? Tomorrow, if you will, I will hear your narrative; but today I wish to nurse you carefully. Besides," he said, "a treasure is not a thing we need hurry about."

"On the contrary, it is a matter of the utmost importance, Edmond!" replied the old man. "Who knows if tomorrow, or the next day after, the third attack may not come on? and then must not all be over? Yes, indeed, I have often thought with a bitter joy that these riches, which would make the wealth of a dozen families, will be forever lost to those men who persecute me. This idea was one of vengeance to me, and I tasted it slowly in the night of my dungeon and the despair of my captivity. But now I have forgiven the world for the love of you; now that I see you, young and with a promising future,—now that I think of all that may result to you in the good fortune of such a disclosure, I shudder at any delay, and tremble lest I should not assure to one as worthy as yourself the possession of so vast an amount of hidden wealth."

Edmond turned away his head with a sigh.

"You persist in your incredulity, Edmond," continued Faria. "My words have not convinced you. I see you require proofs. Well, then, read this paper, which I have never shown to anyone."

"Tomorrow, my dear friend," said Edmond, desirous of not yielding to the old man's madness. "I thought it was understood that we should not talk of that until tomorrow."

"Then we will not talk of it until tomorrow; but read this paper today."

"I will not irritate him," thought Edmond, and taking the paper, of which half was wanting,—having been burnt, no doubt, by some accident,—he read:

"this treasure, which may amount to two...
of Roman crowns in the most distant a...
of the second opening wh...
declare to belong to him alo...
heir.

"25th April, 149"

"Well!" said Faria, when the young man had finished reading it.

"Why," replied Dantès, "I see nothing but broken lines and unconnected words, which are rendered illegible by fire."

"Yes, to you, my friend, who read them for the first time; but not for me, who have grown pale over them by many nights' study, and have reconstructed every

phrase, completed every thought.”

“And do you believe you have discovered the hidden meaning?”

“I am sure I have, and you shall judge for yourself; but first listen to the history of this paper.”

“Silence!” exclaimed Dantès. “Steps approach—I go—adieu!”

And Dantès, happy to escape the history and explanation which would be sure to confirm his belief in his friend’s mental instability, glided like a snake along the narrow passage; while Faria, restored by his alarm to a certain amount of activity, pushed the stone into place with his foot, and covered it with a mat in order the more effectually to avoid discovery.

It was the governor, who, hearing of Faria’s illness from the jailer, had come in person to see him.

Faria sat up to receive him, avoiding all gestures in order that he might conceal from the governor the paralysis that had already half stricken him with death. His fear was lest the governor, touched with pity, might order him to be removed to better quarters, and thus separate him from his young companion. But fortunately this was not the case, and the governor left him, convinced that the poor madman, for whom in his heart he felt a kind of affection, was only troubled with a slight indisposition.

During this time, Edmond, seated on his bed with his head in his hands, tried to collect his scattered thoughts. Faria, since their first acquaintance, had been on all points so rational and logical, so wonderfully sagacious, in fact, that he could not understand how so much wisdom on all points could be allied with madness. Was Faria deceived as to his treasure, or was all the world deceived as to Faria?

Dantès remained in his cell all day, not daring to return to his friend, thinking thus to defer the moment when he should be convinced, once for all, that the abbé was mad—such a conviction would be so terrible!

But, towards the evening after the hour for the customary visit had gone by, Faria, not seeing the young man appear, tried to move and get over the distance which separated them. Edmond shuddered when he heard the painful efforts which the old man made to drag himself along; his leg was inert, and he could no longer make use of one arm. Edmond was obliged to assist him, for otherwise he would not have been able to enter by the small aperture which led to Dantès’ chamber.

“Here I am, pursuing you remorselessly,” he said with a benignant smile. “You thought to escape my munificence, but it is in vain. Listen to me.”

Edmond saw there was no escape, and placing the old man on his bed, he seated himself on the stool beside him.

“You know,” said the abbé, “that I was the secretary and intimate friend of Cardinal Spada, the last of the princes of that name. I owe to this worthy lord all the happiness I ever knew. He was not rich, although the wealth of his family had passed into a proverb, and I heard the phrase very often, ‘As rich as a Spada.’ But he, like public rumor, lived on this reputation for wealth; his palace was my paradise. I was tutor to his nephews, who are dead; and when he was alone in the world, I tried by absolute devotion to his will, to make up to him all he had done for me during ten years of unremitting kindness. The cardinal’s house had no secrets for me. I had often seen my noble patron annotating ancient volumes, and eagerly searching amongst dusty family manuscripts. One day when I was reproaching him for his unavailing searches, and deplored the prostration of mind that followed them, he looked at me, and, smiling bitterly, opened a volume relating to the History of the City of Rome. There, in the twentieth chapter of the Life of Pope Alexander VI., were the following lines, which I can never forget:—

“The great wars of Romagna had ended; Cæsar Borgia, who had completed his conquest, had need of money to purchase all Italy. The pope had also need of money to bring matters to an end with Louis XII. King of France, who was formidable still in spite of his recent reverses; and it was necessary, therefore, to have recourse to some profitable scheme, which was a matter of great difficulty in the impoverished condition of exhausted Italy. His holiness had an idea. He determined to make two cardinals.’

“By choosing two of the greatest personages of Rome, especially rich men —*this* was the return the Holy Father looked for. In the first place, he could sell the great appointments and splendid offices which the cardinals already held; and then he had the two hats to sell besides. There was a third point in view, which will appear hereafter.

“The pope and Cæsar Borgia first found the two future cardinals; they were Giovanni Rospigliosi, who held four of the highest dignities of the Holy See, and Cæsar Spada, one of the noblest and richest of the Roman nobility; both felt the high honor of such a favor from the pope. They were ambitious, and Cæsar Borgia soon found purchasers for their appointments. The result was, that Rospigliosi and Spada paid for being cardinals, and eight other persons paid for the offices the cardinals held before their elevation, and thus eight hundred thousand crowns entered into the coffers of the speculators.

"It is time now to proceed to the last part of the speculation. The pope heaped attentions upon Rospigliosi and Spada, conferred upon them the insignia of the cardinalate, and induced them to arrange their affairs and take up their residence at Rome. Then the pope and Cæsar Borgia invited the two cardinals to dinner. This was a matter of dispute between the Holy Father and his son. Cæsar thought they could make use of one of the means which he always had ready for his friends, that is to say, in the first place, the famous key which was given to certain persons with the request that they go and open a designated cupboard. This key was furnished with a small iron point,—a negligence on the part of the locksmith. When this was pressed to effect the opening of the cupboard, of which the lock was difficult, the person was pricked by this small point, and died next day. Then there was the ring with the lion's head, which Cæsar wore when he wanted to greet his friends with a clasp of the hand. The lion bit the hand thus favored, and at the end of twenty-four hours, the bite was mortal.

"Cæsar proposed to his father, that they should either ask the cardinals to open the cupboard, or shake hands with them; but Alexander VI. replied: 'Now as to the worthy cardinals, Spada and Rospigliosi, let us ask both of them to dinner, something tells me that we shall get that money back. Besides, you forget, Cæsar, an indigestion declares itself immediately, while a prick or a bite occasions a delay of a day or two.' Cæsar gave way before such cogent reasoning, and the cardinals were consequently invited to dinner.

"The table was laid in a vineyard belonging to the pope, near San Pierdarena, a charming retreat which the cardinals knew very well by report. Rospigliosi, quite set up with his new dignities, went with a good appetite and his most ingratiating manner. Spada, a prudent man, and greatly attached to his only nephew, a young captain of the highest promise, took paper and pen, and made his will. He then sent word to his nephew to wait for him near the vineyard; but it appeared the servant did not find him.

"Spada knew what these invitations meant; since Christianity, so eminently civilizing, had made progress in Rome, it was no longer a centurion who came from the tyrant with a message, 'Cæsar wills that you die.' but it was a legate à latere, who came with a smile on his lips to say from the pope, 'His holiness requests you to dine with him.'

"Spada set out about two o'clock to San Pierdarena. The pope awaited him. The first sight that attracted the eyes of Spada was that of his nephew, in full costume, and Cæsar Borgia paying him most marked attentions. Spada turned pale, as Cæsar looked at him with an ironical air, which proved that he had anticipated all, and that the snare was well spread.

"They began dinner and Spada was only able to inquire of his nephew if he had received his message. The nephew replied no; perfectly comprehending the meaning of the question. It was too late, for he had already drunk a glass of excellent wine, placed for him expressly by the pope's butler. Spada at the same moment saw another bottle approach him, which he was pressed to taste. An hour afterwards a physician declared they were both poisoned through eating mushrooms. Spada died on the threshold of the vineyard; the nephew expired at his own door, making signs which his wife could not comprehend.

"Then Cæsar and the pope hastened to lay hands on the heritage, under pretense of seeking for the papers of the dead man. But the inheritance consisted in this only, a scrap of paper on which Spada had written:—'I bequeath to my beloved nephew my coffers, my books, and, amongst others, my breviary with the gold corners, which I beg he will preserve in remembrance of his affectionate uncle.'

"The heirs sought everywhere, admired the breviary, laid hands on the furniture, and were greatly astonished that Spada, the rich man, was really the most miserable of uncles—no treasures—unless they were those of science, contained in the library and laboratories. That was all. Cæsar and his father searched, examined, scrutinized, but found nothing, or at least very little; not exceeding a few thousand crowns in plate, and about the same in ready money; but the nephew had time to say to his wife before he expired: 'Look well among my uncle's papers; there is a will.'

"They sought even more thoroughly than the august heirs had done, but it was fruitless. There were two palaces and a vineyard behind the Palatine Hill; but in these days landed property had not much value, and the two palaces and the vineyard remained to the family since they were beneath the rapacity of the pope and his son. Months and years rolled on. Alexander VI. died, poisoned,—you know by what mistake. Cæsar, poisoned at the same time, escaped by shedding his skin like a snake; but the new skin was spotted by the poison till it looked like a tiger's. Then, compelled to quit Rome, he went and got himself obscurely killed in a night skirmish, scarcely noticed in history.

"After the pope's death and his son's exile, it was supposed that the Spada family would resume the splendid position they had held before the cardinal's time; but this was not the case. The Spadas remained in doubtful ease, a mystery hung over this dark affair, and the public rumor was, that Cæsar, a better politician than his father, had carried off from the pope the fortune of the two cardinals. I say the two, because Cardinal Rospigliosi, who had not taken any precaution, was completely despoiled.

"Up to this point," said Faria, interrupting the thread of his narrative, "this seems to you very meaningless, no doubt, eh?"

"Oh, my friend," cried Dantès, "on the contrary, it seems as if I were reading a most interesting narrative; go on, I beg of you."

"I will. The family began to get accustomed to their obscurity. Years rolled on, and amongst the descendants some were soldiers, others diplomatists; some churchmen, some bankers; some grew rich, and some were ruined. I come now to the last of the family, whose secretary I was—the Count of Spada. I had often heard him complain of the disproportion of his rank with his fortune; and I advised him to invest all he had in an annuity. He did so, and thus doubled his income. The celebrated breviary remained in the family, and was in the count's possession. It had been handed down from father to son; for the singular clause of the only will that had been found, had caused it to be regarded as a genuine relic, preserved in the family with superstitious veneration. It was an illuminated book, with beautiful Gothic characters, and so weighty with gold, that a servant always carried it before the cardinal on days of great solemnity.

"At the sight of papers of all sorts,—titles, contracts, parchments, which were kept in the archives of the family, all descending from the poisoned cardinal, I in my turn examined the immense bundles of documents, like twenty servitors, stewards, secretaries before me; but in spite of the most exhaustive researches, I found—nothing. Yet I had read, I had even written a precise history of the Borgia family, for the sole purpose of assuring myself whether any increase of fortune had occurred to them on the death of the Cardinal Cæsar Spada; but could only trace the acquisition of the property of the Cardinal Rospigliosi, his companion in misfortune.

"I was then almost assured that the inheritance had neither profited the Borgias nor the family, but had remained unpossessed like the treasures of the Arabian Nights, which slept in the bosom of the earth under the eyes of the genie. I searched, ransacked, counted, calculated a thousand and a thousand times the income and expenditure of the family for three hundred years. It was useless. I remained in my ignorance, and the Count of Spada in his poverty.

"My patron died. He had reserved from his annuity his family papers, his library, composed of five thousand volumes, and his famous breviary. All these he bequeathed to me, with a thousand Roman crowns, which he had in ready money, on condition that I would have anniversary masses said for the repose of his soul, and that I would draw up a genealogical tree and history of his house. All this I did scrupulously. Be easy, my dear Edmond, we are near the conclusion.

"In 1807, a month before I was arrested, and a fortnight after the death of the Count of Spada, on the 25th of December (you will see presently how the date became fixed in my memory), I was reading, for the thousandth time, the papers I was arranging, for the palace was sold to a stranger, and I was going to leave Rome and settle at Florence, intending to take with me twelve thousand francs I possessed, my library, and the famous breviary, when, tired with my constant labor at the same thing, and overcome by a heavy dinner I had eaten, my head dropped on my hands, and I fell asleep about three o'clock in the afternoon.

0243m

"I awoke as the clock was striking six. I raised my head; I was in utter darkness. I rang for a light, but, as no one came, I determined to find one for myself. It was indeed but anticipating the simple manners which I should soon be under the necessity of adopting. I took a wax-candle in one hand, and with the other groped about for a piece of paper (my match-box being empty), with which I proposed to get a light from the small flame still playing on the embers. Fearing, however, to make use of any valuable piece of paper, I hesitated for a moment, then recollecting that I had seen in the famous breviary, which was on the table beside me, an old paper quite yellow with age, and which had served as a marker for centuries, kept there by the request of the heirs. I felt for it, found it, twisted it up together, and putting it into the expiring flame, set light to it.

"But beneath my fingers, as if by magic, in proportion as the fire ascended, I saw yellowish characters appear on the paper. I grasped it in my hand, put out the flame as quickly as I could, lighted my taper in the fire itself, and opened the crumpled paper with inexpressible emotion, recognizing, when I had done so, that these characters had been traced in mysterious and sympathetic ink, only appearing when exposed to the fire; nearly one-third of the paper had been consumed by the flame. It was that paper you read this morning; read it again, Dantès, and then I will complete for you the incomplete words and unconnected sense."

Faria, with an air of triumph, offered the paper to Dantès, who this time read the following words, traced with an ink of a reddish color resembling rust:

"This 25th day of April, 1498, be...
Alexander VI., and fearing that not...
he may desire to become my heir, and re...
and Bentivoglio, who were poisoned,...
my sole heir, that I have bu...
and has visited with me, that is, in..."

Island of Monte Cristo, all I poss...
jewels, diamonds, gems; that I alone...
may amount to nearly two mil...
will find on raising the twentieth ro...
creek to the east in a right line. Two open...
in these caves; the treasure is in the furthest a...
which treasure I bequeath and leave en...
as my sole heir.
“25th April, 1498.
“Cæs...

“And now,” said the abbé, “read this other paper;” and he presented to Dantès a second leaf with fragments of lines written on it, which Edmond read as follows:

“...ing invited to dine by his Holiness
...content with making me pay for my hat,
...serves for me the fate of Cardinals Caprara
...I declare to my nephew, Guido Spada
...ried in a place he knows
...the caves of the small
...essed of ingots, gold, money,
...know of the existence of this treasure, which
...lions of Roman crowns, and which he
...ck from the small
...ings have been made
...ngle in the second;
...tire to him
...ar † Spada.”

Faria followed him with an excited look.

“And now,” he said, when he saw that Dantès had read the last line, “put the two fragments together, and judge for yourself.” Dantès obeyed, and the conjoined pieces gave the following:

0245m

“This 25th day of April, 1498, be...ing invited to dine by his Holiness Alexander VI., and fearing that not...content with making me pay for my hat, he may desire to become my heir, and re...serves for me the fate of Cardinals

Caprara and Bentivoglio, who were poisoned,...I declare to my nephew, Guido Spada, my sole heir, that I have buried in a place he knows and has visited with me, that is, in...the caves of the small Island of Monte Cristo, all I possessed of ingots, gold, money, jewels, diamonds, gems; that I alone...know of the existence of this treasure, which may amount to nearly two millions of Roman crowns, and which he will find on raising the twentieth rock from the small creek to the east in a right line. Two openings have been made in these caves; the treasure is in the furthest angle in the second; which treasure I bequeath and leave entire to him as my sole heir. "25th April, 1498. "Cæsar † Spada."

"Well, do you comprehend now?" inquired Faria.

"It is the declaration of Cardinal Spada, and the will so long sought for," replied Edmond, still incredulous.

"Yes; a thousand times, yes!"

"And who completed it as it now is?"

"I did. Aided by the remaining fragment, I guessed the rest; measuring the length of the lines by those of the paper, and divining the hidden meaning by means of what was in part revealed, as we are guided in a cavern by the small ray of light above us."

"And what did you do when you arrived at this conclusion?"

"I resolved to set out, and did set out at that very instant, carrying with me the beginning of my great work, the unity of the Italian kingdom; but for some time the imperial police (who at this period, quite contrary to what Napoleon desired so soon as he had a son born to him, wished for a partition of provinces) had their eyes on me; and my hasty departure, the cause of which they were unable to guess, having aroused their suspicions, I was arrested at the very moment I was leaving Piombino.

"Now," continued Faria, addressing Dantès with an almost paternal expression, "now, my dear fellow, you know as much as I do myself. If we ever escape together, half this treasure is yours; if I die here, and you escape alone, the whole belongs to you."

"But," inquired Dantès hesitating, "has this treasure no more legitimate possessor in the world than ourselves?"

"No, no, be easy on that score; the family is extinct. The last Count of Spada, moreover, made me his heir, bequeathing to me this symbolic breviary, he bequeathed to me all it contained; no, no, make your mind satisfied on that point. If we lay hands on this fortune, we may enjoy it without remorse."

“And you say this treasure amounts to——”

“Two millions of Roman crowns; nearly thirteen millions of our money.”²

“Impossible!” said Dantès, staggered at the enormous amount.

“Impossible? and why?” asked the old man. “The Spada family was one of the oldest and most powerful families of the fifteenth century; and in those times, when other opportunities for investment were wanting, such accumulations of gold and jewels were by no means rare; there are at this day Roman families perishing of hunger, though possessed of nearly a million in diamonds and jewels, handed down by entail, and which they cannot touch.”

Edmond thought he was in a dream—he wavered between incredulity and joy.

“I have only kept this secret so long from you,” continued Faria, “that I might test your character, and then surprise you. Had we escaped before my attack of catalepsy, I should have conducted you to Monte Cristo; now,” he added, with a sigh, “it is you who will conduct me thither. Well, Dantès, you do not thank me?”

“This treasure belongs to you, my dear friend,” replied Dantès, “and to you only. I have no right to it. I am no relation of yours.”

“You are my son, Dantès,” exclaimed the old man. “You are the child of my captivity. My profession condemns me to celibacy. God has sent you to me to console, at one and the same time, the man who could not be a father, and the prisoner who could not get free.”

And Faria extended the arm of which alone the use remained to him to the young man, who threw himself upon his neck and wept.

Chapter 19. The Third Attack

Now that this treasure, which had so long been the object of the abbé's meditations, could insure the future happiness of him whom Faria really loved as a son, it had doubled its value in his eyes, and every day he expatiated on the amount, explaining to Dantès all the good which, with thirteen or fourteen millions of francs, a man could do in these days to his friends; and then Dantès' countenance became gloomy, for the oath of vengeance he had taken recurred to his memory, and he reflected how much ill, in these times, a man with thirteen or fourteen millions could do to his enemies.

The abbé did not know the Island of Monte Cristo; but Dantès knew it, and had often passed it, situated twenty-five miles from Pianosa, between Corsica and the Island of Elba, and had once touched there. This island was, always had been, and still is, completely deserted. It is a rock of almost conical form, which looks as though it had been thrust up by volcanic force from the depth to the surface of the ocean. Dantès drew a plan of the island for Faria, and Faria gave Dantès advice as to the means he should employ to recover the treasure. But Dantès was far from being as enthusiastic and confident as the old man. It was past a question now that Faria was not a lunatic, and the way in which he had achieved the discovery, which had given rise to the suspicion of his madness, increased Edmond's admiration of him; but at the same time Dantès could not believe that the deposit, supposing it had ever existed, still existed; and though he considered the treasure as by no means chimerical, he yet believed it was no longer there.

However, as if fate resolved on depriving the prisoners of their last chance, and making them understand that they were condemned to perpetual imprisonment, a new misfortune befell them; the gallery on the sea side, which had long been in ruins, was rebuilt. They had repaired it completely, and stopped up with vast masses of stone the hole Dantès had partly filled in. But for this precaution, which, it will be remembered, the abbé had made to Edmond, the misfortune would have been still greater, for their attempt to escape would have been detected, and they would undoubtedly have been separated. Thus a new, a stronger, and more inexorable barrier was interposed to cut off the realization of their hopes.

“You see,” said the young man, with an air of sorrowful resignation, to Faria, “that God deems it right to take from me any claim to merit for what you call my devotion to you. I have promised to remain forever with you, and now I could not break my promise if I would. The treasure will be no more mine than yours, and neither of us will quit this prison. But my real treasure is not that, my dear friend, which awaits me beneath the sombre rocks of Monte Cristo, it is your presence, our living together five or six hours a day, in spite of our jailers; it is the rays of intelligence you have elicited from my brain, the languages you have implanted in my memory, and which have taken root there with all their philological ramifications. These different sciences that you have made so easy to me by the depth of the knowledge you possess of them, and the clearness of the principles to which you have reduced them—this is my treasure, my beloved friend, and with this you have made me rich and happy. Believe me, and take comfort, this is better for me than tons of gold and cases of diamonds, even were they not as problematical as the clouds we see in the morning floating over the sea, which we take for *terra firma*, and which evaporate and vanish as we draw near to them. To have you as long as possible near me, to hear your eloquent speech,—which embellishes my mind, strengthens my soul, and makes my whole frame capable of great and terrible things, if I should ever be free,—so fills my whole existence, that the despair to which I was just on the point of yielding when I knew you, has no longer any hold over me; and this—this is my fortune—not chimerical, but actual. I owe you my real good, my present happiness; and all the sovereigns of the earth, even Cæsar Borgia himself, could not deprive me of this.”

Thus, if not actually happy, yet the days these two unfortunates passed together went quickly. Faria, who for so long a time had kept silence as to the treasure, now perpetually talked of it. As he had prophesied would be the case, he remained paralyzed in the right arm and the left leg, and had given up all hope of ever enjoying it himself. But he was continually thinking over some means of escape for his young companion, and anticipating the pleasure he would enjoy. For fear the letter might be some day lost or stolen, he compelled Dantès to learn it by heart; and Dantès knew it from the first to the last word. Then he destroyed the second portion, assured that if the first were seized, no one would be able to discover its real meaning. Whole hours sometimes passed while Faria was giving instructions to Dantès,—instructions which were to serve him when he was at liberty. Then, once free, from the day and hour and moment when he was so, he could have but one only thought, which was, to gain Monte Cristo by some means, and remain there alone under some pretext which would

arouse no suspicions; and once there, to endeavor to find the wonderful caverns, and search in the appointed spot,—the appointed spot, be it remembered, being the farthest angle in the second opening.

In the meanwhile the hours passed, if not rapidly, at least tolerably. Faria, as we have said, without having recovered the use of his hand and foot, had regained all the clearness of his understanding, and had gradually, besides the moral instructions we have detailed, taught his youthful companion the patient and sublime duty of a prisoner, who learns to make something from nothing. They were thus perpetually employed,—Faria, that he might not see himself grow old; Dantès, for fear of recalling the almost extinct past which now only floated in his memory like a distant light wandering in the night. So life went on for them as it does for those who are not victims of misfortune and whose activities glide along mechanically and tranquilly beneath the eye of Providence.

But beneath this superficial calm there were in the heart of the young man, and perhaps in that of the old man, many repressed desires, many stifled sighs, which found vent when Faria was left alone, and when Edmond returned to his cell.

One night Edmond awoke suddenly, believing that he heard someone calling him. He opened his eyes upon utter darkness. His name, or rather a plaintive voice which essayed to pronounce his name, reached him. He sat up in bed and a cold sweat broke out upon his brow. Undoubtedly the call came from Faria's dungeon.

“Alas,” murmured Edmond; “can it be?”

He moved his bed, drew up the stone, rushed into the passage, and reached the opposite extremity; the secret entrance was open. By the light of the wretched and wavering lamp, of which we have spoken, Dantès saw the old man, pale, but yet erect, clinging to the bedstead. His features were writhing with those horrible symptoms which he already knew, and which had so seriously alarmed him when he saw them for the first time.

“Alas, my dear friend,” said Faria in a resigned tone, “you understand, do you not, and I need not attempt to explain to you?”

Edmond uttered a cry of agony, and, quite out of his senses, rushed towards the door, exclaiming, “Help, help!”

Faria had just sufficient strength to restrain him.

“Silence,” he said, “or you are lost. We must now only think of you, my dear friend, and so act as to render your captivity supportable or your flight possible. It would require years to do again what I have done here, and the results would

be instantly destroyed if our jailers knew we had communicated with each other. Besides, be assured, my dear Edmond, the dungeon I am about to leave will not long remain empty; some other unfortunate being will soon take my place, and to him you will appear like an angel of salvation. Perhaps he will be young, strong, and enduring, like yourself, and will aid you in your escape, while I have been but a hindrance. You will no longer have half a dead body tied to you as a drag to all your movements. At length Providence has done something for you; he restores to you more than he takes away, and it was time I should die."

Edmond could only clasp his hands and exclaim, "Oh, my friend, my friend, speak not thus!" and then resuming all his presence of mind, which had for a moment staggered under this blow, and his strength, which had failed at the words of the old man, he said, "Oh, I have saved you once, and I will save you a second time!" And raising the foot of the bed, he drew out the phial, still a third filled with the red liquor.

"See," he exclaimed, "there remains still some of the magic draught. Quick, quick! tell me what I must do this time; are there any fresh instructions? Speak, my friend; I listen."

"There is not a hope," replied Faria, shaking his head, "but no matter; God wills it that man whom he has created, and in whose heart he has so profoundly rooted the love of life, should do all in his power to preserve that existence, which, however painful it may be, is yet always so dear."

"Oh, yes, yes!" exclaimed Dantès; "and I tell you that I will save you yet."

"Well, then, try. The cold gains upon me. I feel the blood flowing towards my brain. These horrible chills, which make my teeth chatter and seem to dislocate my bones, begin to pervade my whole frame; in five minutes the malady will reach its height, and in a quarter of an hour there will be nothing left of me but a corpse."

"Oh!" exclaimed Dantès, his heart wrung with anguish.

"Do as you did before, only do not wait so long, all the springs of life are now exhausted in me, and death," he continued, looking at his paralyzed arm and leg, "has but half its work to do. If, after having made me swallow twelve drops instead of ten, you see that I do not recover, then pour the rest down my throat. Now lift me on my bed, for I can no longer support myself."

Edmond took the old man in his arms, and laid him on the bed.

"And now, my dear friend," said Faria, "sole consolation of my wretched existence,—you whom Heaven gave me somewhat late, but still gave me, a priceless gift, and for which I am most grateful,—at the moment of separating

from you forever, I wish you all the happiness and all the prosperity you so well deserve. My son, I bless thee!"

The young man cast himself on his knees, leaning his head against the old man's bed.

"Listen, now, to what I say in this my dying moment. The treasure of the Spadas exists. God grants me the boon of vision unrestricted by time or space. I see it in the depths of the inner cavern. My eyes pierce the inmost recesses of the earth, and are dazzled at the sight of so much riches. If you do escape, remember that the poor abbé, whom all the world called mad, was not so. Hasten to Monte Cristo—avail yourself of the fortune—for you have indeed suffered long enough."

A violent convulsion attacked the old man. Dantès raised his head and saw Faria's eyes injected with blood. It seemed as if a flow of blood had ascended from the chest to the head.

"Adieu, adieu!" murmured the old man, clasping Edmond's hand convulsively—"adieu!"

"Oh, no,—no, not yet," he cried; "do not forsake me! Oh, succor him! Help—help—help!"

"Hush! hush!" murmured the dying man, "that they may not separate us if you save me!"

"You are right. Oh, yes, yes; be assured I shall save you! Besides, although you suffer much, you do not seem to be in such agony as you were before."

"Do not mistake! I suffer less because there is in me less strength to endure. At your age we have faith in life; it is the privilege of youth to believe and hope, but old men see death more clearly. Oh, 'tis here—'tis here—'tis over—my sight is gone—my senses fail! Your hand, Dantès! Adieu! adieu!"

And raising himself by a final effort, in which he summoned all his faculties, he said,—"Monte Cristo, forget not Monte Cristo!" And he fell back on the bed.

The crisis was terrible, and a rigid form with twisted limbs, swollen eyelids, and lips flecked with bloody foam, lay on the bed of torture, in place of the intellectual being who so lately rested there.

Dantès took the lamp, placed it on a projecting stone above the bed, whence its tremulous light fell with strange and fantastic ray on the distorted countenance and motionless, stiffened body. With steady gaze he awaited confidently the moment for administering the restorative.

When he believed that the right moment had arrived, he took the knife, pried

open the teeth, which offered less resistance than before, counted one after the other twelve drops, and watched; the phial contained, perhaps, twice as much more. He waited ten minutes, a quarter of an hour, half an hour,—no change took place. Trembling, his hair erect, his brow bathed with perspiration, he counted the seconds by the beating of his heart. Then he thought it was time to make the last trial, and he put the phial to the purple lips of Faria, and without having occasion to force open his jaws, which had remained extended, he poured the whole of the liquid down his throat.

0255m

The draught produced a galvanic effect, a violent trembling pervaded the old man's limbs, his eyes opened until it was fearful to gaze upon them, he heaved a sigh which resembled a shriek, and then his convulsed body returned gradually to its former immobility, the eyes remaining open.

Half an hour, an hour, an hour and a half elapsed, and during this period of anguish, Edmond leaned over his friend, his hand applied to his heart, and felt the body gradually grow cold, and the heart's pulsation become more and more deep and dull, until at length it stopped; the last movement of the heart ceased, the face became livid, the eyes remained open, but the eyeballs were glazed.

It was six o'clock in the morning, the dawn was just breaking, and its feeble ray came into the dungeon, and paled the ineffectual light of the lamp. Strange shadows passed over the countenance of the dead man, and at times gave it the appearance of life. While the struggle between day and night lasted, Dantès still doubted; but as soon as the daylight gained the pre-eminence, he saw that he was alone with a corpse. Then an invincible and extreme terror seized upon him, and he dared not again press the hand that hung out of bed, he dared no longer to gaze on those fixed and vacant eyes, which he tried many times to close, but in vain—they opened again as soon as shut. He extinguished the lamp, carefully concealed it, and then went away, closing as well as he could the entrance to the secret passage by the large stone as he descended.

It was time, for the jailer was coming. On this occasion he began his rounds at Dantès' cell, and on leaving him he went on to Faria's dungeon, taking thither breakfast and some linen. Nothing betokened that the man knew anything of what had occurred. He went on his way.

Dantès was then seized with an indescribable desire to know what was going on in the dungeon of his unfortunate friend. He therefore returned by the subterraneous gallery, and arrived in time to hear the exclamations of the turnkey, who called out for help. Other turnkeys came, and then was heard the

regular tramp of soldiers. Last of all came the governor.

Edmond heard the creaking of the bed as they moved the corpse, heard the voice of the governor, who asked them to throw water on the dead man's face; and seeing that, in spite of this application, the prisoner did not recover, they sent for the doctor. The governor then went out, and words of pity fell on Dantès' listening ears, mingled with brutal laughter.

"Well, well," said one, "the madman has gone to look after his treasure. Good journey to him!"

"With all his millions, he will not have enough to pay for his shroud!" said another.

"Oh," added a third voice, "the shrouds of the Château d'If are not dear!"

0257m

"Perhaps," said one of the previous speakers, "as he was a churchman, they may go to some expense in his behalf."

"They may give him the honors of the sack."

Edmond did not lose a word, but comprehended very little of what was said. The voices soon ceased, and it seemed to him as if everyone had left the cell. Still he dared not to enter, as they might have left some turnkey to watch the dead. He remained, therefore, mute and motionless, hardly venturing to breathe. At the end of an hour, he heard a faint noise, which increased. It was the governor who returned, followed by the doctor and other attendants. There was a moment's silence,—it was evident that the doctor was examining the dead body. The inquiries soon commenced.

The doctor analyzed the symptoms of the malady to which the prisoner had succumbed, and declared that he was dead. Questions and answers followed in a nonchalant manner that made Dantès indignant, for he felt that all the world should have for the poor abbé a love and respect equal to his own.

"I am very sorry for what you tell me," said the governor, replying to the assurance of the doctor, "that the old man is really dead; for he was a quiet, inoffensive prisoner, happy in his folly, and required no watching."

"Ah," added the turnkey, "there was no occasion for watching him; he would have stayed here fifty years, I'll answer for it, without any attempt to escape."

"Still," said the governor, "I believe it will be requisite, notwithstanding your certainty, and not that I doubt your science, but in discharge of my official duty, that we should be perfectly assured that the prisoner is dead."

There was a moment of complete silence, during which Dantès, still listening,

knew that the doctor was examining the corpse a second time.

“You may make your mind easy,” said the doctor; “he is dead. I will answer for that.”

“You know, sir,” said the governor, persisting, “that we are not content in such cases as this with such a simple examination. In spite of all appearances, be so kind, therefore, as to finish your duty by fulfilling the formalities described by law.”

“Let the irons be heated,” said the doctor; “but really it is a useless precaution.”

This order to heat the irons made Dantès shudder. He heard hasty steps, the creaking of a door, people going and coming, and some minutes afterwards a turnkey entered, saying:

“Here is the brazier, lighted.”

There was a moment’s silence, and then was heard the crackling of burning flesh, of which the peculiar and nauseous smell penetrated even behind the wall where Dantès was listening in horror. The perspiration poured forth upon the young man’s brow, and he felt as if he should faint.

“You see, sir, he is really dead,” said the doctor; “this burn in the heel is decisive. The poor fool is cured of his folly, and delivered from his captivity.”

“Wasn’t his name Faria?” inquired one of the officers who accompanied the governor.

0259m

“Yes, sir; and, as he said, it was an ancient name. He was, too, very learned, and rational enough on all points which did not relate to his treasure; but on that, indeed, he was intractable.”

“It is the sort of malady which we call monomania,” said the doctor.

“You had never anything to complain of?” said the governor to the jailer who had charge of the abbé.

“Never, sir,” replied the jailer, “never; on the contrary, he sometimes amused me very much by telling me stories. One day, too, when my wife was ill, he gave me a prescription which cured her.”

“Ah, ah!” said the doctor, “I did not know that I had a rival; but I hope, governor, that you will show him all proper respect in consequence.”

“Yes, yes, make your mind easy, he shall be decently interred in the newest sack we can find. Will that satisfy you?”

"Must this last formality take place in your presence, sir?" inquired a turnkey.

"Certainly. But make haste—I cannot stay here all day." Other footsteps, going and coming, were now heard, and a moment afterwards the noise of rustling canvas reached Dantès' ears, the bed creaked, and the heavy footfall of a man who lifts a weight sounded on the floor; then the bed again creaked under the weight deposited upon it.

"This evening," said the governor.

"Will there be any mass?" asked one of the attendants.

"That is impossible," replied the governor. "The chaplain of the château came to me yesterday to beg for leave of absence, in order to take a trip to Hyères for a week. I told him I would attend to the prisoners in his absence. If the poor abbé had not been in such a hurry, he might have had his requiem."

"Pooh, pooh;" said the doctor, with the impiety usual in persons of his profession; "he is a churchman. God will respect his profession, and not give the devil the wicked delight of sending him a priest." A shout of laughter followed this brutal jest. Meanwhile the operation of putting the body in the sack was going on.

"This evening," said the governor, when the task was ended.

"At what hour?" inquired a turnkey.

"Why, about ten or eleven o'clock."

"Shall we watch by the corpse?"

"Of what use would it be? Shut the dungeon as if he were alive—that is all."

Then the steps retreated, and the voices died away in the distance; the noise of the door, with its creaking hinges and bolts ceased, and a silence more sombre than that of solitude ensued,—the silence of death, which was all-pervasive, and struck its icy chill to the very soul of Dantès.

Then he raised the flag-stone cautiously with his head, and looked carefully around the chamber. It was empty, and Dantès emerged from the tunnel.

Chapter 20. The Cemetery of the Château d'If

On the bed, at full length, and faintly illuminated by the pale light that came from the window, lay a sack of canvas, and under its rude folds was stretched a long and stiffened form; it was Faria's last winding-sheet,—a winding-sheet which, as the turnkey said, cost so little. Everything was in readiness. A barrier had been placed between Dantès and his old friend. No longer could Edmond look into those wide-open eyes which had seemed to be penetrating the mysteries of death; no longer could he clasp the hand which had done so much to make his existence blessed. Faria, the beneficent and cheerful companion, with whom he was accustomed to live so intimately, no longer breathed. He seated himself on the edge of that terrible bed, and fell into melancholy and gloomy reverie.

Alone! he was alone again! again condemned to silence—again face to face with nothingness! Alone!—never again to see the face, never again to hear the voice of the only human being who united him to earth! Was not Faria's fate the better, after all—to solve the problem of life at its source, even at the risk of horrible suffering?

The idea of suicide, which his friend had driven away and kept away by his cheerful presence, now hovered like a phantom over the abbé's dead body.

"If I could die," he said, "I should go where he goes, and should assuredly find him again. But how to die? It is very easy," he went on with a smile; "I will remain here, rush on the first person that opens the door, strangle him, and then they will guillotine me."

But excessive grief is like a storm at sea, where the frail bark is tossed from the depths to the top of the wave. Dantès recoiled from the idea of so infamous a death, and passed suddenly from despair to an ardent desire for life and liberty.

"Die? oh, no," he exclaimed—"not die now, after having lived and suffered so long and so much! Die? yes, had I died years ago; but now to die would be, indeed, to give way to the sarcasm of destiny. No, I want to live; I shall struggle to the very last; I will yet win back the happiness of which I have been deprived. Before I die I must not forget that I have my executioners to punish, and perhaps, too, who knows, some friends to reward. Yet they will forget me here, and I shall

die in my dungeon like Faria."

As he said this, he became silent and gazed straight before him like one overwhelmed with a strange and amazing thought. Suddenly he arose, lifted his hand to his brow as if his brain were giddy, paced twice or thrice round the dungeon, and then paused abruptly by the bed.

"Just God!" he muttered, "whence comes this thought? Is it from thee? Since none but the dead pass freely from this dungeon, let me take the place of the dead!"

Without giving himself time to reconsider his decision, and, indeed, that he might not allow his thoughts to be distracted from his desperate resolution, he bent over the appalling shroud, opened it with the knife which Faria had made, drew the corpse from the sack, and bore it along the tunnel to his own chamber, laid it on his couch, tied around its head the rag he wore at night around his own, covered it with his counterpane, once again kissed the ice-cold brow, and tried vainly to close the resisting eyes, which glared horribly, turned the head towards the wall, so that the jailer might, when he brought the evening meal, believe that he was asleep, as was his frequent custom; entered the tunnel again, drew the bed against the wall, returned to the other cell, took from the hiding-place the needle and thread, flung off his rags, that they might feel only naked flesh beneath the coarse canvas, and getting inside the sack, placed himself in the posture in which the dead body had been laid, and sewed up the mouth of the sack from the inside.

He would have been discovered by the beating of his heart, if by any mischance the jailers had entered at that moment. Dantès might have waited until the evening visit was over, but he was afraid that the governor would change his mind, and order the dead body to be removed earlier. In that case his last hope would have been destroyed.

Now his plans were fully made, and this is what he intended to do. If while he was being carried out the grave-diggers should discover that they were bearing a live instead of a dead body, Dantès did not intend to give them time to recognize him, but with a sudden cut of the knife, he meant to open the sack from top to bottom, and, profiting by their alarm, escape; if they tried to catch him, he would use his knife to better purpose.

0263m

If they took him to the cemetery and laid him in a grave, he would allow himself to be covered with earth, and then, as it was night, the grave-diggers could scarcely have turned their backs before he would have worked his way

through the yielding soil and escaped. He hoped that the weight of earth would not be so great that he could not overcome it. If he was detected in this and the earth proved too heavy, he would be stifled, and then—so much the better, all would be over.

Dantès had not eaten since the preceding evening, but he had not thought of hunger, nor did he think of it now. His situation was too precarious to allow him even time to reflect on any thought but one.

The first risk that Dantès ran was, that the jailer, when he brought him his supper at seven o'clock, might perceive the change that had been made; fortunately, twenty times at least, from misanthropy or fatigue, Dantès had received his jailer in bed, and then the man placed his bread and soup on the table, and went away without saying a word. This time the jailer might not be as silent as usual, but speak to Dantès, and seeing that he received no reply, go to the bed, and thus discover all.

When seven o'clock came, Dantès' agony really began. His hand placed upon his heart was unable to redress its throbings, while, with the other he wiped the perspiration from his temples. From time to time chills ran through his whole body, and clutched his heart in a grasp of ice. Then he thought he was going to die. Yet the hours passed on without any unusual disturbance, and Dantès knew that he had escaped the first peril. It was a good augury.

At length, about the hour the governor had appointed, footsteps were heard on the stairs. Edmond felt that the moment had arrived, summoned up all his courage, held his breath, and would have been happy if at the same time he could have repressed the throbbing of his veins. The footsteps—they were double—paused at the door—and Dantès guessed that the two grave-diggers had come to seek him—this idea was soon converted into certainty, when he heard the noise they made in putting down the hand-bier.

The door opened, and a dim light reached Dantès' eyes through the coarse sack that covered him; he saw two shadows approach his bed, a third remaining at the door with a torch in its hand. The two men, approaching the ends of the bed, took the sack by its extremities.

"He's heavy, though, for an old and thin man," said one, as he raised the head.

"They say every year adds half a pound to the weight of the bones," said another, lifting the feet.

"Have you tied the knot?" inquired the first speaker.

"What would be the use of carrying so much more weight?" was the reply, "I can do that when we get there."

“Yes, you’re right,” replied the companion.

“What’s the knot for?” thought Dantès.

They deposited the supposed corpse on the bier. Edmond stiffened himself in order to play the part of a dead man, and then the party, lighted by the man with the torch, who went first, ascended the stairs. Suddenly he felt the fresh and sharp night air, and Dantès knew that the mistral was blowing. It was a sensation in which pleasure and pain were strangely mingled.

The bearers went on for twenty paces, then stopped, putting the bier down on the ground. One of them went away, and Dantès heard his shoes striking on the pavement.

“Where am I?” he asked himself.

“Really, he is by no means a light load!” said the other bearer, sitting on the edge of the hand-barrow.

Dantès’ first impulse was to escape, but fortunately he did not attempt it.

“Give us a light,” said the other bearer, “or I shall never find what I am looking for.”

The man with the torch complied, although not asked in the most polite terms.

“What can he be looking for?” thought Edmond. “The spade, perhaps.”

An exclamation of satisfaction indicated that the grave-digger had found the object of his search. “Here it is at last,” he said, “not without some trouble, though.”

“Yes,” was the answer, “but it has lost nothing by waiting.”

As he said this, the man came towards Edmond, who heard a heavy metallic substance laid down beside him, and at the same moment a cord was fastened round his feet with sudden and painful violence.

“Well, have you tied the knot?” inquired the grave-digger, who was looking on.

“Yes, and pretty tight too, I can tell you,” was the answer.

“Move on, then.” And the bier was lifted once more, and they proceeded.

They advanced fifty paces farther, and then stopped to open a door, then went forward again. The noise of the waves dashing against the rocks on which the château is built, reached Dantès’ ear distinctly as they went forward.

“Bad weather!” observed one of the bearers; “not a pleasant night for a dip in the sea.”

“Why, yes, the abbé runs a chance of being wet,” said the other; and then there

was a burst of brutal laughter.

Dantès did not comprehend the jest, but his hair stood erect on his head.

“Well, here we are at last,” said one of them.

“A little farther—a little farther,” said the other. “You know very well that the last was stopped on his way, dashed on the rocks, and the governor told us next day that we were careless fellows.”

They ascended five or six more steps, and then Dantès felt that they took him, one by the head and the other by the heels, and swung him to and fro.

“One!” said the grave-diggers, “two! three!”

And at the same instant Dantès felt himself flung into the air like a wounded bird, falling, falling, with a rapidity that made his blood curdle. Although drawn downwards by the heavy weight which hastened his rapid descent, it seemed to him as if the fall lasted for a century. At last, with a horrible splash, he darted like an arrow into the ice-cold water, and as he did so he uttered a shrill cry, stifled in a moment by his immersion beneath the waves.

Dantès had been flung into the sea, and was dragged into its depths by a thirty-six-pound shot tied to his feet.

The sea is the cemetery of the Château d’If.

0267m

Chapter 21. The Island of Tiboulen

Dantès, although stunned and almost suffocated, had sufficient presence of mind to hold his breath, and as his right hand (prepared as he was for every chance) held his knife open, he rapidly ripped up the sack, extricated his arm, and then his body; but in spite of all his efforts to free himself from the shot, he felt it dragging him down still lower. He then bent his body, and by a desperate effort severed the cord that bound his legs, at the moment when it seemed as if he were actually strangled. With a mighty leap he rose to the surface of the sea, while the shot dragged down to the depths the sack that had so nearly become his shroud.

Dantès waited only to get breath, and then dived, in order to avoid being seen. When he arose a second time, he was fifty paces from where he had first sunk. He saw overhead a black and tempestuous sky, across which the wind was driving clouds that occasionally suffered a twinkling star to appear; before him was the vast expanse of waters, sombre and terrible, whose waves foamed and roared as if before the approach of a storm. Behind him, blacker than the sea, blacker than the sky, rose phantom-like the vast stone structure, whose projecting crags seemed like arms extended to seize their prey, and on the highest rock was a torch lighting two figures.

He fancied that these two forms were looking at the sea; doubtless these strange grave-diggers had heard his cry. Dantès dived again, and remained a long time beneath the water. This was an easy feat to him, for he usually attracted a crowd of spectators in the bay before the lighthouse at Marseilles when he swam there, and was unanimously declared to be the best swimmer in the port. When he came up again the light had disappeared.

He must now get his bearings. Ratonneau and Pomègue are the nearest islands of all those that surround the Château d'If, but Ratonneau and Pomègue are inhabited, as is also the islet of Daume. Tiboulen and Lemaire were therefore the safest for Dantès' venture. The islands of Tiboulen and Lemaire are a league from the Château d'If; Dantès, nevertheless, determined to make for them. But how could he find his way in the darkness of the night?

At this moment he saw the light of Planier, gleaming in front of him like a

star. By leaving this light on the right, he kept the Island of Tiboulen a little on the left; by turning to the left, therefore, he would find it. But, as we have said, it was at least a league from the Château d'If to this island. Often in prison Faria had said to him, when he saw him idle and inactive:

“Dantès, you must not give way to this listlessness; you will be drowned if you seek to escape, and your strength has not been properly exercised and prepared for exertion.”

These words rang in Dantès’ ears, even beneath the waves; he hastened to cleave his way through them to see if he had not lost his strength. He found with pleasure that his captivity had taken away nothing of his power, and that he was still master of that element on whose bosom he had so often sported as a boy.

Fear, that relentless pursuer, clogged Dantès’ efforts. He listened for any sound that might be audible, and every time that he rose to the top of a wave he scanned the horizon, and strove to penetrate the darkness. He fancied that every wave behind him was a pursuing boat, and he redoubled his exertions, increasing rapidly his distance from the château, but exhausting his strength. He swam on still, and already the terrible château had disappeared in the darkness. He could not see it, but he *felt* its presence.

An hour passed, during which Dantès, excited by the feeling of freedom, continued to cleave the waves.

“Let us see,” said he, “I have swum above an hour, but as the wind is against me, that has retarded my speed; however, if I am not mistaken, I must be close to Tiboulen. But what if I were mistaken?”

A shudder passed over him. He sought to tread water, in order to rest himself; but the sea was too violent, and he felt that he could not make use of this means of recuperation.

“Well,” said he, “I will swim on until I am worn out, or the cramp seizes me, and then I shall sink;” and he struck out with the energy of despair.

Suddenly the sky seemed to him to become still darker and more dense, and heavy clouds seemed to sweep down towards him; at the same time he felt a sharp pain in his knee. He fancied for a moment that he had been shot, and listened for the report; but he heard nothing. Then he put out his hand, and encountered an obstacle and with another stroke knew that he had gained the shore.

Before him rose a grotesque mass of rocks, that resembled nothing so much as a vast fire petrified at the moment of its most fervent combustion. It was the Island of Tiboulen. Dantès rose, advanced a few steps, and, with a fervent prayer

of gratitude, stretched himself on the granite, which seemed to him softer than down. Then, in spite of the wind and rain, he fell into the deep, sweet sleep of utter exhaustion. At the expiration of an hour Edmond was awakened by the roar of thunder. The tempest was let loose and beating the atmosphere with its mighty wings; from time to time a flash of lightning stretched across the heavens like a fiery serpent, lighting up the clouds that rolled on in vast chaotic waves.

Dantès had not been deceived—he had reached the first of the two islands, which was, in fact, Tiboulen. He knew that it was barren and without shelter; but when the sea became more calm, he resolved to plunge into its waves again, and swim to Lemaire, equally arid, but larger, and consequently better adapted for concealment.

An overhanging rock offered him a temporary shelter, and scarcely had he availed himself of it when the tempest burst forth in all its fury. Edmond felt the trembling of the rock beneath which he lay; the waves, dashing themselves against it, wetted him with their spray. He was safely sheltered, and yet he felt dizzy in the midst of the warring of the elements and the dazzling brightness of the lightning. It seemed to him that the island trembled to its base, and that it would, like a vessel at anchor, break moorings, and bear him off into the centre of the storm.

He then recollect ed that he had not eaten or drunk for four-and-twenty hours. He extended his hands, and drank greedily of the rainwater that had lodged in a hollow of the rock.

As he rose, a flash of lightning, that seemed to rive the remotest heights of heaven, illumined the darkness. By its light, between the Island of Lemaire and Cape Croiselle, a quarter of a league distant, Dantès saw a fishing-boat driven rapidly like a spectre before the power of winds and waves. A second after, he saw it again, approaching with frightful rapidity. Dantès cried at the top of his voice to warn them of their danger, but they saw it themselves. Another flash showed him four men clinging to the shattered mast and the rigging, while a fifth clung to the broken rudder. The men he beheld saw him undoubtedly, for their cries were carried to his ears by the wind. Above the splintered mast a sail rent to tatters was waving; suddenly the ropes that still held it gave way, and it disappeared in the darkness of the night like a vast sea-bird.

At the same moment a violent crash was heard, and cries of distress. Dantès from his rocky perch saw the shattered vessel, and among the fragments the floating forms of the hapless sailors. Then all was dark again.

Dantès ran down the rocks at the risk of being himself dashed to pieces; he

listened, he groped about, but he heard and saw nothing—the cries had ceased, and the tempest continued to rage. By degrees the wind abated, vast gray clouds rolled towards the west, and the blue firmament appeared studded with bright stars. Soon a red streak became visible in the horizon, the waves whitened, a light played over them, and gilded their foaming crests with gold. It was day.

Dantès stood mute and motionless before this majestic spectacle, as if he now beheld it for the first time; and indeed since his captivity in the Château d'If he had forgotten that such scenes were ever to be witnessed. He turned towards the fortress, and looked at both sea and land. The gloomy building rose from the bosom of the ocean with imposing majesty and seemed to dominate the scene. It was about five o'clock. The sea continued to get calmer.

"In two or three hours," thought Dantès, "the turnkey will enter my chamber, find the body of my poor friend, recognize it, seek for me in vain, and give the alarm. Then the tunnel will be discovered; the men who cast me into the sea and who must have heard the cry I uttered, will be questioned. Then boats filled with armed soldiers will pursue the wretched fugitive. The cannon will warn everyone to refuse shelter to a man wandering about naked and famished. The police of Marseilles will be on the alert by land, whilst the governor pursues me by sea. I am cold, I am hungry. I have lost even the knife that saved me. Oh, my God, I have suffered enough surely! Have pity on me, and do for me what I am unable to do for myself."

As Dantès (his eyes turned in the direction of the Château d'If) uttered this prayer, he saw off the farther point of the Island of Pomègue a small vessel with lateen sail skimming the sea like a gull in search of prey; and with his sailor's eye he knew it to be a Genoese tartan. She was coming out of Marseilles harbor, and was standing out to sea rapidly, her sharp prow cleaving through the waves.

"Oh," cried Edmond, "to think that in half an hour I could join her, did I not fear being questioned, detected, and conveyed back to Marseilles! What can I do? What story can I invent? under pretext of trading along the coast, these men, who are in reality smugglers, will prefer selling me to doing a good action. I must wait. But I cannot—I am starving. In a few hours my strength will be utterly exhausted; besides, perhaps I have not been missed at the fortress. I can pass as one of the sailors wrecked last night. My story will be accepted, for there is no one left to contradict me."

As he spoke, Dantès looked toward the spot where the fishing-vessel had been wrecked, and started. The red cap of one of the sailors hung to a point of the rock and some timbers that had formed part of the vessel's keel, floated at the foot of the crag. In an instant Dantès' plan was formed. He swam to the cap,

placed it on his head, seized one of the timbers, and struck out so as to cut across the course the vessel was taking.

"I am saved!" murmured he. And this conviction restored his strength.

He soon saw that the vessel, with the wind dead ahead, was tacking between the Château d'If and the tower of Planier. For an instant he feared lest, instead of keeping in shore, she should stand out to sea; but he soon saw that she would pass, like most vessels bound for Italy, between the islands of Jaros and Calaseraigne.

However, the vessel and the swimmer insensibly neared one another, and in one of its tacks the tartan bore down within a quarter of a mile of him. He rose on the waves, making signs of distress; but no one on board saw him, and the vessel stood on another tack. Dantès would have shouted, but he knew that the wind would drown his voice.

It was then he rejoiced at his precaution in taking the timber, for without it he would have been unable, perhaps, to reach the vessel—certainly to return to shore, should he be unsuccessful in attracting attention.

Dantès, though almost sure as to what course the vessel would take, had yet watched it anxiously until it tacked and stood towards him. Then he advanced; but before they could meet, the vessel again changed her course. By a violent effort he rose half out of the water, waving his cap, and uttering a loud shout peculiar to sailors. This time he was both seen and heard, and the tartan instantly steered towards him. At the same time, he saw they were about to lower the boat.

An instant after, the boat, rowed by two men, advanced rapidly towards him. Dantès let go of the timber, which he now thought to be useless, and swam vigorously to meet them. But he had reckoned too much upon his strength, and then he realized how serviceable the timber had been to him. His arms became stiff, his legs lost their flexibility, and he was almost breathless.

He shouted again. The two sailors redoubled their efforts, and one of them cried in Italian, "Courage!"

The word reached his ear as a wave which he no longer had the strength to surmount passed over his head. He rose again to the surface, struggled with the last desperate effort of a drowning man, uttered a third cry, and felt himself sinking, as if the fatal cannon shot were again tied to his feet. The water passed over his head, and the sky turned gray. A convulsive movement again brought him to the surface. He felt himself seized by the hair, then he saw and heard nothing. He had fainted.

When he opened his eyes Dantès found himself on the deck of the tartan. His

first care was to see what course they were taking. They were rapidly leaving the Château d'If behind. Dantès was so exhausted that the exclamation of joy he uttered was mistaken for a sigh.

As we have said, he was lying on the deck. A sailor was rubbing his limbs with a woollen cloth; another, whom he recognized as the one who had cried out "Courage!" held a gourd full of rum to his mouth; while the third, an old sailor, at once the pilot and captain, looked on with that egotistical pity men feel for a misfortune that they have escaped yesterday, and which may overtake them tomorrow.

A few drops of the rum restored suspended animation, while the friction of his limbs restored their elasticity.

"Who are you?" said the pilot in bad French.

"I am," replied Dantès, in bad Italian, "a Maltese sailor. We were coming from Syracuse laden with grain. The storm of last night overtook us at Cape Morgiou, and we were wrecked on these rocks."

"Where do you come from?"

"From these rocks that I had the good luck to cling to while our captain and the rest of the crew were all lost. I saw your vessel, and fearful of being left to perish on the desolate island, I swam off on a piece of wreckage to try and intercept your course. You have saved my life, and I thank you," continued Dantès. "I was lost when one of your sailors caught hold of my hair."

"It was I," said a sailor of a frank and manly appearance; "and it was time, for you were sinking."

"Yes," returned Dantès, holding out his hand, "I thank you again."

"I almost hesitated, though," replied the sailor; "you looked more like a brigand than an honest man, with your beard six inches, and your hair a foot long."

Dantès recollect ed that his hair and beard had not been cut all the time he was at the Château d'If.

"Yes," said he, "I made a vow, to our Lady of the Grotto not to cut my hair or beard for ten years if I were saved in a moment of danger; but today the vow expires."

"Now what are we to do with you?" said the captain.

"Alas, anything you please. My captain is dead; I have barely escaped; but I am a good sailor. Leave me at the first port you make; I shall be sure to find employment."

“Do you know the Mediterranean?”

“I have sailed over it since my childhood.”

“You know the best harbors?”

“There are few ports that I could not enter or leave with a bandage over my eyes.”

“I say, captain,” said the sailor who had cried “Courage!” to Dantès, “if what he says is true, what hinders his staying with us?”

“If he says true,” said the captain doubtfully. “But in his present condition he will promise anything, and take his chance of keeping it afterwards.”

“I will do more than I promise,” said Dantès.

“We shall see,” returned the other, smiling.

“Where are you going?” asked Dantès.

“To Leghorn.”

“Then why, instead of tacking so frequently, do you not sail nearer the wind?”

“Because we should run straight on to the Island of Rion.”

“You shall pass it by twenty fathoms.”

“Take the helm, and let us see what you know.”

The young man took the helm, felt to see if the vessel answered the rudder promptly and seeing that, without being a first-rate sailor, she yet was tolerably obedient.

“To the sheets,” said he. The four seamen, who composed the crew, obeyed, while the pilot looked on. “Haul taut.”

They obeyed.

“Belay.” This order was also executed; and the vessel passed, as Dantès had predicted, twenty fathoms to windward.

“Bravo!” said the captain.

“Bravo!” repeated the sailors. And they all looked with astonishment at this man whose eye now disclosed an intelligence and his body a vigor they had not thought him capable of showing.

“You see,” said Dantès, quitting the helm, “I shall be of some use to you, at least during the voyage. If you do not want me at Leghorn, you can leave me there, and I will pay you out of the first wages I get, for my food and the clothes you lend me.”

“Ah,” said the captain, “we can agree very well, if you are reasonable.”

“Give me what you give the others, and it will be all right,” returned Dantès.

“That’s not fair,” said the seaman who had saved Dantès; “for you know more than we do.”

“What is that to you, Jacopo?” returned the Captain. “Everyone is free to ask what he pleases.”

“That’s true,” replied Jacopo; “I only make a remark.”

“Well, you would do much better to find him a jacket and a pair of trousers, if you have them.”

“No,” said Jacopo; “but I have a shirt and a pair of trousers.”

“That is all I want,” interrupted Dantès. Jacopo dived into the hold and soon returned with what Edmond wanted.

“Now, then, do you wish for anything else?” said the patron.

“A piece of bread and another glass of the capital rum I tasted, for I have not eaten or drunk for a long time.” He had not tasted food for forty hours. A piece of bread was brought, and Jacopo offered him the gourd.

“Larboard your helm,” cried the captain to the steersman. Dantès glanced that way as he lifted the gourd to his mouth; then paused with hand in mid-air.

“Hollo! what’s the matter at the Château d’If?” said the captain.

A small white cloud, which had attracted Dantès’ attention, crowned the summit of the bastion of the Château d’If. At the same moment the faint report of a gun was heard. The sailors looked at one another.

“What is this?” asked the captain.

“A prisoner has escaped from the Château d’If, and they are firing the alarm gun,” replied Dantès. The captain glanced at him, but he had lifted the rum to his lips and was drinking it with so much composure, that suspicions, if the captain had any, died away.

0277m

“Pretty strong rum!” said Dantès, wiping his brow with his sleeve.

“At any rate,” murmured he, “if it be, so much the better, for I have made a rare acquisition.”

0279m

Under pretence of being fatigued, Dantès asked to take the helm; the steersman, glad to be relieved, looked at the captain, and the latter by a sign indicated that he might abandon it to his new comrade. Dantès could thus keep

his eyes on Marseilles.

“What is the day of the month?” asked he of Jacopo, who sat down beside him.

“The 28th of February.”

“In what year?”

“In what year—you ask me in what year?”

“Yes,” replied the young man, “I ask you in what year!”

“You have forgotten then?”

“I got such a fright last night,” replied Dantès, smiling, “that I have almost lost my memory. I ask you what year is it?”

“The year 1829,” returned Jacopo.

It was fourteen years, day for day, since Dantès’ arrest. He was nineteen when he entered the Château d’If; he was thirty-three when he escaped. A sorrowful smile passed over his face; he asked himself what had become of Mercédès, who must believe him dead. Then his eyes lighted up with hatred as he thought of the three men who had caused him so long and wretched a captivity. He renewed against Danglars, Fernand, and Villefort the oath of implacable vengeance he had made in his dungeon.

This oath was no longer a vain menace; for the fastest sailor in the Mediterranean would have been unable to overtake the little tartan, that with every stitch of canvas set was flying before the wind to Leghorn.

Chapter 22. The Smugglers

Dantès had not been a day on board before he had a very clear idea of the men with whom his lot had been cast. Without having been in the school of the Abbé Faria, the worthy master of *La Jeune Amélie* (the name of the Genoese tartan) knew a smattering of all the tongues spoken on the shores of that large lake called the Mediterranean, from the Arabic to the Provençal, and this, while it spared him interpreters, persons always troublesome and frequently indiscreet, gave him great facilities of communication, either with the vessels he met at sea, with the small boats sailing along the coast, or with the people without name, country, or occupation, who are always seen on the quays of seaports, and who live by hidden and mysterious means which we must suppose to be a direct gift of Providence, as they have no visible means of support. It is fair to assume that Dantès was on board a smuggler.

At first the captain had received Dantès on board with a certain degree of distrust. He was very well known to the customs officers of the coast; and as there was between these worthies and himself a perpetual battle of wits, he had at first thought that Dantès might be an emissary of these industrious guardians of rights and duties, who perhaps employed this ingenious means of learning some of the secrets of his trade. But the skilful manner in which Dantès had handled the lugger had entirely reassured him; and then, when he saw the light plume of smoke floating above the bastion of the Château d'If, and heard the distant report, he was instantly struck with the idea that he had on board his vessel one whose coming and going, like that of kings, was accompanied with salutes of artillery. This made him less uneasy, it must be owned, than if the new-comer had proved to be a customs officer; but this supposition also disappeared like the first, when he beheld the perfect tranquillity of his recruit.

Edmond thus had the advantage of knowing what the owner was, without the owner knowing who he was; and however the old sailor and his crew tried to “pump” him, they extracted nothing more from him; he gave accurate descriptions of Naples and Malta, which he knew as well as Marseilles, and held stoutly to his first story. Thus the Genoese, subtle as he was, was duped by Edmond, in whose favor his mild demeanor, his nautical skill, and his admirable dissimulation, pleaded. Moreover, it is possible that the Genoese was one of

those shrewd persons who know nothing but what they should know, and believe nothing but what they should believe.

In this state of mutual understanding, they reached Leghorn. Here Edmond was to undergo another trial; he was to find out whether he could recognize himself, as he had not seen his own face for fourteen years. He had preserved a tolerably good remembrance of what the youth had been, and was now to find out what the man had become. His comrades believed that his vow was fulfilled. As he had twenty times touched at Leghorn, he remembered a barber in St. Ferdinand Street; he went there to have his beard and hair cut. The barber gazed in amazement at this man with the long, thick and black hair and beard, which gave his head the appearance of one of Titian's portraits. At this period it was not the fashion to wear so large a beard and hair so long; now a barber would only be surprised if a man gifted with such advantages should consent voluntarily to deprive himself of them. The Leghorn barber said nothing and went to work.

When the operation was concluded, and Edmond felt that his chin was completely smooth, and his hair reduced to its usual length, he asked for a looking-glass. He was now, as we have said, three-and-thirty years of age, and his fourteen years' imprisonment had produced a great transformation in his appearance.

Dantès had entered the Château d'If with the round, open, smiling face of a young and happy man, with whom the early paths of life have been smooth, and who anticipates a future corresponding with his past. This was now all changed. The oval face was lengthened, his smiling mouth had assumed the firm and marked lines which betoken resolution; his eyebrows were arched beneath a brow furrowed with thought; his eyes were full of melancholy, and from their depths occasionally sparkled gloomy fires of misanthropy and hatred; his complexion, so long kept from the sun, had now that pale color which produces, when the features are encircled with black hair, the aristocratic beauty of the man of the north; the profound learning he had acquired had besides diffused over his features a refined intellectual expression; and he had also acquired, being naturally of a goodly stature, that vigor which a frame possesses which has so long concentrated all its force within itself.

0283m

To the elegance of a nervous and slight form had succeeded the solidity of a rounded and muscular figure. As to his voice, prayers, sobs, and imprecations had changed it so that at times it was of a singularly penetrating sweetness, and at others rough and almost hoarse.

Moreover, from being so long in twilight or darkness, his eyes had acquired the faculty of distinguishing objects in the night, common to the hyena and the wolf. Edmond smiled when he beheld himself; it was impossible that his best friend—if, indeed, he had any friend left—could recognize him; he could not recognize himself.

The master of *La Jeune Amélie*, who was very desirous of retaining amongst his crew a man of Edmond's value, had offered to advance him funds out of his future profits, which Edmond had accepted. His next care on leaving the barber's who had achieved his first metamorphosis was to enter a shop and buy a complete sailor's suit—a garb, as we all know, very simple, and consisting of white trousers, a striped shirt, and a cap.

It was in this costume, and bringing back to Jacopo the shirt and trousers he had lent him, that Edmond reappeared before the captain of the lugger, who had made him tell his story over and over again before he could believe him, or recognize in the neat and trim sailor the man with thick and matted beard, hair tangled with seaweed, and body soaking in seabrine, whom he had picked up naked and nearly drowned. Attracted by his prepossessing appearance, he renewed his offers of an engagement to Dantès; but Dantès, who had his own projects, would not agree for a longer time than three months.

La Jeune Amélie had a very active crew, very obedient to their captain, who lost as little time as possible. He had scarcely been a week at Leghorn before the hold of his vessel was filled with printed muslins, contraband cottons, English powder, and tobacco on which the excise had forgotten to put its mark. The master was to get all this out of Leghorn free of duties, and land it on the shores of Corsica, where certain speculators undertook to forward the cargo to France.

They sailed; Edmond was again cleaving the azure sea which had been the first horizon of his youth, and which he had so often dreamed of in prison. He left Gorgone on his right and La Pianosa on his left, and went towards the country of Paoli and Napoleon.

The next morning going on deck, as he always did at an early hour, the patron found Dantès leaning against the bulwarks gazing with intense earnestness at a pile of granite rocks, which the rising sun tinged with rosy light. It was the Island of Monte Cristo.

La Jeune Amélie left it three-quarters of a league to the larboard and kept on for Corsica. Dantès thought, as they passed so closely to the island whose name was so interesting to him, that he had only to leap into the sea and in half an hour be at the promised land. But then what could he do without instruments to

discover his treasure, without arms to defend himself? Besides, what would the sailors say? What would the patron think? He must wait.

Fortunately, Dantès had learned how to wait; he had waited fourteen years for his liberty, and now he was free he could wait at least six months or a year for wealth. Would he not have accepted liberty without riches if it had been offered to him? Besides, were not those riches chimerical?—offspring of the brain of the poor Abbé Faria, had they not died with him? It is true, the letter of the Cardinal Spada was singularly circumstantial, and Dantès repeated it to himself, from one end to the other, for he had not forgotten a word.

0285m

Evening came, and Edmond saw the island tinged with the shades of twilight, and then disappear in the darkness from all eyes but his own, for he, with vision accustomed to the gloom of a prison, continued to behold it last of all, for he remained alone upon deck. The next morn broke off the coast of Aleria; all day they coasted, and in the evening saw fires lighted on land; the position of these was no doubt a signal for landing, for a ship's lantern was hung up at the mast-head instead of the streamer, and they came to within a gunshot of the shore. Dantès noticed that the captain of *La Jeune Amélie* had, as he neared the land, mounted two small culverins, which, without making much noise, can throw a four ounce ball a thousand paces or so.

But on this occasion the precaution was superfluous, and everything proceeded with the utmost smoothness and politeness. Four shallop came off with very little noise alongside the lugger, which, no doubt, in acknowledgement of the compliment, lowered her own shallop into the sea, and the five boats worked so well that by two o'clock in the morning all the cargo was out of *La Jeune Amélie* and on *terra firma*. The same night, such a man of regularity was the patron of *La Jeune Amélie*, the profits were divided, and each man had a hundred Tuscan livres, or about eighty francs.

But the voyage was not ended. They turned the bowsprit towards Sardinia, where they intended to take in a cargo, which was to replace what had been discharged. The second operation was as successful as the first, *La Jeune Amélie* was in luck. This new cargo was destined for the coast of the Duchy of Lucca, and consisted almost entirely of Havana cigars, sherry, and Malaga wines.

There they had a bit of a skirmish in getting rid of the duties; the excise was, in truth, the everlasting enemy of the patron of *La Jeune Amélie*. A customs officer was laid low, and two sailors wounded; Dantès was one of the latter, a ball having touched him in the left shoulder. Dantès was almost glad of this

affray, and almost pleased at being wounded, for they were rude lessons which taught him with what eye he could view danger, and with what endurance he could bear suffering. He had contemplated danger with a smile, and when wounded had exclaimed with the great philosopher, "Pain, thou art not an evil."

He had, moreover, looked upon the customs officer wounded to death, and whether from heat of blood produced by the encounter, or the chill of human sentiment, this sight had made but slight impression upon him. Dantès was on the way he desired to follow, and was moving towards the end he wished to achieve; his heart was in a fair way of petrifying in his bosom. Jacopo, seeing him fall, had believed him killed, and rushing towards him raised him up, and then attended to him with all the kindness of a devoted comrade.

This world was not then so good as Doctor Pangloss believed it, neither was it so wicked as Dantès thought it, since this man, who had nothing to expect from his comrade but the inheritance of his share of the prize-money, manifested so much sorrow when he saw him fall. Fortunately, as we have said, Edmond was only wounded, and with certain herbs gathered at certain seasons, and sold to the smugglers by the old Sardinian women, the wound soon closed. Edmond then resolved to try Jacopo, and offered him in return for his attention a share of his prize-money, but Jacopo refused it indignantly.

As a result of the sympathetic devotion which Jacopo had from the first bestowed on Edmond, the latter was moved to a certain degree of affection. But this sufficed for Jacopo, who instinctively felt that Edmond had a right to superiority of position—a superiority which Edmond had concealed from all others. And from this time the kindness which Edmond showed him was enough for the brave seaman.

Then in the long days on board ship, when the vessel, gliding on with security over the azure sea, required no care but the hand of the helmsman, thanks to the favorable winds that swelled her sails, Edmond, with a chart in his hand, became the instructor of Jacopo, as the poor Abbé Faria had been his tutor. He pointed out to him the bearings of the coast, explained to him the variations of the compass, and taught him to read in that vast book opened over our heads which they call heaven, and where God writes in azure with letters of diamonds.

And when Jacopo inquired of him, "What is the use of teaching all these things to a poor sailor like me?" Edmond replied, "Who knows? You may one day be the captain of a vessel. Your fellow-countryman, Bonaparte, became emperor." We had forgotten to say that Jacopo was a Corsican.

Two months and a half elapsed in these trips, and Edmond had become as

skilful a coaster as he had been a hardy seaman; he had formed an acquaintance with all the smugglers on the coast, and learned all the Masonic signs by which these half pirates recognize each other. He had passed and re-passed his Island of Monte Cristo twenty times, but not once had he found an opportunity of landing there.

He then formed a resolution. As soon as his engagement with the patron of *La Jeune Amélie* ended, he would hire a small vessel on his own account—for in his several voyages he had amassed a hundred piastres—and under some pretext land at the Island of Monte Cristo. Then he would be free to make his researches, not perhaps entirely at liberty, for he would be doubtless watched by those who accompanied him. But in this world we must risk something. Prison had made Edmond prudent, and he was desirous of running no risk whatever. But in vain did he rack his imagination; fertile as it was, he could not devise any plan for reaching the island without companionship.

Dantès was tossed about on these doubts and wishes, when the patron, who had great confidence in him, and was very desirous of retaining him in his service, took him by the arm one evening and led him to a tavern on the Via del' Oglio, where the leading smugglers of Leghorn used to congregate and discuss affairs connected with their trade. Already Dantès had visited this maritime Bourse two or three times, and seeing all these hardy free-traders, who supplied the whole coast for nearly two hundred leagues in extent, he had asked himself what power might not that man attain who should give the impulse of his will to all these contrary and diverging minds. This time it was a great matter that was under discussion, connected with a vessel laden with Turkey carpets, stuffs of the Levant, and cashmeres. It was necessary to find some neutral ground on which an exchange could be made, and then to try and land these goods on the coast of France. If the venture was successful the profit would be enormous, there would be a gain of fifty or sixty piastres each for the crew.

The patron of *La Jeune Amélie* proposed as a place of landing the Island of Monte Cristo, which being completely deserted, and having neither soldiers nor revenue officers, seemed to have been placed in the midst of the ocean since the time of the heathen Olympus by Mercury, the god of merchants and robbers, classes of mankind which we in modern times have separated if not made distinct, but which antiquity appears to have included in the same category.

At the mention of Monte Cristo Dantès started with joy; he rose to conceal his emotion, and took a turn around the smoky tavern, where all the languages of the known world were jumbled in a *lingua franca*.

When he again joined the two persons who had been discussing the matter, it

had been decided that they should touch at Monte Cristo and set out on the following night. Edmond, being consulted, was of opinion that the island afforded every possible security, and that great enterprises to be well done should be done quickly.

Nothing then was altered in the plan, and orders were given to get under weigh next night, and, wind and weather permitting, to make the neutral island by the following day.

0289m

Chapter 23. The Island of Monte Cristo

Thus, at length, by one of the unexpected strokes of fortune which sometimes befall those who have for a long time been the victims of an evil destiny, Dantès was about to secure the opportunity he wished for, by simple and natural means, and land on the island without incurring any suspicion. One night more and he would be on his way.

The night was one of feverish distraction, and in its progress visions, good and evil, passed through Dantès' mind. If he closed his eyes, he saw Cardinal Spada's letter written on the wall in characters of flame—if he slept for a moment the wildest dreams haunted his brain. He ascended into grottos paved with emeralds, with panels of rubies, and the roof glowing with diamond stalactites. Pearls fell drop by drop, as subterranean waters filter in their caves. Edmond, amazed, wonderstruck, filled his pockets with the radiant gems and then returned to daylight, when he discovered that his prizes had all changed into common pebbles. He then endeavored to re-enter the marvellous grottos, but they had suddenly receded, and now the path became a labyrinth, and then the entrance vanished, and in vain did he tax his memory for the magic and mysterious word which opened the splendid caverns of Ali Baba to the Arabian fisherman. All was useless, the treasure disappeared, and had again reverted to the genii from whom for a moment he had hoped to carry it off.

The day came at length, and was almost as feverish as the night had been, but it brought reason to the aid of imagination, and Dantès was then enabled to arrange a plan which had hitherto been vague and unsettled in his brain. Night came, and with it the preparation for departure, and these preparations served to conceal Dantès' agitation. He had by degrees assumed such authority over his companions that he was almost like a commander on board; and as his orders were always clear, distinct, and easy of execution, his comrades obeyed him with celerity and pleasure.

The old patron did not interfere, for he too had recognized the superiority of Dantès over the crew and himself. He saw in the young man his natural successor, and regretted that he had not a daughter, that he might have bound Edmond to him by a more secure alliance. At seven o'clock in the evening all was ready, and at ten minutes past seven they doubled the lighthouse just as the

beacon was kindled. The sea was calm, and, with a fresh breeze from the south-east, they sailed beneath a bright blue sky, in which God also lighted up in turn his beacon lights, each of which is a world. Dantès told them that all hands might turn in, and he would take the helm. When the Maltese (for so they called Dantès) had said this, it was sufficient, and all went to their bunks contentedly.

This frequently happened. Dantès, cast from solitude into the world, frequently experienced an imperious desire for solitude; and what solitude is more complete, or more poetical, than that of a ship floating in isolation on the sea during the obscurity of the night, in the silence of immensity, and under the eye of Heaven?

Now this solitude was peopled with his thoughts, the night lighted up by his illusions, and the silence animated by his anticipations. When the patron awoke, the vessel was hurrying on with every sail set, and every sail full with the breeze. They were making nearly ten knots an hour. The Island of Monte Cristo loomed large in the horizon. Edmond resigned the lugger to the master's care, and went and lay down in his hammock; but, in spite of a sleepless night, he could not close his eyes for a moment.

Two hours afterwards he came on deck, as the boat was about to double the Island of Elba. They were just abreast of Mareciana, and beyond the flat but verdant Island of La Pianosa. The peak of Monte Cristo reddened by the burning sun, was seen against the azure sky. Dantès ordered the helmsman to put down his helm, in order to leave La Pianosa to starboard, as he knew that he should shorten his course by two or three knots. About five o'clock in the evening the island was distinct, and everything on it was plainly perceptible, owing to that clearness of the atmosphere peculiar to the light which the rays of the sun cast at its setting.

Edmond gazed very earnestly at the mass of rocks which gave out all the variety of twilight colors, from the brightest pink to the deepest blue; and from time to time his cheeks flushed, his brow darkened, and a mist passed over his eyes. Never did a gamester, whose whole fortune is staked on one cast of the die, experience the anguish which Edmond felt in his paroxysms of hope.

Night came, and at ten o'clock they anchored. *La Jeune Amélie* was first at the rendezvous. In spite of his usual command over himself, Dantès could not restrain his impetuosity. He was the first to jump on shore; and had he dared, he would, like Lucius Brutus, have "kissed his mother earth." It was dark, but at eleven o'clock the moon rose in the midst of the ocean, whose every wave she silvered, and then, "ascending high," played in floods of pale light on the rocky hills of this second Pelion.

The island was familiar to the crew of *La Jeune Amélie*,—it was one of her regular haunts. As to Dantès, he had passed it on his voyage to and from the Levant, but never touched at it. He questioned Jacopo.

“Where shall we pass the night?” he inquired.

“Why, on board the tartan,” replied the sailor.

“Should we not do better in the grottos?”

“What grottos?”

“Why, the grottos—caves of the island.”

“I do not know of any grottos,” replied Jacopo.

The cold sweat sprang forth on Dantès’ brow.

“What, are there no grottos at Monte Cristo?” he asked.

“None.”

For a moment Dantès was speechless; then he remembered that these caves might have been filled up by some accident, or even stopped up, for the sake of greater security, by Cardinal Spada. The point was, then, to discover the hidden entrance. It was useless to search at night, and Dantès therefore delayed all investigation until the morning. Besides, a signal made half a league out at sea, and to which *La Jeune Amélie* replied by a similar signal, indicated that the moment for business had come.

The boat that now arrived, assured by the answering signal that all was well, soon came in sight, white and silent as a phantom, and cast anchor within a cable’s length of shore.

Then the landing began. Dantès reflected, as he worked, on the shout of joy which, with a single word, he could evoke from all these men, if he gave utterance to the one unchanging thought that pervaded his heart; but, far from disclosing this precious secret, he almost feared that he had already said too much, and by his restlessness and continual questions, his minute observations and evident preoccupation, aroused suspicions. Fortunately, as regarded this circumstance at least, his painful past gave to his countenance an indelible sadness, and the glimmerings of gayety seen beneath this cloud were indeed but transitory.

No one had the slightest suspicion; and when next day, taking a fowling-piece, powder, and shot, Dantès declared his intention to go and kill some of the wild goats that were seen springing from rock to rock, his wish was construed into a love of sport, or a desire for solitude. However, Jacopo insisted on following him, and Dantès did not oppose this, fearing if he did so that he might incur

distrust. Scarcely, however, had they gone a quarter of a league when, having killed a kid, he begged Jacopo to take it to his comrades, and request them to cook it, and when ready to let him know by firing a gun. This and some dried fruits and a flask of Monte Pulciano, was the bill of fare.

Dantès went on, looking from time to time behind and around about him. Having reached the summit of a rock, he saw, a thousand feet beneath him, his companions, whom Jacopo had rejoined, and who were all busy preparing the repast which Edmond's skill as a marksman had augmented with a capital dish.

Edmond looked at them for a moment with the sad and gentle smile of a man superior to his fellows.

"In two hours' time," said he, "these persons will depart richer by fifty piastres each, to go and risk their lives again by endeavoring to gain fifty more; then they will return with a fortune of six hundred francs, and waste this treasure in some city with the pride of sultans and the insolence of nabobs. At this moment hope makes me despise their riches, which seem to me contemptible. Yet perchance tomorrow deception will so act on me, that I shall, on compulsion, consider such a contemptible possession as the utmost happiness. Oh, no!" exclaimed Edmond, "that will not be. The wise, unerring Faria could not be mistaken in this one thing. Besides, it were better to die than to continue to lead this low and wretched life."

Thus Dantès, who but three months before had no desire but liberty had now not liberty enough, and panted for wealth. The cause was not in Dantès, but in Providence, who, while limiting the power of man, has filled him with boundless desires.

Meanwhile, by a cleft between two walls of rock, following a path worn by a torrent, and which, in all human probability, human foot had never before trod, Dantès approached the spot where he supposed the grottos must have existed. Keeping along the shore, and examining the smallest object with serious attention, he thought he could trace, on certain rocks, marks made by the hand of man.

Time, which encrusts all physical substances with its mossy mantle, as it invests all things of the mind with forgetfulness, seemed to have respected these signs, which apparently had been made with some degree of regularity, and probably with a definite purpose. Occasionally the marks were hidden under tufts of myrtle, which spread into large bushes laden with blossoms, or beneath parasitical lichen. So Edmond had to separate the branches or brush away the moss to know where the guide-marks were. The sight of marks renewed Edmond

0295m

It seemed, however, to Edmond, who was hidden from his comrades by the inequalities of the ground, that at sixty paces from the harbor the marks ceased; nor did they terminate at any grotto. A large round rock, placed solidly on its base, was the only spot to which they seemed to lead. Edmond concluded that perhaps instead of having reached the end of the route he had only explored its beginning, and he therefore turned round and retraced his steps.

Meanwhile his comrades had prepared the repast, had got some water from a spring, spread out the fruit and bread, and cooked the kid. Just at the moment when they were taking the dainty animal from the spit, they saw Edmond springing with the boldness of a chamois from rock to rock, and they fired the signal agreed upon. The sportsman instantly changed his direction, and ran quickly towards them. But even while they watched his daring progress, Edmond's foot slipped, and they saw him stagger on the edge of a rock and disappear. They all rushed towards him, for all loved Edmond in spite of his superiority; yet Jacopo reached him first.

He found Edmond lying prone, bleeding, and almost senseless. He had rolled down a declivity of twelve or fifteen feet. They poured a little rum down his throat, and this remedy which had before been so beneficial to him, produced the same effect as formerly. Edmond opened his eyes, complained of great pain in his knee, a feeling of heaviness in his head, and severe pains in his loins. They wished to carry him to the shore; but when they touched him, although under Jacopo's directions, he declared, with heavy groans, that he could not bear to be moved.

It may be supposed that Dantès did not now think of his dinner, but he insisted that his comrades, who had not his reasons for fasting, should have their meal. As for himself, he declared that he had only need of a little rest, and that when they returned he should be easier. The sailors did not require much urging. They were hungry, and the smell of the roasted kid was very savory, and your tars are not very ceremonious. An hour afterwards they returned. All that Edmond had

been able to do was to drag himself about a dozen paces forward to lean against a moss-grown rock.

But, instead of growing easier, Dantès' pains appeared to increase in violence. The old patron, who was obliged to sail in the morning in order to land his cargo on the frontiers of Piedmont and France, between Nice and Fréjus, urged Dantès to try and rise. Edmond made great exertions in order to comply; but at each effort he fell back, moaning and turning pale.

"He has broken his ribs," said the commander, in a low voice. "No matter; he is an excellent fellow, and we must not leave him. We will try and carry him on board the tartan."

Dantès declared, however, that he would rather die where he was than undergo the agony which the slightest movement cost him.

"Well," said the patron, "let what may happen, it shall never be said that we deserted a good comrade like you. We will not go till evening."

This very much astonished the sailors, although, not one opposed it. The patron was so strict that this was the first time they had ever seen him give up an enterprise, or even delay in its execution. Dantès would not allow that any such infraction of regular and proper rules should be made in his favor.

"No, no," he said to the patron, "I was awkward, and it is just that I pay the penalty of my clumsiness. Leave me a small supply of biscuit, a gun, powder, and balls, to kill the kids or defend myself at need, and a pickaxe, that I may build a shelter if you delay in coming back for me."

"But you'll die of hunger," said the patron.

"I would rather do so," was Edmond's reply, "than suffer the inexpressible agonies which the slightest movement causes me."

The patron turned towards his vessel, which was rolling on the swell in the little harbor, and, with sails partly set, would be ready for sea when her toilet should be completed.

"What are we to do, Maltese?" asked the captain. "We cannot leave you here so, and yet we cannot stay."

"Go, go!" exclaimed Dantès.

"We shall be absent at least a week," said the patron, "and then we must run out of our course to come here and take you up again."

"Why," said Dantès, "if in two or three days you hail any fishing-boat, desire them to come here to me. I will pay twenty-five piastres for my passage back to Leghorn. If you do not come across one, return for me." The patron shook his

head.

"Listen, Captain Baldi; there's one way of settling this," said Jacopo. "Do you go, and I will stay and take care of the wounded man."

"And give up your share of the venture," said Edmond, "to remain with me?"

"Yes," said Jacopo, "and without any hesitation."

"You are a good fellow and a kind-hearted messmate," replied Edmond, "and heaven will recompense you for your generous intentions; but I do not wish anyone to stay with me. A day or two of rest will set me up, and I hope I shall find among the rocks certain herbs most excellent for bruises."

A peculiar smile passed over Dantès' lips; he squeezed Jacopo's hand warmly, but nothing could shake his determination to remain—and remain alone.

The smugglers left with Edmond what he had requested and set sail, but not without turning about several times, and each time making signs of a cordial farewell, to which Edmond replied with his hand only, as if he could not move the rest of his body.

Then, when they had disappeared, he said with a smile,—“Tis strange that it should be among such men that we find proofs of friendship and devotion.” Then he dragged himself cautiously to the top of a rock, from which he had a full view of the sea, and thence he saw the tartan complete her preparations for sailing, weigh anchor, and, balancing herself as gracefully as a water-fowl ere it takes to the wing, set sail.

At the end of an hour she was completely out of sight; at least, it was impossible for the wounded man to see her any longer from the spot where he was. Then Dantès rose more agile and light than the kid among the myrtles and shrubs of these wild rocks, took his gun in one hand, his pickaxe in the other, and hastened towards the rock on which the marks he had noted terminated.

"And now," he exclaimed, remembering the tale of the Arabian fisherman, which Faria had related to him, "now, Open Sesame!"

Chapter 24. The Secret Cave

The sun had nearly reached the meridian, and his scorching rays fell full on the rocks, which seemed themselves sensible of the heat. Thousands of grasshoppers, hidden in the bushes, chirped with a monotonous and dull note; the leaves of the myrtle and olive trees waved and rustled in the wind. At every step that Edmond took he disturbed the lizards glittering with the hues of the emerald; afar off he saw the wild goats bounding from crag to crag. In a word, the island was inhabited, yet Edmond felt himself alone, guided by the hand of God.

He felt an indescribable sensation somewhat akin to dread—that dread of the daylight which even in the desert makes us fear we are watched and observed. This feeling was so strong that at the moment when Edmond was about to begin his labor, he stopped, laid down his pickaxe, seized his gun, mounted to the summit of the highest rock, and from thence gazed round in every direction.

But it was not upon Corsica, the very houses of which he could distinguish; or on Sardinia; or on the Island of Elba, with its historical associations; or upon the almost imperceptible line that to the experienced eye of a sailor alone revealed the coast of Genoa the proud, and Leghorn the commercial, that he gazed. It was at the brigantine that had left in the morning, and the tartan that had just set sail, that Edmond fixed his eyes.

The first was just disappearing in the straits of Bonifacio; the other, following an opposite direction, was about to round the Island of Corsica.

This sight reassured him. He then looked at the objects near him. He saw that he was on the highest point of the island,—a statue on this vast pedestal of granite, nothing human appearing in sight, while the blue ocean beat against the base of the island, and covered it with a fringe of foam. Then he descended with cautious and slow step, for he dreaded lest an accident similar to that he had so adroitly feigned should happen in reality.

Dantès, as we have said, had traced the marks along the rocks, and he had noticed that they led to a small creek, which was hidden like the bath of some ancient nymph. This creek was sufficiently wide at its mouth, and deep in the centre, to admit of the entrance of a small vessel of the lugger class, which

would be perfectly concealed from observation.

Then following the clew that, in the hands of the Abbé Faria, had been so skilfully used to guide him through the Dædalian labyrinth of probabilities, he thought that the Cardinal Spada, anxious not to be watched, had entered the creek, concealed his little barque, followed the line marked by the notches in the rock, and at the end of it had buried his treasure. It was this idea that had brought Dantès back to the circular rock. One thing only perplexed Edmond, and destroyed his theory. How could this rock, which weighed several tons, have been lifted to this spot, without the aid of many men?

Suddenly an idea flashed across his mind. Instead of raising it, thought he, they have lowered it. And he sprang from the rock in order to inspect the base on which it had formerly stood.

He soon perceived that a slope had been formed, and the rock had slid along this until it stopped at the spot it now occupied. A large stone had served as a wedge; flints and pebbles had been inserted around it, so as to conceal the orifice; this species of masonry had been covered with earth, and grass and weeds had grown there, moss had clung to the stones, myrtle-bushes had taken root, and the old rock seemed fixed to the earth.

0301m

Dantès dug away the earth carefully, and detected, or fancied he detected, the ingenious artifice. He attacked this wall, cemented by the hand of time, with his pickaxe. After ten minutes' labor the wall gave way, and a hole large enough to insert the arm was opened.

Dantès went and cut the strongest olive-tree he could find, stripped off its branches, inserted it in the hole, and used it as a lever. But the rock was too heavy, and too firmly wedged, to be moved by anyone man, were he Hercules himself. Dantès saw that he must attack the wedge. But how?

He cast his eyes around, and saw the horn full of powder which his friend Jacopo had left him. He smiled; the infernal invention would serve him for this purpose.

With the aid of his pickaxe, Dantès, after the manner of a labor-saving pioneer, dug a mine between the upper rock and the one that supported it, filled it with powder, then made a match by rolling his handkerchief in saltpetre. He lighted it and retired.

The explosion soon followed; the upper rock was lifted from its base by the terrific force of the powder; the lower one flew into pieces; thousands of insects

escaped from the aperture Dantès had previously formed, and a huge snake, like the guardian demon of the treasure, rolled himself along in darkening coils, and disappeared.

Dantès approached the upper rock, which now, without any support, leaned towards the sea. The intrepid treasure-seeker walked round it, and, selecting the spot from whence it appeared most susceptible to attack, placed his lever in one of the crevices, and strained every nerve to move the mass.

The rock, already shaken by the explosion, tottered on its base. Dantès redoubled his efforts; he seemed like one of the ancient Titans, who uprooted the mountains to hurl against the father of the gods. The rock yielded, rolled over, bounded from point to point, and finally disappeared in the ocean.

On the spot it had occupied was a circular space, exposing an iron ring let into a square flag-stone.

Dantès uttered a cry of joy and surprise; never had a first attempt been crowned with more perfect success. He would fain have continued, but his knees trembled, and his heart beat so violently, and his sight became so dim, that he was forced to pause.

This feeling lasted but for a moment. Edmond inserted his lever in the ring and exerted all his strength; the flag-stone yielded, and disclosed steps that descended until they were lost in the obscurity of a subterraneous grotto.

Anyone else would have rushed on with a cry of joy. Dantès turned pale, hesitated, and reflected.

“Come,” said he to himself, “be a man. I am accustomed to adversity. I must not be cast down by the discovery that I have been deceived. What, then, would be the use of all I have suffered? The heart breaks when, after having been elated by flattering hopes, it sees all its illusions destroyed. Faria has dreamed this; the Cardinal Spada buried no treasure here; perhaps he never came here, or if he did, Cæsar Borgia, the intrepid adventurer, the stealthy and indefatigable plunderer, has followed him, discovered his traces, pursued them as I have done, raised the stone, and descending before me, has left me nothing.”

He remained motionless and pensive, his eyes fixed on the gloomy aperture that was open at his feet.

“Now that I expect nothing, now that I no longer entertain the slightest hopes, the end of this adventure becomes simply a matter of curiosity.” And he remained again motionless and thoughtful.

“Yes, yes; this is an adventure worthy a place in the varied career of that royal

bandit. This fabulous event formed but a link in a long chain of marvels. Yes, Borgia has been here, a torch in one hand, a sword in the other, and within twenty paces, at the foot of this rock, perhaps two guards kept watch on land and sea, while their master descended, as I am about to descend, dispelling the darkness before his awe-inspiring progress."

0303m

"But what was the fate of the guards who thus possessed his secret?" asked Dantès of himself.

"The fate," replied he, smiling, "of those who buried Alaric, and were interred with the corpse."

"Yet, had he come," thought Dantès, "he would have found the treasure, and Borgia, he who compared Italy to an artichoke, which he could devour leaf by leaf, knew too well the value of time to waste it in replacing this rock. I will go down."

Then he descended, a smile on his lips, and murmuring that last word of human philosophy, "Perhaps!"

But instead of the darkness, and the thick and mephitic atmosphere he had expected to find, Dantès saw a dim and bluish light, which, as well as the air, entered, not merely by the aperture he had just formed, but by the interstices and crevices of the rock which were visible from without, and through which he could distinguish the blue sky and the waving branches of the evergreen oaks, and the tendrils of the creepers that grew from the rocks.

After having stood a few minutes in the cavern, the atmosphere of which was rather warm than damp, Dantès' eye, habituated as it was to darkness, could pierce even to the remotest angles of the cavern, which was of granite that sparkled like diamonds.

"Alas," said Edmond, smiling, "these are the treasures the cardinal has left; and the good abbé, seeing in a dream these glittering walls, has indulged in fallacious hopes."

But he called to mind the words of the will, which he knew by heart. "In the farthest angle of the second opening," said the cardinal's will. He had only found the first grotto; he had now to seek the second. Dantès continued his search. He reflected that this second grotto must penetrate deeper into the island; he examined the stones, and sounded one part of the wall where he fancied the opening existed, masked for precaution's sake.

The pickaxe struck for a moment with a dull sound that drew out of Dantès'

forehead large drops of perspiration. At last it seemed to him that one part of the wall gave forth a more hollow and deeper echo; he eagerly advanced, and with the quickness of perception that no one but a prisoner possesses, saw that there, in all probability, the opening must be.

However, he, like Cæsar Borgia, knew the value of time; and, in order to avoid fruitless toil, he sounded all the other walls with his pickaxe, struck the earth with the butt of his gun, and finding nothing that appeared suspicious, returned to that part of the wall whence issued the consoling sound he had before heard.

He again struck it, and with greater force. Then a singular thing occurred. As he struck the wall, pieces of stucco similar to that used in the ground work of arabesques broke off, and fell to the ground in flakes, exposing a large white stone. The aperture of the rock had been closed with stones, then this stucco had been applied, and painted to imitate granite. Dantès struck with the sharp end of his pickaxe, which entered someway between the interstices.

It was there he must dig.

But by some strange play of emotion, in proportion as the proofs that Faria, had not been deceived became stronger, so did his heart give way, and a feeling of discouragement stole over him. This last proof, instead of giving him fresh strength, deprived him of it; the pickaxe descended, or rather fell; he placed it on the ground, passed his hand over his brow, and remounted the stairs, alleging to himself, as an excuse, a desire to be assured that no one was watching him, but in reality because he felt that he was about to faint.

The island was deserted, and the sun seemed to cover it with its fiery glance; afar off, a few small fishing boats studded the bosom of the blue ocean.

Dantès had tasted nothing, but he thought not of hunger at such a moment; he hastily swallowed a few drops of rum, and again entered the cavern.

The pickaxe that had seemed so heavy, was now like a feather in his grasp; he seized it, and attacked the wall. After several blows he perceived that the stones were not cemented, but had been merely placed one upon the other, and covered with stucco; he inserted the point of his pickaxe, and using the handle as a lever, with joy soon saw the stone turn as if on hinges, and fall at his feet.

He had nothing more to do now, but with the iron tooth of the pickaxe to draw the stones towards him one by one. The aperture was already sufficiently large for him to enter, but by waiting, he could still cling to hope, and retard the certainty of deception. At last, after renewed hesitation, Dantès entered the second grotto.

The second grotto was lower and more gloomy than the first; the air that could only enter by the newly formed opening had the mephitic smell Dantès was surprised not to find in the outer cavern. He waited in order to allow pure air to displace the foul atmosphere, and then went on.

At the left of the opening was a dark and deep angle. But to Dantès' eye there was no darkness. He glanced around this second grotto; it was, like the first, empty.

The treasure, if it existed, was buried in this corner. The time had at length arrived; two feet of earth removed, and Dantès' fate would be decided.

He advanced towards the angle, and summoning all his resolution, attacked the ground with the pickaxe. At the fifth or sixth blow the pickaxe struck against an iron substance. Never did funeral knell, never did alarm-bell, produce a greater effect on the hearer. Had Dantès found nothing he could not have become more ghastly pale.

He again struck his pickaxe into the earth, and encountered the same resistance, but not the same sound.

"It is a casket of wood bound with iron," thought he.

At this moment a shadow passed rapidly before the opening; Dantès seized his gun, sprang through the opening, and mounted the stair. A wild goat had passed before the mouth of the cave, and was feeding at a little distance. This would have been a favorable occasion to secure his dinner; but Dantès feared lest the report of his gun should attract attention.

He thought a moment, cut a branch of a resinous tree, lighted it at the fire at which the smugglers had prepared their breakfast, and descended with this torch.

He wished to see everything. He approached the hole he had dug, and now, with the aid of the torch, saw that his pickaxe had in reality struck against iron and wood. He planted his torch in the ground and resumed his labor.

In an instant a space three feet long by two feet broad was cleared, and Dantès could see an oaken coffer, bound with cut steel; in the middle of the lid he saw engraved on a silver plate, which was still untarnished, the arms of the Spada family—viz., a sword, *en pale*, on an oval shield, like all the Italian armorial bearings, and surmounted by a cardinal's hat.

Dantès easily recognized them, Faria had so often drawn them for him. There was no longer any doubt: the treasure was there—no one would have been at such pains to conceal an empty casket. In an instant he had cleared every obstacle away, and he saw successively the lock, placed between two padlocks,

and the two handles at each end, all carved as things were carved at that epoch, when art rendered the commonest metals precious.

Dantès seized the handles, and strove to lift the coffer; it was impossible. He sought to open it; lock and padlock were fastened; these faithful guardians seemed unwilling to surrender their trust. Dantès inserted the sharp end of the pickaxe between the coffer and the lid, and pressing with all his force on the handle, burst open the fastenings. The hinges yielded in their turn and fell, still holding in their grasp fragments of the wood, and the chest was open.

0307m

Edmond was seized with vertigo; he cocked his gun and laid it beside him. He then closed his eyes as children do in order that they may see in the resplendent night of their own imagination more stars than are visible in the firmament; then he re-opened them, and stood motionless with amazement.

Three compartments divided the coffer. In the first, blazed piles of golden coin; in the second, were ranged bars of unpolished gold, which possessed nothing attractive save their value; in the third, Edmond grasped handfuls of diamonds, pearls, and rubies, which, as they fell on one another, sounded like hail against glass.

After having touched, felt, examined these treasures, Edmond rushed through the caverns like a man seized with frenzy; he leaped on a rock, from whence he could behold the sea. He was alone—alone with these countless, these unheard-of treasures! Was he awake, or was it but a dream? Was it a transient vision, or was he face to face with reality?

He would fain have gazed upon his gold, and yet he had not strength enough; for an instant he leaned his head in his hands as if to prevent his senses from leaving him, and then rushed madly about the rocks of Monte Cristo, terrifying the wild goats and scaring the sea-fowls with his wild cries and gestures; then he returned, and, still unable to believe the evidence of his senses, rushed into the grotto, and found himself before this mine of gold and jewels.

This time he fell on his knees, and, clasping his hands convulsively, uttered a prayer intelligible to God alone. He soon became calmer and more happy, for only now did he begin to realize his felicity.

He then set himself to work to count his fortune. There were a thousand ingots of gold, each weighing from two to three pounds; then he piled up twenty-five thousand crowns, each worth about eighty francs of our money, and bearing the effigies of Alexander VI. and his predecessors; and he saw that the complement was not half empty. And he measured ten double handfuls of pearls, diamonds,

and other gems, many of which, mounted by the most famous workmen, were valuable beyond their intrinsic worth.

Dantès saw the light gradually disappear, and fearing to be surprised in the cavern, left it, his gun in his hand. A piece of biscuit and a small quantity of rum formed his supper, and he snatched a few hours' sleep, lying over the mouth of the cave.

It was a night of joy and terror, such as this man of stupendous emotions had already experienced twice or thrice in his lifetime.

Chapter 25. The Unknown

Day, for which Dantès had so eagerly and impatiently waited with open eyes, again dawned. With the first light Dantès resumed his search. Again he climbed the rocky height he had ascended the previous evening, and strained his view to catch every peculiarity of the landscape; but it wore the same wild, barren aspect when seen by the rays of the morning sun which it had done when surveyed by the fading glimmer of eve.

Descending into the grotto, he lifted the stone, filled his pockets with gems, put the box together as well and securely as he could, sprinkled fresh sand over the spot from which it had been taken, and then carefully trod down the earth to give it everywhere a uniform appearance; then, quitting the grotto, he replaced the stone, heaping on it broken masses of rocks and rough fragments of crumbling granite, filling the interstices with earth, into which he deftly inserted rapidly growing plants, such as the wild myrtle and flowering thorn, then carefully watering these new plantations, he scrupulously effaced every trace of footsteps, leaving the approach to the cavern as savage-looking and untrodden as he had found it. This done, he impatiently awaited the return of his companions. To wait at Monte Cristo for the purpose of watching like a dragon over the almost incalculable riches that had thus fallen into his possession satisfied not the cravings of his heart, which yearned to return to dwell among mankind, and to assume the rank, power, and influence which are always accorded to wealth—that first and greatest of all the forces within the grasp of man.

On the sixth day, the smugglers returned. From a distance Dantès recognized the rig and handling of *La Jeune Amélie*, and dragging himself with affected difficulty towards the landing-place, he met his companions with an assurance that, although considerably better than when they quitted him, he still suffered acutely from his late accident. He then inquired how they had fared in their trip. To this question the smugglers replied that, although successful in landing their cargo in safety, they had scarcely done so when they received intelligence that a guard-ship had just quitted the port of Toulon and was crowding all sail towards them. This obliged them to make all the speed they could to evade the enemy, when they could but lament the absence of Dantès, whose superior skill in the management of a vessel would have availed them so materially. In fact, the

pursuing vessel had almost overtaken them when, fortunately, night came on, and enabled them to double the Cape of Corsica, and so elude all further pursuit. Upon the whole, however, the trip had been sufficiently successful to satisfy all concerned; while the crew, and particularly Jacopo, expressed great regrets that Dantès had not been an equal sharer with themselves in the profits, which amounted to no less a sum than fifty piastres each.

0311m

Edmond preserved the most admirable self-command, not suffering the faintest indication of a smile to escape him at the enumeration of all the benefits he would have reaped had he been able to quit the island; but as *La Jeune Amélie* had merely come to Monte Cristo to fetch him away, he embarked that same evening, and proceeded with the captain to Leghorn.

Arrived at Leghorn, he repaired to the house of a Jew, a dealer in precious stones, to whom he disposed of four of his smallest diamonds for five thousand francs each. Dantès half feared that such valuable jewels in the hands of a poor sailor like himself might excite suspicion; but the cunning purchaser asked no troublesome questions concerning a bargain by which he gained a round profit of at least eighty per cent.

The following day Dantès presented Jacopo with an entirely new vessel, accompanying the gift by a donation of one hundred piastres, that he might provide himself with a suitable crew and other requisites for his outfit, upon condition that he would go at once to Marseilles for the purpose of inquiring after an old man named Louis Dantès, residing in the Allées de Meilhan, and also a young woman called Mercédès, an inhabitant of the Catalan village.

Jacopo could scarcely believe his senses at receiving this magnificent present, which Dantès hastened to account for by saying that he had merely been a sailor from whim and a desire to spite his family, who did not allow him as much money as he liked to spend; but that on his arrival at Leghorn he had come into possession of a large fortune, left him by an uncle, whose sole heir he was. The superior education of Dantès gave an air of such extreme probability to this statement that it never once occurred to Jacopo to doubt its accuracy.

The term for which Edmond had engaged to serve on board *La Jeune Amélie* having expired, Dantès took leave of the captain, who at first tried all his powers of persuasion to induce him to remain as one of the crew, but having been told the history of the legacy, he ceased to importune him further.

The following morning Jacopo set sail for Marseilles, with directions from Dantès to join him at the Island of Monte Cristo.

Having seen Jacopo fairly out of the harbor, Dantès proceeded to make his final adieu on board *La Jeune Amélie*, distributing so liberal a gratuity among her crew as to secure for him the good wishes of all, and expressions of cordial interest in all that concerned him. To the captain he promised to write when he had made up his mind as to his future plans. Then Dantès departed for Genoa.

At the moment of his arrival a small yacht was under trial in the bay; this yacht had been built by order of an Englishman, who, having heard that the Genoese excelled all other builders along the shores of the Mediterranean in the construction of fast-sailing vessels, was desirous of possessing a specimen of their skill; the price agreed upon between the Englishman and the Genoese builder was forty thousand francs. Dantès, struck with the beauty and capability of the little vessel, applied to its owner to transfer it to him, offering sixty thousand francs, upon condition that he should be allowed to take immediate possession. The proposal was too advantageous to be refused, the more so as the person for whom the yacht was intended had gone upon a tour through Switzerland, and was not expected back in less than three weeks or a month, by which time the builder reckoned upon being able to complete another. A bargain was therefore struck. Dantès led the owner of the yacht to the dwelling of a Jew; retired with the latter for a few minutes to a small back parlor, and upon their return the Jew counted out to the shipbuilder the sum of sixty thousand francs in bright gold pieces.

The delighted builder then offered his services in providing a suitable crew for the little vessel, but this Dantès declined with many thanks, saying he was accustomed to cruise about quite alone, and his principal pleasure consisted in managing his yacht himself; the only thing the builder could oblige him in would be to contrive a sort of secret closet in the cabin at his bed's head, the closet to contain three divisions, so constructed as to be concealed from all but himself. The builder cheerfully undertook the commission, and promised to have these secret places completed by the next day, Dantès furnishing the dimensions and plan in accordance with which they were to be constructed.

0313m

Two hours afterward Dantès sailed from the port of Genoa, under the inspection of an immense crowd drawn together by curiosity to see the rich Spanish nobleman who preferred managing his own yacht. But their wonder was soon changed to admiration at seeing the perfect skill with which Dantès handled the helm. The boat, indeed, seemed to be animated with almost human intelligence, so promptly did it obey the slightest touch; and Dantès required but

a short trial of his beautiful craft to acknowledge that the Genoese had not without reason attained their high reputation in the art of shipbuilding.

The spectators followed the little vessel with their eyes as long as it remained visible; they then turned their conjectures upon her probable destination. Some insisted she was making for Corsica, others the Island of Elba; bets were offered to any amount that she was bound for Spain; while Africa was positively reported by many persons as her intended course; but no one thought of Monte Cristo.

Yet thither it was that Dantès guided his vessel, and at Monte Cristo he arrived at the close of the second day; his boat had proved herself a first-class sailor, and had come the distance from Genoa in thirty-five hours. Dantès had carefully noted the general appearance of the shore, and, instead of landing at the usual place, he dropped anchor in the little creek. The island was utterly deserted, and bore no evidence of having been visited since he went away; his treasure was just as he had left it.

Early on the following morning he commenced the removal of his riches, and ere nightfall the whole of his immense wealth was safely deposited in the compartments of the secret locker.

A week passed by. Dantès employed it in manœuvring his yacht round the island, studying it as a skilful horseman would the animal he destined for some important service, till at the end of that time he was perfectly conversant with its good and bad qualities. The former Dantès proposed to augment, the latter to remedy.

Upon the eighth day he discerned a small vessel under full sail approaching Monte Cristo. As it drew near, he recognized it as the boat he had given to Jacopo. He immediately signalled it. His signal was returned, and in two hours afterwards the new-comer lay at anchor beside the yacht.

A mournful answer awaited each of Edmond's eager inquiries as to the information Jacopo had obtained. Old Dantès was dead, and Mercédès had disappeared.

Dantès listened to these melancholy tidings with outward calmness; but, leaping lightly ashore, he signified his desire to be quite alone. In a couple of hours he returned. Two of the men from Jacopo's boat came on board the yacht to assist in navigating it, and he gave orders that she should be steered direct to Marseilles. For his father's death he was in some manner prepared; but he knew not how to account for the mysterious disappearance of Mercédès.

Without divulging his secret, Dantès could not give sufficiently clear

instructions to an agent. There were, besides, other particulars he was desirous of ascertaining, and those were of a nature he alone could investigate in a manner satisfactory to himself. His looking-glass had assured him, during his stay at Leghorn, that he ran no risk of recognition; moreover, he had now the means of adopting any disguise he thought proper. One fine morning, then, his yacht, followed by the little fishing-boat, boldly entered the port of Marseilles, and anchored exactly opposite the spot from whence, on the never-to-be-forgotten night of his departure for the Château d'If, he had been put on board the boat destined to convey him thither.

0315m

Still Dantès could not view without a shudder the approach of a gendarme who accompanied the officers deputed to demand his bill of health ere the yacht was permitted to hold communication with the shore; but with that perfect self-possession he had acquired during his acquaintance with Faria, Dantès coolly presented an English passport he had obtained from Leghorn, and as this gave him a standing which a French passport would not have afforded, he was informed that there existed no obstacle to his immediate debarkation.

The first person to attract the attention of Dantès, as he landed on the Canebière, was one of the crew belonging to the *Pharaon*. Edmond welcomed the meeting with this fellow—who had been one of his own sailors—as a sure means of testing the extent of the change which time had worked in his own appearance. Going straight towards him, he propounded a variety of questions on different subjects, carefully watching the man's countenance as he did so; but not a word or look implied that he had the slightest idea of ever having seen before the person with whom he was then conversing.

Giving the sailor a piece of money in return for his civility, Dantès proceeded onwards; but ere he had gone many steps he heard the man loudly calling him to stop.

Dantès instantly turned to meet him.

"I beg your pardon, sir," said the honest fellow, in almost breathless haste, "but I believe you made a mistake; you intended to give me a two-franc piece, and see, you gave me a double Napoleon."

"Thank you, my good friend. I see that I have made a trifling mistake, as you say; but by way of rewarding your honesty I give you another double Napoleon, that you may drink to my health, and be able to ask your messmates to join you."

So extreme was the surprise of the sailor, that he was unable even to thank Edmond, whose receding figure he continued to gaze after in speechless

astonishment. "Some nabob from India," was his comment.

Dantès, meanwhile, went on his way. Each step he trod oppressed his heart with fresh emotion; his first and most indelible recollections were there; not a tree, not a street, that he passed but seemed filled with dear and cherished memories. And thus he proceeded onwards till he arrived at the end of the Rue de Noailles, from whence a full view of the Allées de Meilhan was obtained. At this spot, so pregnant with fond and filial remembrances, his heart beat almost to bursting, his knees tottered under him, a mist floated over his sight, and had he not clung for support to one of the trees, he would inevitably have fallen to the ground and been crushed beneath the many vehicles continually passing there. Recovering himself, however, he wiped the perspiration from his brows, and stopped not again till he found himself at the door of the house in which his father had lived.

The nasturtiums and other plants, which his father had delighted to train before his window, had all disappeared from the upper part of the house.

Leaning against the tree, he gazed thoughtfully for a time at the upper stories of the shabby little house. Then he advanced to the door, and asked whether there were any rooms to be let. Though answered in the negative, he begged so earnestly to be permitted to visit those on the fifth floor, that, in despite of the oft-repeated assurance of the *concierge* that they were occupied, Dantès succeeded in inducing the man to go up to the tenants, and ask permission for a gentleman to be allowed to look at them.

The tenants of the humble lodging were a young couple who had been scarcely married a week; and seeing them, Dantès sighed heavily. Nothing in the two small chambers forming the apartments remained as it had been in the time of the elder Dantès; the very paper was different, while the articles of antiquated furniture with which the rooms had been filled in Edmond's time had all disappeared; the four walls alone remained as he had left them.

The bed belonging to the present occupants was placed as the former owner of the chamber had been accustomed to have his; and, in spite of his efforts to prevent it, the eyes of Edmond were suffused in tears as he reflected that on that spot the old man had breathed his last, vainly calling for his son.

The young couple gazed with astonishment at the sight of their visitor's emotion, and wondered to see the large tears silently chasing each other down his otherwise stern and immovable features; but they felt the sacredness of his grief, and kindly refrained from questioning him as to its cause, while, with instinctive delicacy, they left him to indulge his sorrow alone.

When he withdrew from the scene of his painful recollections, they both accompanied him downstairs, reiterating their hope that he would come again whenever he pleased, and assuring him that their poor dwelling would ever be open to him.

As Edmond passed the door on the fourth floor, he paused to inquire whether Caderousse the tailor still dwelt there; but he received for reply, that the person in question had got into difficulties, and at the present time kept a small inn on the route from Bellegarde to Beaucaire.

Having obtained the address of the person to whom the house in the Allées de Meilhan belonged, Dantès next proceeded thither, and, under the name of Lord Wilmore (the name and title inscribed on his passport), purchased the small dwelling for the sum of twenty-five thousand francs, at least ten thousand more than it was worth; but had its owner asked half a million, it would unhesitatingly have been given.

The very same day the occupants of the apartments on the fifth floor of the house, now become the property of Dantès, were duly informed by the notary who had arranged the necessary transfer of deeds, etc., that the new landlord gave them their choice of any of the rooms in the house, without the least augmentation of rent, upon condition of their giving instant possession of the two small chambers they at present inhabited.

This strange event aroused great wonder and curiosity in the neighborhood of the Allées de Meilhan, and a multitude of theories were afloat, none of which was anywhere near the truth. But what raised public astonishment to a climax, and set all conjecture at defiance, was the knowledge that the same stranger who had in the morning visited the Allées de Meilhan had been seen in the evening walking in the little village of the Catalans, and afterwards observed to enter a poor fisherman's hut, and to pass more than an hour in inquiring after persons who had either been dead or gone away for more than fifteen or sixteen years.

But on the following day the family from whom all these particulars had been asked received a handsome present, consisting of an entirely new fishing-boat, with two seines and a tender.

The delighted recipients of these munificent gifts would gladly have poured out their thanks to their generous benefactor, but they had seen him, upon quitting the hut, merely give some orders to a sailor, and then springing lightly on horseback, leave Marseilles by the Porte d'Aix.

Chapter 26. The Pont du Gard Inn

Such of my readers as have made a pedestrian excursion to the south of France may perchance have noticed, about midway between the town of Beaucaire and the village of Bellegarde,—a little nearer to the former than to the latter,—a small roadside inn, from the front of which hung, creaking and flapping in the wind, a sheet of tin covered with a grotesque representation of the Pont du Gard. This modern place of entertainment stood on the left-hand side of the post road, and backed upon the Rhône. It also boasted of what in Languedoc is styled a garden, consisting of a small plot of ground, on the side opposite to the main entrance reserved for the reception of guests. A few dingy olives and stunted fig-trees struggled hard for existence, but their withered dusty foliage abundantly proved how unequal was the conflict. Between these sickly shrubs grew a scanty supply of garlic, tomatoes, and eschalots; while, lone and solitary, like a forgotten sentinel, a tall pine raised its melancholy head in one of the corners of this unattractive spot, and displayed its flexible stem and fan-shaped summit dried and cracked by the fierce heat of the sub-tropical sun.

All these trees, great or small, were turned in the direction to which the Mistral blows, one of the three curses of Provence, the others being the Durance and the Parliament.

In the surrounding plain, which more resembled a dusty lake than solid ground, were scattered a few miserable stalks of wheat, the effect, no doubt, of a curious desire on the part of the agriculturists of the country to see whether such a thing as the raising of grain in those parched regions was practicable. Each stalk served as a perch for a grasshopper, which regaled the passers-by through this Egyptian scene with its strident, monotonous note.

For about seven or eight years the little tavern had been kept by a man and his wife, with two servants,—a chambermaid named Trinette, and a hostler called Pecaud. This small staff was quite equal to all the requirements, for a canal between Beaucaire and Aiguemortes had revolutionized transportation by substituting boats for the cart and the stagecoach. And, as though to add to the daily misery which this prosperous canal inflicted on the unfortunate innkeeper, whose utter ruin it was fast accomplishing, it was situated between the Rhône from which it had its source and the post-road it had depleted, not a hundred

steps from the inn, of which we have given a brief but faithful description.

The innkeeper himself was a man of from forty to fifty-five years of age, tall, strong, and bony, a perfect specimen of the natives of those southern latitudes; he had dark, sparkling, and deep-set eyes, hooked nose, and teeth white as those of a carnivorous animal; his hair, like his beard, which he wore under his chin, was thick and curly, and in spite of his age but slightly interspersed with a few silvery threads. His naturally dark complexion had assumed a still further shade of brown from the habit the unfortunate man had acquired of stationing himself from morning till eve at the threshold of his door, on the lookout for guests who seldom came, yet there he stood, day after day, exposed to the meridional rays of a burning sun, with no other protection for his head than a red handkerchief twisted around it, after the manner of the Spanish muleteers. This man was our old acquaintance, Gaspard Caderousse.

His wife, on the contrary, whose maiden name had been Madeleine Radelle, was pale, meagre, and sickly-looking. Born in the neighborhood of Arles, she had shared in the beauty for which its women are proverbial; but that beauty had gradually withered beneath the devastating influence of the slow fever so prevalent among dwellers by the ponds of Aiguemortes and the marshes of Camargue. She remained nearly always in her second-floor chamber, shivering in her chair, or stretched languid and feeble on her bed, while her husband kept his daily watch at the door—a duty he performed with so much the greater willingness, as it saved him the necessity of listening to the endless plaints and murmurs of his helpmate, who never saw him without breaking out into bitter invectives against fate; to all of which her husband would calmly return an unvarying reply, in these philosophic words:

“Hush, La Carconte. It is God’s pleasure that things should be so.”

The sobriquet of La Carconte had been bestowed on Madeleine Radelle from the fact that she had been born in a village, so called, situated between Salon and Lambesc; and as a custom existed among the inhabitants of that part of France where Caderousse lived of styling every person by some particular and distinctive appellation, her husband had bestowed on her the name of La Carconte in place of her sweet and euphonious name of Madeleine, which, in all probability, his rude gutteral language would not have enabled him to pronounce.

Still, let it not be supposed that amid this affected resignation to the will of Providence, the unfortunate innkeeper did not writhe under the double misery of seeing the hateful canal carry off his customers and his profits, and the daily infliction of his peevish partner’s murmurs and lamentations.

Like other dwellers in the south, he was a man of sober habits and moderate desires, but fond of external show, vain, and addicted to display. During the days of his prosperity, not a festivity took place without himself and wife being among the spectators. He dressed in the picturesque costume worn upon grand occasions by the inhabitants of the south of France, bearing equal resemblance to the style adopted both by the Catalans and Andalusians; while La Carconte displayed the charming fashion prevalent among the women of Arles, a mode of attire borrowed equally from Greece and Arabia. But, by degrees, watch-chains, necklaces, parti-colored scarves, embroidered bodices, velvet vests, elegantly worked stockings, striped gaiters, and silver buckles for the shoes, all disappeared; and Gaspard Caderousse, unable to appear abroad in his pristine splendor, had given up any further participation in the pomps and vanities, both for himself and wife, although a bitter feeling of envious discontent filled his mind as the sound of mirth and merry music from the joyous revellers reached even the miserable hostelry to which he still clung, more for the shelter than the profit it afforded.

Caderousse, then, was, as usual, at his place of observation before the door, his eyes glancing listlessly from a piece of closely shaven grass—on which some fowls were industriously, though fruitlessly, endeavoring to turn up some grain or insect suited to their palate—to the deserted road, which led away to the north and south, when he was aroused by the shrill voice of his wife, and grumbling to himself as he went, he mounted to her chamber, first taking care, however, to set the entrance door wide open, as an invitation to any chance traveller who might be passing.

At the moment Caderousse quitted his sentry-like watch before the door, the road on which he so eagerly strained his sight was void and lonely as a desert at midday. There it lay stretching out into one interminable line of dust and sand, with its sides bordered by tall, meagre trees, altogether presenting so uninviting an appearance, that no one in his senses could have imagined that any traveller, at liberty to regulate his hours for journeying, would choose to expose himself in such a formidable Sahara.

Nevertheless, had Caderousse but retained his post a few minutes longer, he might have caught a dim outline of something approaching from the direction of Bellegarde; as the moving object drew nearer, he would easily have perceived that it consisted of a man and horse, between whom the kindest and most amiable understanding appeared to exist. The horse was of Hungarian breed, and

ambled along at an easy pace. His rider was a priest, dressed in black, and wearing a three-cornered hat; and, spite of the ardent rays of a noonday sun, the pair came on with a fair degree of rapidity.

Having arrived before the Pont du Gard, the horse stopped, but whether for his own pleasure or that of his rider would have been difficult to say. However that might have been, the priest, dismounting, led his steed by the bridle in search of some place to which he could secure him. Availing himself of a handle that projected from a half-fallen door, he tied the animal safely and having drawn a red cotton handkerchief, from his pocket, wiped away the perspiration that streamed from his brow, then, advancing to the door, struck thrice with the end of his iron-shod stick.

At this unusual sound, a huge black dog came rushing to meet the daring assailant of his ordinarily tranquil abode, snarling and displaying his sharp white teeth with a determined hostility that abundantly proved how little he was accustomed to society. At that moment a heavy footstep was heard descending the wooden staircase that led from the upper floor, and, with many bows and courteous smiles, the host of the Pont du Gard besought his guest to enter.

0319m

“You are welcome, sir, most welcome!” repeated the astonished Caderousse. “Now, then, Margotin,” cried he, speaking to the dog, “will you be quiet? Pray don’t heed him, sir!—he only barks, he never bites. I make no doubt a glass of good wine would be acceptable this dreadfully hot day.” Then perceiving for the first time the garb of the traveller he had to entertain, Caderousse hastily exclaimed: “A thousand pardons! I really did not observe whom I had the honor to receive under my poor roof. What would the abbé please to have? What refreshment can I offer? All I have is at his service.”

The priest gazed on the person addressing him with a long and searching gaze —there even seemed a disposition on his part to court a similar scrutiny on the part of the innkeeper; then, observing in the countenance of the latter no other expression than extreme surprise at his own want of attention to an inquiry so courteously worded, he deemed it as well to terminate this dumb show, and therefore said, speaking with a strong Italian accent, “You are, I presume, M. Caderousse?”

“Yes, sir,” answered the host, even more surprised at the question than he had been by the silence which had preceded it; “I am Gaspard Caderousse, at your service.”

“Gaspard Caderousse,” rejoined the priest. “Yes,—Christian and surname are

the same. You formerly lived, I believe in the Allées de Meilhan, on the fourth floor?"

0325m

"I did."

"And you followed the business of a tailor?"

"True, I was a tailor, till the trade fell off. It is so hot at Marseilles, that really I believe that the respectable inhabitants will in time go without any clothing whatever. But talking of heat, is there nothing I can offer you by way of refreshment?"

"Yes; let me have a bottle of your best wine, and then, with your permission, we will resume our conversation from where we left off."

"As you please, sir," said Caderousse, who, anxious not to lose the present opportunity of finding a customer for one of the few bottles of Cahors still remaining in his possession, hastily raised a trap-door in the floor of the apartment they were in, which served both as parlor and kitchen.

Upon issuing forth from his subterranean retreat at the expiration of five minutes, he found the abbé seated upon a wooden stool, leaning his elbow on a table, while Margotin, whose animosity seemed appeased by the unusual command of the traveller for refreshments, had crept up to him, and had established himself very comfortably between his knees, his long, skinny neck resting on his lap, while his dim eye was fixed earnestly on the traveller's face.

"Are you quite alone?" inquired the guest, as Caderousse placed before him the bottle of wine and a glass.

"Quite, quite alone," replied the man—"or, at least, practically so, for my poor wife, who is the only person in the house besides myself, is laid up with illness, and unable to render me the least assistance, poor thing!"

"You are married, then?" said the priest, with a show of interest, glancing round as he spoke at the scanty furnishings of the apartment.

"Ah, sir," said Caderousse with a sigh, "it is easy to perceive I am not a rich man; but in this world a man does not thrive the better for being honest." The abbé fixed on him a searching, penetrating glance.

"Yes, honest—I can certainly say that much for myself," continued the innkeeper, fairly sustaining the scrutiny of the abbé's gaze; "I can boast with truth of being an honest man; and," continued he significantly, with a hand on his breast and shaking his head, "that is more than everyone can say nowadays."

0327m

"So much the better for you, if what you assert be true," said the abbé; "for I am firmly persuaded that, sooner or later, the good will be rewarded, and the wicked punished."

"Such words as those belong to your profession," answered Caderousse, "and you do well to repeat them; but," added he, with a bitter expression of countenance, "one is free to believe them or not, as one pleases."

"You are wrong to speak thus," said the abbé; "and perhaps I may, in my own person, be able to prove to you how completely you are in error."

"What mean you?" inquired Caderousse with a look of surprise.

"In the first place, I must be satisfied that you are the person I am in search of."

"What proofs do you require?"

"Did you, in the year 1814 or 1815, know anything of a young sailor named Dantès?"

"Dantès? Did I know poor dear Edmond? Why, Edmond Dantès and myself were intimate friends!" exclaimed Caderousse, whose countenance flushed darkly as he caught the penetrating gaze of the abbé fixed on him, while the clear, calm eye of the questioner seemed to dilate with feverish scrutiny.

"You remind me," said the priest, "that the young man concerning whom I asked you was said to bear the name of Edmond."

"Said to bear the name!" repeated Caderousse, becoming excited and eager. "Why, he was so called as truly as I myself bore the appellation of Gaspard Caderousse; but tell me, I pray, what has become of poor Edmond? Did you know him? Is he alive and at liberty? Is he prosperous and happy?"

"He died a more wretched, hopeless, heart-broken prisoner than the felons who pay the penalty of their crimes at the galleys of Toulon."

A deadly pallor followed the flush on the countenance of Caderousse, who turned away, and the priest saw him wiping the tears from his eyes with the corner of the red handkerchief twisted round his head.

"Poor fellow, poor fellow!" murmured Caderousse. "Well, there, sir, is another proof that good people are never rewarded on this earth, and that none but the wicked prosper. Ah," continued Caderousse, speaking in the highly colored language of the South, "the world grows worse and worse. Why does not God, if he really hates the wicked, as he is said to do, send down brimstone and fire, and consume them altogether?"

"You speak as though you had loved this young Dantès," observed the abbé,

without taking any notice of his companion's vehemence.

"And so I did," replied Caderousse; "though once, I confess, I envied him his good fortune. But I swear to you, sir, I swear to you, by everything a man holds dear, I have, since then, deeply and sincerely lamented his unhappy fate."

There was a brief silence, during which the fixed, searching eye of the abbé was employed in scrutinizing the agitated features of the innkeeper.

"You knew the poor lad, then?" continued Caderousse.

"I was called to see him on his dying bed, that I might administer to him the consolations of religion."

"And of what did he die?" asked Caderousse in a choking voice.

"Of what, think you, do young and strong men die in prison, when they have scarcely numbered their thirtieth year, unless it be of imprisonment?" Caderousse wiped away the large beads of perspiration that gathered on his brow.

0329m

"But the strangest part of the story is," resumed the abbé, "that Dantès, even in his dying moments, swore by his crucified Redeemer, that he was utterly ignorant of the cause of his detention."

"And so he was," murmured Caderousse. "How should he have been otherwise? Ah, sir, the poor fellow told you the truth."

"And for that reason, he besought me to try and clear up a mystery he had never been able to penetrate, and to clear his memory should any foul spot or stain have fallen on it."

And here the look of the abbé, becoming more and more fixed, seemed to rest with ill-concealed satisfaction on the gloomy depression which was rapidly spreading over the countenance of Caderousse.

"A rich Englishman," continued the abbé, "who had been his companion in misfortune, but had been released from prison during the second restoration, was possessed of a diamond of immense value; this jewel he bestowed on Dantès upon himself quitting the prison, as a mark of his gratitude for the kindness and brotherly care with which Dantès had nursed him in a severe illness he underwent during his confinement. Instead of employing this diamond in attempting to bribe his jailers, who might only have taken it and then betrayed him to the governor, Dantès carefully preserved it, that in the event of his getting out of prison he might have wherewithal to live, for the sale of such a diamond would have quite sufficed to make his fortune."

"Then, I suppose," asked Caderousse, with eager, glowing looks, "that it was a stone of immense value?"

"Why, everything is relative," answered the abbé. "To one in Edmond's position the diamond certainly was of great value. It was estimated at fifty thousand francs."

"Bless me!" exclaimed Caderousse, "fifty thousand francs! Surely the diamond was as large as a nut to be worth all that."

"No," replied the abbé, "it was not of such a size as that; but you shall judge for yourself. I have it with me."

The sharp gaze of Caderousse was instantly directed towards the priest's garments, as though hoping to discover the location of the treasure. Calmly drawing forth from his pocket a small box covered with black shagreen, the abbé opened it, and displayed to the dazzled eyes of Caderousse the sparkling jewel it contained, set in a ring of admirable workmanship.

"And that diamond," cried Caderousse, almost breathless with eager admiration, "you say, is worth fifty thousand francs?"

"It is, without the setting, which is also valuable," replied the abbé, as he closed the box, and returned it to his pocket, while its brilliant hues seemed still to dance before the eyes of the fascinated innkeeper.

"But how comes the diamond in your possession, sir? Did Edmond make you his heir?"

"No, merely his testamentary executor. 'I once possessed four dear and faithful friends, besides the maiden to whom I was betrothed' he said; 'and I feel convinced they have all unfeignedly grieved over my loss. The name of one of the four friends is Caderousse.'" The innkeeper shivered.

"Another of the number," continued the abbé, without seeming to notice the emotion of Caderousse, "is called Danglars; and the third, in spite of being my rival, entertained a very sincere affection for me."

A fiendish smile played over the features of Caderousse, who was about to break in upon the abbé's speech, when the latter, waving his hand, said, "Allow me to finish first, and then if you have any observations to make, you can do so afterwards. 'The third of my friends, although my rival, was much attached to me,—his name was Fernand; that of my betrothed was'—Stay, stay," continued the abbé, "I have forgotten what he called her."

"Mercédès," said Caderousse eagerly.

"True," said the abbé, with a stifled sigh, "Mercédès it was."

“Go on,” urged Caderousse.

“Bring me a *carafe* of water,” said the abbé.

Caderousse quickly performed the stranger’s bidding; and after pouring some into a glass, and slowly swallowing its contents, the abbé, resuming his usual placidity of manner, said, as he placed his empty glass on the table:

“Where did we leave off?”

“The name of Edmond’s betrothed was Mercédès.”

“To be sure. ‘You will go to Marseilles,’ said Dantès,—for you understand, I repeat his words just as he uttered them. Do you understand?”

“Perfectly.”

“‘You will sell this diamond; you will divide the money into five equal parts, and give an equal portion to these good friends, the only persons who have loved me upon earth.’”

“But why into five parts?” asked Caderousse; “you only mentioned four persons.”

“Because the fifth is dead, as I hear. The fifth sharer in Edmond’s bequest, was his own father.”

“Too true, too true!” ejaculated Caderousse, almost suffocated by the contending passions which assailed him, “the poor old man did die.”

“I learned so much at Marseilles,” replied the abbé, making a strong effort to appear indifferent; “but from the length of time that has elapsed since the death of the elder Dantès, I was unable to obtain any particulars of his end. Can you enlighten me on that point?”

“I do not know who could if I could not,” said Caderousse. “Why, I lived almost on the same floor with the poor old man. Ah, yes, about a year after the disappearance of his son the poor old man died.”

“Of what did he die?”

“Why, the doctors called his complaint gastro-enteritis, I believe; his acquaintances say he died of grief; but I, who saw him in his dying moments, I say he died of——”

Caderousse paused.

“Of what?” asked the priest, anxiously and eagerly.

“Why, of downright starvation.”

“Starvation!” exclaimed the abbé, springing from his seat. “Why, the vilest animals are not suffered to die by such a death as that. The very dogs that

wander houseless and homeless in the streets find some pitying hand to cast them a mouthful of bread; and that a man, a Christian, should be allowed to perish of hunger in the midst of other men who call themselves Christians, is too horrible for belief. Oh, it is impossible!—utterly impossible!”

“What I have said, I have said,” answered Caderousse.

“And you are a fool for having said anything about it,” said a voice from the top of the stairs. “Why should you meddle with what does not concern you?”

The two men turned quickly, and saw the sickly countenance of La Carconte peering between the baluster rails; attracted by the sound of voices, she had feebly dragged herself down the stairs, and, seated on the lower step, head on knees, she had listened to the foregoing conversation.

“Mind your own business, wife,” replied Caderousse sharply. “This gentleman asks me for information, which common politeness will not permit me to refuse.”

“Politeness, you simpleton!” retorted La Carconte. “What have you to do with politeness, I should like to know? Better study a little common prudence. How do you know the motives that person may have for trying to extract all he can from you?”

“I pledge you my word, madam,” said the abbé, “that my intentions are good; and that your husband can incur no risk, provided he answers me candidly.”

“Ah, that’s all very fine,” retorted the woman. “Nothing is easier than to begin with fair promises and assurances of nothing to fear; but when poor, silly folks, like my husband there, have been persuaded to tell all they know, the promises and assurances of safety are quickly forgotten; and at some moment when nobody is expecting it, behold trouble and misery, and all sorts of persecutions, are heaped on the unfortunate wretches, who cannot even see whence all their afflictions come.”

“Nay, nay, my good woman, make yourself perfectly easy, I beg of you. Whatever evils may befall you, they will not be occasioned by my instrumentality, that I solemnly promise you.”

La Carconte muttered a few inarticulate words, then let her head again drop upon her knees, and went into a fit of ague, leaving the two speakers to resume the conversation, but remaining so as to be able to hear every word they uttered. Again the abbé had been obliged to swallow a draught of water to calm the emotions that threatened to overpower him.

When he had sufficiently recovered himself, he said, “It appears, then, that the

miserable old man you were telling me of was forsaken by everyone. Surely, had not such been the case, he would not have perished by so dreadful a death."

"Why, he was not altogether forsaken," continued Caderousse, "for Mercédès the Catalan and Monsieur Morrel were very kind to him; but somehow the poor old man had contracted a profound hatred for Fernand—the very person," added Caderousse with a bitter smile, "that you named just now as being one of Dantès' faithful and attached friends."

"And was he not so?" asked the abbé.

"Gaspard, Gaspard!" murmured the woman, from her seat on the stairs, "mind what you are saying!"

Caderousse made no reply to these words, though evidently irritated and annoyed by the interruption, but, addressing the abbé, said, "Can a man be faithful to another whose wife he covets and desires for himself? But Dantès was so honorable and true in his own nature, that he believed everybody's professions of friendship. Poor Edmond, he was cruelly deceived; but it was fortunate that he never knew, or he might have found it more difficult, when on his deathbed, to pardon his enemies. And, whatever people may say," continued Caderousse, in his native language, which was not altogether devoid of rude poetry, "I cannot help being more frightened at the idea of the malediction of the dead than the hatred of the living."

"Imbecile!" exclaimed La Carconte.

"Do you, then, know in what manner Fernand injured Dantès?" inquired the abbé of Caderousse.

"Do I? No one better."

"Speak out then, say what it was!"

"Gaspard!" cried La Carconte, "do as you will; you are master—but if you take my advice you'll hold your tongue."

"Well, wife," replied Caderousse, "I don't know but what you're right!"

"So you will say nothing?" asked the abbé.

"Why, what good would it do?" asked Caderousse. "If the poor lad were living, and came to me and begged that I would candidly tell which were his true and which his false friends, why, perhaps, I should not hesitate. But you tell me he is no more, and therefore can have nothing to do with hatred or revenge, so let all such feeling be buried with him."

"You prefer, then," said the abbé, "that I should bestow on men you say are false and treacherous, the reward intended for faithful friendship?"

"That is true enough," returned Caderousse. "You say truly, the gift of poor Edmond was not meant for such traitors as Fernand and Danglars; besides, what would it be to them? no more than a drop of water in the ocean."

"Remember," chimed in La Carconte, "those two could crush you at a single blow!"

"How so?" inquired the abbé. "Are these persons, then, so rich and powerful?"

"Do you not know their history?"

"I do not. Pray relate it to me!"

Caderousse seemed to reflect for a few moments, then said, "No, truly, it would take up too much time."

"Well, my good friend," returned the abbé, in a tone that indicated utter indifference on his part, "you are at liberty, either to speak or be silent, just as you please; for my own part, I respect your scruples and admire your sentiments; so let the matter end. I shall do my duty as conscientiously as I can, and fulfil my promise to the dying man. My first business will be to dispose of this diamond."

So saying, the abbé again drew the small box from his pocket, opened it, and contrived to hold it in such a light, that a bright flash of brilliant hues passed before the dazzled gaze of Caderousse.

"Wife, wife!" cried he in a hoarse voice, "come here!"

"Diamond!" exclaimed La Carconte, rising and descending to the chamber with a tolerably firm step; "what diamond are you talking about?"

"Why, did you not hear all we said?" inquired Caderousse. "It is a beautiful diamond left by poor Edmond Dantès, to be sold, and the money divided between his father, Mercédès, his betrothed bride, Fernand, Danglars, and myself. The jewel is worth at least fifty thousand francs."

"Oh, what a magnificent jewel!" cried the astonished woman.

"The fifth part of the profits from this stone belongs to us then, does it not?" asked Caderousse.

"It does," replied the abbé; "with the addition of an equal division of that part intended for the elder Dantès, which I believe myself at liberty to divide equally with the four survivors."

"And why among us four?" inquired Caderousse.

"As being the friends Edmond esteemed most faithful and devoted to him."

"I don't call those friends who betray and ruin you," murmured the wife in her

turn, in a low, muttering voice.

“Of course not!” rejoined Caderousse quickly; “no more do I, and that was what I was observing to this gentleman just now. I said I looked upon it as a sacrilegious profanation to reward treachery, perhaps crime.”

“Remember,” answered the abbé calmly, as he replaced the jewel and its case in the pocket of his cassock, “it is your fault, not mine, that I do so. You will have the goodness to furnish me with the address of both Fernand and Danglars, in order that I may execute Edmond’s last wishes.”

The agitation of Caderousse became extreme, and large drops of perspiration rolled from his heated brow. As he saw the abbé rise from his seat and go towards the door, as though to ascertain if his horse were sufficiently refreshed to continue his journey, Caderousse and his wife exchanged looks of deep meaning.

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“There, you see, wife,” said the former, “this splendid diamond might all be ours, if we chose!”

“Do you believe it?”

“Why, surely a man of his holy profession would not deceive us!”

“Well,” replied La Carconte, “do as you like. For my part, I wash my hands of the affair.”

So saying, she once more climbed the staircase leading to her chamber, her body convulsed with chills, and her teeth rattling in her head, in spite of the intense heat of the weather. Arrived at the top stair, she turned round, and called out, in a warning tone, to her husband, “Gaspard, consider well what you are about to do!”

“I have both reflected and decided,” answered he.

La Carconte then entered her chamber, the flooring of which creaked beneath her heavy, uncertain tread, as she proceeded towards her armchair, into which she fell as though exhausted.

“Well,” asked the abbé, as he returned to the apartment below, “what have you made up your mind to do?”

“To tell you all I know,” was the reply.

“I certainly think you act wisely in so doing,” said the priest. “Not because I have the least desire to learn anything you may please to conceal from me, but simply that if, through your assistance, I could distribute the legacy according to

the wishes of the testator, why, so much the better, that is all.”

“I hope it may be so,” replied Caderousse, his face flushed with cupidity.

“I am all attention,” said the abbé.

“Stop a minute,” answered Caderousse; “we might be interrupted in the most interesting part of my story, which would be a pity; and it is as well that your visit hither should be made known only to ourselves.”

With these words he went stealthily to the door, which he closed, and, by way of still greater precaution, bolted and barred it, as he was accustomed to do at night.

During this time the abbé had chosen his place for listening at his ease. He removed his seat into a corner of the room, where he himself would be in deep shadow, while the light would be fully thrown on the narrator; then, with head bent down and hands clasped, or rather clenched together, he prepared to give his whole attention to Caderousse, who seated himself on the little stool, exactly opposite to him.

“Remember, this is no affair of mine,” said the trembling voice of La Carconte, as though through the flooring of her chamber she viewed the scene that was enacting below.

“Enough, enough!” replied Caderousse; “say no more about it; I will take all the consequences upon myself.”

And he began his story.

Chapter 27. The Story

First, sir," said Caderousse, "you must make me a promise."

"What is that?" inquired the abbé.

"Why, if you ever make use of the details I am about to give you, that you will never let anyone know that it was I who supplied them; for the persons of whom I am about to talk are rich and powerful, and if they only laid the tips of their fingers on me, I should break to pieces like glass."

"Make yourself easy, my friend," replied the abbé. "I am a priest, and confessions die in my breast. Recollect, our only desire is to carry out, in a fitting manner, the last wishes of our friend. Speak, then, without reserve, as without hatred; tell the truth, the whole truth; I do not know, never may know, the persons of whom you are about to speak; besides, I am an Italian, and not a Frenchman, and belong to God, and not to man, and I shall shortly retire to my convent, which I have only quitted to fulfil the last wishes of a dying man."

This positive assurance seemed to give Caderousse a little courage.

"Well, then, under these circumstances," said Caderousse, "I will, I even believe I ought to undeceive you as to the friendship which poor Edmond thought so sincere and unquestionable."

"Begin with his father, if you please." said the abbé; "Edmond talked to me a great deal about the old man for whom he had the deepest love."

"The history is a sad one, sir," said Caderousse, shaking his head; "perhaps you know all the earlier part of it?"

"Yes." answered the abbé; "Edmond related to me everything until the moment when he was arrested in a small cabaret close to Marseilles."

"At La Réserve! Oh, yes; I can see it all before me this moment."

"Was it not his betrothal feast?"

"It was and the feast that began so gayly had a very sorrowful ending; a police commissary, followed by four soldiers, entered, and Dantès was arrested."

"Yes, and up to this point I know all," said the priest. "Dantès himself only knew that which personally concerned him, for he never beheld again the five persons I have named to you, or heard mention of anyone of them."

“Well, when Dantès was arrested, Monsieur Morrel hastened to obtain the particulars, and they were very sad. The old man returned alone to his home, folded up his wedding suit with tears in his eyes, and paced up and down his chamber the whole day, and would not go to bed at all, for I was underneath him and heard him walking the whole night; and for myself, I assure you I could not sleep either, for the grief of the poor father gave me great uneasiness, and every step he took went to my heart as really as if his foot had pressed against my breast.

“The next day Mercédès came to implore the protection of M. de Villefort; she did not obtain it, however, and went to visit the old man; when she saw him so miserable and heart-broken, having passed a sleepless night, and not touched food since the previous day, she wished him to go with her that she might take care of him; but the old man would not consent. ‘No,’ was the old man’s reply, ‘I will not leave this house, for my poor dear boy loves me better than anything in the world; and if he gets out of prison he will come and see me the first thing, and what would he think if I did not wait here for him?’ I heard all this from the window, for I was anxious that Mercédès should persuade the old man to accompany her, for his footsteps over my head night and day did not leave me a moment’s repose.”

“But did you not go upstairs and try to console the poor old man?” asked the abbé.

“Ah, sir,” replied Caderousse, “we cannot console those who will not be consoled, and he was one of these; besides, I know not why, but he seemed to dislike seeing me. One night, however, I heard his sobs, and I could not resist my desire to go up to him, but when I reached his door he was no longer weeping but praying. I cannot now repeat to you, sir, all the eloquent words and imploring language he made use of; it was more than piety, it was more than grief, and I, who am no canter, and hate the Jesuits, said then to myself, ‘It is really well, and I am very glad that I have not any children; for if I were a father and felt such excessive grief as the old man does, and did not find in my memory or heart all he is now saying, I should throw myself into the sea at once, for I could not bear it.’”

“Poor father!” murmured the priest.

“From day to day he lived on alone, and more and more solitary. M. Morrel and Mercédès came to see him, but his door was closed; and, although I was certain he was at home, he would not make any answer. One day, when, contrary to his custom, he had admitted Mercédès, and the poor girl, in spite of her own grief and despair, endeavored to console him, he said to her,—‘Be assured, my

dear daughter, he is dead; and instead of expecting him, it is he who is awaiting us; I am quite happy, for I am the oldest, and of course shall see him first.'

"However well disposed a person may be, why, you see we leave off after a time seeing persons who are in sorrow, they make one melancholy; and so at last old Dantès was left all to himself, and I only saw from time to time strangers go up to him and come down again with some bundle they tried to hide; but I guessed what these bundles were, and that he sold by degrees what he had to pay for his subsistence. At length the poor old fellow reached the end of all he had; he owed three quarters' rent, and they threatened to turn him out; he begged for another week, which was granted to him. I know this, because the landlord came into my apartment when he left his.

"For the first three days I heard him walking about as usual, but, on the fourth I heard nothing. I then resolved to go up to him at all risks. The door was closed, but I looked through the keyhole, and saw him so pale and haggard, that believing him very ill, I went and told M. Morrel and then ran on to Mercédès. They both came immediately, M. Morrel bringing a doctor, and the doctor said it was inflammation of the bowels, and ordered him a limited diet. I was there, too, and I never shall forget the old man's smile at this prescription.

"From that time he received all who came; he had an excuse for not eating any more; the doctor had put him on a diet."

The abbé uttered a kind of groan.

"The story interests you, does it not, sir?" inquired Caderousse.

"Yes," replied the abbé, "it is very affecting."

"Mercédès came again, and she found him so altered that she was even more anxious than before to have him taken to her own home. This was M. Morrel's wish also, who would fain have conveyed the old man against his consent; but the old man resisted, and cried so that they were actually frightened. Mercédès remained, therefore, by his bedside, and M. Morrel went away, making a sign to the Catalan that he had left his purse on the chimney-piece; but, availing himself of the doctor's order, the old man would not take any sustenance; at length (after nine days of despair and fasting), the old man died, cursing those who had caused his misery, and saying to Mercédès, 'If you ever see my Edmond again, tell him I die blessing him.'"

The abbé rose from his chair, made two turns round the chamber, and pressed his trembling hand against his parched throat.

"And you believe he died——"

"Of hunger, sir, of hunger," said Caderousse. "I am as certain of it as that we two are Christians."

The abbé, with a shaking hand, seized a glass of water that was standing by him half-full, swallowed it at one gulp, and then resumed his seat, with red eyes and pale cheeks.

"This was, indeed, a horrid event," said he in a hoarse voice.

"The more so, sir, as it was men's and not God's doing."

"Tell me of those men," said the abbé, "and remember too," he added in an almost menacing tone, "you have promised to tell me everything. Tell me, therefore, who are these men who killed the son with despair, and the father with famine?"

"Two men jealous of him, sir; one from love, and the other from ambition,—Fernand and Danglars."

"How was this jealousy manifested? Speak on."

"They denounced Edmond as a Bonapartist agent."

"Which of the two denounced him? Which was the real delinquent?"

"Both, sir; one with a letter, and the other put it in the post."

"And where was this letter written?"

"At La Réserve, the day before the betrothal feast."

"Twas so, then—'twas so, then," murmured the abbé. "Oh, Faria, Faria, how well did you judge men and things!"

"What did you please to say, sir?" asked Caderousse.

"Nothing, nothing," replied the priest; "go on."

"It was Danglars who wrote the denunciation with his left hand, that his writing might not be recognized, and Fernand who put it in the post."

"But," exclaimed the abbé suddenly, "you were there yourself."

"I!" said Caderousse, astonished; "who told you I was there?"

The abbé saw he had overshot the mark, and he added quickly,—"No one; but in order to have known everything so well, you must have been an eye-witness."

"True, true!" said Caderousse in a choking voice, "I was there."

"And did you not remonstrate against such infamy?" asked the abbé; "if not, you were an accomplice."

"Sir," replied Caderousse, "they had made me drink to such an excess that I nearly lost all perception. I had only an indistinct understanding of what was

passing around me. I said all that a man in such a state could say; but they both assured me that it was a jest they were carrying on, and perfectly harmless."

"Next day—next day, sir, you must have seen plain enough what they had been doing, yet you said nothing, though you were present when Dantès was arrested."

"Yes, sir, I was there, and very anxious to speak; but Danglars restrained me. 'If he should really be guilty,' said he, 'and did really put in to the Island of Elba; if he is really charged with a letter for the Bonapartist committee at Paris, and if they find this letter upon him, those who have supported him will pass for his accomplices.' I confess I had my fears, in the state in which politics then were, and I held my tongue. It was cowardly, I confess, but it was not criminal."

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"I understand—you allowed matters to take their course, that was all."

"Yes, sir," answered Caderousse; "and remorse preys on me night and day. I often ask pardon of God, I swear to you, because this action, the only one with which I have seriously reproached myself in all my life, is no doubt the cause of my abject condition. I am expiating a moment of selfishness, and so I always say to La Carconte, when she complains, 'Hold your tongue, woman; it is the will of God.'" And Caderousse bowed his head with every sign of real repentance.

"Well, sir," said the abbé, "you have spoken unreservedly; and thus to accuse yourself is to deserve pardon."

"Unfortunately, Edmond is dead, and has not pardoned me."

"He did not know," said the abbé.

"But he knows it all now," interrupted Caderousse; "they say the dead know everything."

There was a brief silence; the abbé rose and paced up and down pensively, and then resumed his seat.

"You have two or three times mentioned a M. Morrel," he said; "who was he?"

"The owner of the *Pharaon* and patron of Dantès."

"And what part did he play in this sad drama?" inquired the abbé.

"The part of an honest man, full of courage and real regard. Twenty times he interceded for Edmond. When the emperor returned, he wrote, implored, threatened, and so energetically, that on the second restoration he was persecuted as a Bonapartist. Ten times, as I told you, he came to see Dantès' father, and

offered to receive him in his own house; and the night or two before his death, as I have already said, he left his purse on the mantelpiece, with which they paid the old man's debts, and buried him decently; and so Edmond's father died, as he had lived, without doing harm to anyone. I have the purse still by me—a large one, made of red silk."

"And," asked the abbé, "is M. Morrel still alive?"

"Yes," replied Caderousse.

"In that case," replied the abbé, "he should be a man blessed of God, rich, happy."

Caderousse smiled bitterly. "Yes, happy as myself," said he.

"What! M. Morrel unhappy?" exclaimed the abbé.

"He is reduced almost to the last extremity—nay, he is almost at the point of dishonor."

"How?"

"Yes," continued Caderousse, "so it is; after five-and-twenty years of labor, after having acquired a most honorable name in the trade of Marseilles, M. Morrel is utterly ruined; he has lost five ships in two years, has suffered by the bankruptcy of three large houses, and his only hope now is in that very *Pharaon* which poor Dantès commanded, and which is expected from the Indies with a cargo of cochineal and indigo. If this ship founders, like the others, he is a ruined man."

"And has the unfortunate man wife or children?" inquired the abbé.

"Yes, he has a wife, who through everything has behaved like an angel; he has a daughter, who was about to marry the man she loved, but whose family now will not allow him to wed the daughter of a ruined man; he has, besides, a son, a lieutenant in the army; and, as you may suppose, all this, instead of lessening, only augments his sorrows. If he were alone in the world he would blow out his brains, and there would be an end."

"Horrible!" ejaculated the priest.

"And it is thus heaven recompenses virtue, sir," added Caderousse. "You see, I, who never did a bad action but that I have told you of—am in destitution, with my poor wife dying of fever before my very eyes, and I unable to do anything in the world for her; I shall die of hunger, as old Dantès did, while Fernand and Danglars are rolling in wealth."

"How is that?"

"Because their deeds have brought them good fortune, while honest men have

been reduced to misery.”

“What has become of Danglars, the instigator, and therefore the most guilty?”

“What has become of him? Why, he left Marseilles, and was taken, on the recommendation of M. Morrel, who did not know his crime, as cashier into a Spanish bank. During the war with Spain he was employed in the commissariat of the French army, and made a fortune; then with that money he speculated in the funds, and trebled or quadrupled his capital; and, having first married his banker’s daughter, who left him a widower, he has married a second time, a widow, a Madame de Nargonne, daughter of M. de Servieux, the king’s chamberlain, who is in high favor at court. He is a millionaire, and they have made him a baron, and now he is the Baron Danglars, with a fine residence in the Rue du Mont-Blanc, with ten horses in his stables, six footmen in his antechamber, and I know not how many millions in his strongbox.”

“Ah!” said the abbé, in a peculiar tone, “he is happy.”

“Happy? Who can answer for that? Happiness or unhappiness is the secret known but to one’s self and the walls—walls have ears but no tongue; but if a large fortune produces happiness, Danglars is happy.”

“And Fernand?”

“Fernand? Why, much the same story.”

“But how could a poor Catalan fisher-boy, without education or resources, make a fortune? I confess this staggers me.”

“And it has staggered everybody. There must have been in his life some strange secret that no one knows.”

“But, then, by what visible steps has he attained this high fortune or high position?”

“Both, sir—he has both fortune and position—both.”

“This must be impossible!”

“It would seem so; but listen, and you will understand. Some days before the return of the emperor, Fernand was drafted. The Bourbons left him quietly enough at the Catalans, but Napoleon returned, a special levy was made, and Fernand was compelled to join. I went too; but as I was older than Fernand, and had just married my poor wife, I was only sent to the coast. Fernand was enrolled in the active army, went to the frontier with his regiment, and was at the battle of Ligny. The night after that battle he was sentry at the door of a general who carried on a secret correspondence with the enemy. That same night the general was to go over to the English. He proposed to Fernand to accompany

him; Fernand agreed to do so, deserted his post, and followed the general.

“Fernand would have been court-martialed if Napoleon had remained on the throne, but his action was rewarded by the Bourbons. He returned to France with the epaulet of sub-lieutenant, and as the protection of the general, who is in the highest favor, was accorded to him, he was a captain in 1823, during the Spanish war—that is to say, at the time when Danglars made his early speculations. Fernand was a Spaniard, and being sent to Spain to ascertain the feeling of his fellow-countrymen, found Danglars there, got on very intimate terms with him, won over the support of the royalists at the capital and in the provinces, received promises and made pledges on his own part, guided his regiment by paths known to himself alone through the mountain gorges which were held by the royalists, and, in fact, rendered such services in this brief campaign that, after the taking of Trocadero, he was made colonel, and received the title of count and the cross of an officer of the Legion of Honor.”

“Destiny! destiny!” murmured the abbé.

“Yes, but listen: this was not all. The war with Spain being ended, Fernand’s career was checked by the long peace which seemed likely to endure throughout Europe. Greece only had risen against Turkey, and had begun her war of independence; all eyes were turned towards Athens—it was the fashion to pity and support the Greeks. The French government, without protecting them openly, as you know, gave countenance to volunteer assistance. Fernand sought and obtained leave to go and serve in Greece, still having his name kept on the army roll.

0345m

Some time after, it was stated that the Comte de Morcerf (this was the name he bore) had entered the service of Ali Pasha with the rank of instructor-general. Ali Pasha was killed, as you know, but before he died he recompensed the services of Fernand by leaving him a considerable sum, with which he returned to France, when he was gazetted lieutenant-general.”

“So that now——?” inquired the abbé.

“So that now,” continued Caderousse, “he owns a magnificent house—No. 27, Rue du Helder, Paris.”

The abbé opened his mouth, hesitated for a moment, then, making an effort at self-control, he said, “And Mercédès—they tell me that she has disappeared?”

“Disappeared,” said Caderousse, “yes, as the sun disappears, to rise the next day with still more splendor.”

"Has she made a fortune also?" inquired the abbé, with an ironical smile.

"Mercédès is at this moment one of the greatest ladies in Paris," replied Caderousse.

"Go on," said the abbé; "it seems as if I were listening to the story of a dream. But I have seen things so extraordinary, that what you tell me seems less astonishing than it otherwise might."

"Mercédès was at first in the deepest despair at the blow which deprived her of Edmond. I have told you of her attempts to propitiate M. de Villefort, her devotion to the elder Dantès. In the midst of her despair, a new affliction overtook her. This was the departure of Fernand—of Fernand, whose crime she did not know, and whom she regarded as her brother. Fernand went, and Mercédès remained alone.

"Three months passed and still she wept—no news of Edmond, no news of Fernand, no companionship save that of an old man who was dying with despair. One evening, after a day of accustomed vigil at the angle of two roads leading to Marseilles from the Catalans, she returned to her home more depressed than ever. Suddenly she heard a step she knew, turned anxiously around, the door opened, and Fernand, dressed in the uniform of a sub-lieutenant, stood before her.

"It was not the one she wished for most, but it seemed as if a part of her past life had returned to her.

"Mercédès seized Fernand's hands with a transport which he took for love, but which was only joy at being no longer alone in the world, and seeing at last a friend, after long hours of solitary sorrow. And then, it must be confessed, Fernand had never been hated—he was only not precisely loved. Another possessed all Mercédès' heart; that other was absent, had disappeared, perhaps was dead. At this last thought Mercédès burst into a flood of tears, and wrung her hands in agony; but the thought, which she had always repelled before when it was suggested to her by another, came now in full force upon her mind; and then, too, old Dantès incessantly said to her, 'Our Edmond is dead; if he were not, he would return to us.'

"The old man died, as I have told you; had he lived, Mercédès, perchance, had not become the wife of another, for he would have been there to reproach her infidelity. Fernand saw this, and when he learned of the old man's death he returned. He was now a lieutenant. At his first coming he had not said a word of love to Mercédès; at the second he reminded her that he loved her.

"Mercédès begged for six months more in which to await and mourn for

Edmond."

"So that," said the abbé, with a bitter smile, "that makes eighteen months in all. What more could the most devoted lover desire?" Then he murmured the words of the English poet, "'Frailty, thy name is woman.'"

"Six months afterwards," continued Caderousse, "the marriage took place in the church of Accoules."

"The very church in which she was to have married Edmond," murmured the priest; "there was only a change of bridegrooms."

"Well, Mercédès was married," proceeded Caderousse; "but although in the eyes of the world she appeared calm, she nearly fainted as she passed La Réserve, where, eighteen months before, the betrothal had been celebrated with him whom she might have known she still loved, had she looked to the bottom of her heart. Fernand, more happy, but not more at his ease—for I saw at this time he was in constant dread of Edmond's return—Fernand was very anxious to get his wife away, and to depart himself. There were too many unpleasant possibilities associated with the Catalans, and eight days after the wedding they left Marseilles."

"Did you ever see Mercédès again?" inquired the priest.

"Yes, during the Spanish war, at Perpignan, where Fernand had left her; she was attending to the education of her son."

The abbé started. "Her son?" said he.

"Yes," replied Caderousse, "little Albert."

"But, then, to be able to instruct her child," continued the abbé, "she must have received an education herself. I understood from Edmond that she was the daughter of a simple fisherman, beautiful but uneducated."

"Oh," replied Caderousse, "did he know so little of his lovely betrothed? Mercédès might have been a queen, sir, if the crown were to be placed on the heads of the loveliest and most intelligent. Fernand's fortune was already waxing great, and she developed with his growing fortune. She learned drawing, music—everything. Besides, I believe, between ourselves, she did this in order to distract her mind, that she might forget; and she only filled her head in order to alleviate the weight on her heart. But now her position in life is assured," continued Caderousse; "no doubt fortune and honors have comforted her; she is rich, a countess, and yet——"

Caderousse paused.

"And yet what?" asked the abbé.

“Yet, I am sure, she is not happy,” said Caderousse.

“What makes you believe this?”

“Why, when I found myself utterly destitute, I thought my old friends would, perhaps, assist me. So I went to Danglars, who would not even receive me. I called on Fernand, who sent me a hundred francs by his valet-de-chambre.”

“Then you did not see either of them?”

“No, but Madame de Morcerf saw me.”

“How was that?”

“As I went away a purse fell at my feet—it contained five-and-twenty louis; I raised my head quickly, and saw Mercédès, who at once shut the blind.”

“And M. de Villefort?” asked the abbé.

“Oh, he never was a friend of mine, I did not know him, and I had nothing to ask of him.”

“Do you not know what became of him, and the share he had in Edmond’s misfortunes?”

“No; I only know that some time after Edmond’s arrest, he married Mademoiselle de Saint-Méran, and soon after left Marseilles; no doubt he has been as lucky as the rest; no doubt he is as rich as Danglars, as high in station as Fernand. I only, as you see, have remained poor, wretched, and forgotten.”

“You are mistaken, my friend,” replied the abbé; “God may seem sometimes to forget for a time, while his justice reposes, but there always comes a moment when he remembers—and behold—a proof!”

As he spoke, the abbé took the diamond from his pocket, and giving it to Caderousse, said, “Here, my friend, take this diamond, it is yours.”

“What, for me only?” cried Caderousse, “ah, sir, do not jest with me!”

“This diamond was to have been shared among his friends. Edmond had one friend only, and thus it cannot be divided. Take the diamond, then, and sell it; it is worth fifty thousand francs, and I repeat my wish that this sum may suffice to release you from your wretchedness.”

0351m

“Oh, sir,” said Caderousse, putting out one hand timidly, and with the other wiping away the perspiration which bedewed his brow,—“Oh, sir, do not make a jest of the happiness or despair of a man.”

“I know what happiness and what despair are, and I never make a jest of such feelings. Take it, then, but in exchange——”

Caderousse, who touched the diamond, withdrew his hand.

The abbé smiled.

“In exchange,” he continued, “give me the red silk purse that M. Morrel left on old Dantès’ chimney-piece, and which you tell me is still in your hands.”

Caderousse, more and more astonished, went toward a large oaken cupboard, opened it, and gave the abbé a long purse of faded red silk, round which were two copper runners that had once been gilt. The abbé took it, and in return gave Caderousse the diamond.

“Oh, you are a man of God, sir,” cried Caderousse; “for no one knew that Edmond had given you this diamond, and you might have kept it.”

“Which,” said the abbé to himself, “you would have done.” The abbé rose, took his hat and gloves. “Well,” he said, “all you have told me is perfectly true, then, and I may believe it in every particular.”

“See, sir,” replied Caderousse, “in this corner is a crucifix in holy wood—here on this shelf is my wife’s testament; open this book, and I will swear upon it with my hand on the crucifix. I will swear to you by my soul’s salvation, my faith as a Christian, I have told everything to you as it occurred, and as the recording angel will tell it to the ear of God at the day of the last judgment!”

“Tis well,” said the abbé, convinced by his manner and tone that Caderousse spoke the truth. “Tis well, and may this money profit you! Adieu; I go far from men who thus so bitterly injure each other.”

The abbé with difficulty got away from the enthusiastic thanks of Caderousse, opened the door himself, got out and mounted his horse, once more saluted the innkeeper, who kept uttering his loud farewells, and then returned by the road he had travelled in coming.

When Caderousse turned around, he saw behind him La Carconte, paler and trembling more than ever.

“Is, then, all that I have heard really true?” she inquired.

“What? That he has given the diamond to us only?” inquired Caderousse, half bewildered with joy; “yes, nothing more true! See, here it is.”

The woman gazed at it a moment, and then said, in a gloomy voice, “Suppose it’s false?”

Caderousse started and turned pale.

“False!” he muttered. “False! Why should that man give me a false diamond?”

“To get your secret without paying for it, you blockhead!”

Caderousse remained for a moment aghast under the weight of such an idea.

“Oh!” he said, taking up his hat, which he placed on the red handkerchief tied round his head, “we will soon find out.”

“In what way?”

“Why, the fair is on at Beaucaire, there are always jewellers from Paris there, and I will show it to them. Look after the house, wife, and I shall be back in two hours,” and Caderousse left the house in haste, and ran rapidly in the direction opposite to that which the priest had taken.

“Fifty thousand francs!” muttered La Carconte when left alone; “it is a large sum of money, but it is not a fortune.”

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Chapter 28. The Prison Register

The day after that in which the scene we have just described had taken place on the road between Bellegarde and Beaucaire, a man of about thirty or two-and-thirty, dressed in a bright blue frock coat, nankeen trousers, and a white waistcoat, having the appearance and accent of an Englishman, presented himself before the mayor of Marseilles.

“Sir,” said he, “I am chief clerk of the house of Thomson & French, of Rome. We are, and have been these ten years, connected with the house of Morrel & Son, of Marseilles. We have a hundred thousand francs or thereabouts loaned on their securities, and we are a little uneasy at reports that have reached us that the firm is on the brink of ruin. I have come, therefore, express from Rome, to ask you for information.”

“Sir,” replied the mayor. “I know very well that during the last four or five years misfortune has seemed to pursue M. Morrel. He has lost four or five vessels, and suffered by three or four bankruptcies; but it is not for me, although I am a creditor myself to the amount of ten thousand francs, to give any information as to the state of his finances. Ask of me, as mayor, what is my opinion of M. Morrel, and I shall say that he is a man honorable to the last degree, and who has up to this time fulfilled every engagement with scrupulous punctuality. This is all I can say, sir; if you wish to learn more, address yourself to M. de Boville, the inspector of prisons, No. 15, Rue de Nouailles; he has, I believe, two hundred thousand francs in Morrel’s hands, and if there be any grounds for apprehension, as this is a greater amount than mine, you will most probably find him better informed than myself.”

The Englishman seemed to appreciate this extreme delicacy, made his bow and went away, proceeding with a characteristic British stride towards the street mentioned.

M. de Boville was in his private room, and the Englishman, on perceiving him, made a gesture of surprise, which seemed to indicate that it was not the first time he had been in his presence. As to M. de Boville, he was in such a state of despair, that it was evident all the faculties of his mind, absorbed in the thought which occupied him at the moment, did not allow either his memory or his

imagination to stray to the past.

The Englishman, with the coolness of his nation, addressed him in terms nearly similar to those with which he had accosted the mayor of Marseilles.

"Oh, sir," exclaimed M. de Boville, "your fears are unfortunately but too well founded, and you see before you a man in despair. I had two hundred thousand francs placed in the hands of Morrel & Son; these two hundred thousand francs were the dowry of my daughter, who was to be married in a fortnight, and these two hundred thousand francs were payable, half on the 15th of this month, and the other half on the 15th of next month. I had informed M. Morrel of my desire to have these payments punctually, and he has been here within the last half-hour to tell me that if his ship, the *Pharaon*, did not come into port on the 15th, he would be wholly unable to make this payment."

"But," said the Englishman, "this looks very much like a suspension of payment."

"It looks more like bankruptcy!" exclaimed M. de Boville despairingly.

The Englishman appeared to reflect a moment, and then said, "From which it would appear, sir, that this credit inspires you with considerable apprehension?"

"To tell you the truth, I consider it lost."

"Well, then, I will buy it of you!"

"You?"

"Yes, I!"

"But at a tremendous discount, of course?"

"No, for two hundred thousand francs. Our house," added the Englishman with a laugh, "does not do things in that way."

"And you will pay——"

"Ready money."

20023m

And the Englishman drew from his pocket a bundle of bank-notes, which might have been twice the sum M. de Boville feared to lose. A ray of joy passed across M. de Boville's countenance, yet he made an effort at self-control, and said:

"Sir, I ought to tell you that, in all probability, you will not realize six per cent of this sum."

"That's no affair of mine," replied the Englishman, "that is the affair of the house of Thomson & French, in whose name I act. They have, perhaps, some

motive to serve in hastening the ruin of a rival firm. But all I know, sir, is, that I am ready to hand you over this sum in exchange for your assignment of the debt. I only ask a brokerage."

"Of course, that is perfectly just," cried M. de Boville. "The commission is usually one and a half; will you have two—three—five per cent, or even more? Whatever you say."

"Sir," replied the Englishman, laughing, "I am like my house, and do not do such things—no, the commission I ask is quite different."

"Name it, sir, I beg."

"You are the inspector of prisons?"

"I have been so these fourteen years."

"You keep the registers of entries and departures?"

"I do."

"To these registers there are added notes relative to the prisoners?"

"There are special reports on every prisoner."

"Well, sir, I was educated at Rome by a poor devil of an abbé, who disappeared suddenly. I have since learned that he was confined in the Château d'If, and I should like to learn some particulars of his death."

"What was his name?"

"The Abbé Faria."

"Oh, I recollect him perfectly," cried M. de Boville; "he was crazy."

"So they said."

"Oh, he was, decidedly."

"Very possibly; but what sort of madness was it?"

"He pretended to know of an immense treasure, and offered vast sums to the government if they would liberate him."

"Poor devil!—and he is dead?"

"Yes, sir, five or six months ago, last February."

"You have a good memory, sir, to recollect dates so well."

"I recollect this, because the poor devil's death was accompanied by a singular incident."

"May I ask what that was?" said the Englishman with an expression of curiosity, which a close observer would have been astonished at discovering in his phlegmatic countenance.

"Oh dear, yes, sir; the abbé's dungeon was forty or fifty feet distant from that of one of Bonaparte's emissaries,—one of those who had contributed the most to the return of the usurper in 1815, a very resolute and very dangerous man."

"Indeed!" said the Englishman.

"Yes," replied M. de Boville; "I myself had occasion to see this man in 1816 or 1817, and we could only go into his dungeon with a file of soldiers. That man made a deep impression on me; I shall never forget his countenance!"

20025m

The Englishman smiled imperceptibly.

"And you say, sir," he interposed, "that the two dungeons——"

"Were separated by a distance of fifty feet; but it appears that this Edmond Dantès——"

"This dangerous man's name was——"

"Edmond Dantès. It appears, sir, that this Edmond Dantès had procured tools, or made them, for they found a tunnel through which the prisoners held communication with one another."

"This tunnel was dug, no doubt, with an intention of escape?"

"No doubt; but unfortunately for the prisoners, the Abbé Faria had an attack of catalepsy, and died."

"That must have cut short the projects of escape."

"For the dead man, yes," replied M. de Boville, "but not for the survivor; on the contrary, this Dantès saw a means of accelerating his escape. He, no doubt, thought that prisoners who died in the Château d'If were interred in an ordinary burial-ground, and he conveyed the dead man into his own cell, took his place in the sack in which they had sewed up the corpse, and awaited the moment of interment."

"It was a bold step, and one that showed some courage," remarked the Englishman.

"As I have already told you, sir, he was a very dangerous man; and, fortunately, by his own act disengaged the government of the fears it had on his account."

"How was that?"

"How? Do you not comprehend?"

"No."

“The Château d’If has no cemetery, and they simply throw the dead into the sea, after fastening a thirty-six-pound cannon-ball to their feet.”

“Well?” observed the Englishman as if he were slow of comprehension.

“Well, they fastened a thirty-six-pound ball to his feet, and threw him into the sea.”

“Really!” exclaimed the Englishman.

“Yes, sir,” continued the inspector of prisons. “You may imagine the amazement of the fugitive when he found himself flung headlong over the rocks! I should like to have seen his face at that moment.”

“That would have been difficult.”

“No matter,” replied De Boville, in supreme good-humor at the certainty of recovering his two hundred thousand francs,—“no matter, I can fancy it.” And he shouted with laughter.

“So can I,” said the Englishman, and he laughed too; but he laughed as the English do, “at the end of his teeth.”

“And so,” continued the Englishman who first gained his composure, “he was drowned?”

“Unquestionably.”

“So that the governor got rid of the dangerous and the crazy prisoner at the same time?”

“Precisely.”

20027m

“But some official document was drawn up as to this affair, I suppose?” inquired the Englishman.

“Yes, yes, the mortuary deposition. You understand, Dantès’ relations, if he had any, might have some interest in knowing if he were dead or alive.”

“So that now, if there were anything to inherit from him, they may do so with easy conscience. He is dead, and no mistake about it.”

“Oh, yes; and they may have the fact attested whenever they please.”

“So be it,” said the Englishman. “But to return to these registers.”

“True, this story has diverted our attention from them. Excuse me.”

“Excuse you for what? For the story? By no means; it really seems to me very curious.”

“Yes, indeed. So, sir, you wish to see all relating to the poor abbé, who really

was gentleness itself."

"Yes, you will much oblige me."

"Go into my study here, and I will show it to you."

And they both entered M. de Boville's study. Everything was here arranged in perfect order; each register had its number, each file of papers its place. The inspector begged the Englishman to seat himself in an armchair, and placed before him the register and documents relative to the Château d'If, giving him all the time he desired for the examination, while De Boville seated himself in a corner, and began to read his newspaper. The Englishman easily found the entries relative to the Abbé Faria; but it seemed that the history which the inspector had related interested him greatly, for after having perused the first documents he turned over the leaves until he reached the deposition respecting Edmond Dantès. There he found everything arranged in due order,—the accusation, examination, Morrel's petition, M. de Villefort's marginal notes. He folded up the accusation quietly, and put it as quietly in his pocket; read the examination, and saw that the name of Noirtier was not mentioned in it; perused, too, the application dated 10th April, 1815, in which Morrel, by the deputy procureur's advice, exaggerated with the best intentions (for Napoleon was then on the throne) the services Dantès had rendered to the imperial cause—services which Villefort's certificates rendered indisputable. Then he saw through the whole thing. This petition to Napoleon, kept back by Villefort, had become, under the second restoration, a terrible weapon against him in the hands of the king's attorney. He was no longer astonished when he searched on to find in the register this note, placed in a bracket against his name:

Edmond Dantès.

An inveterate Bonapartist; took an active part in the return from the Island of Elba.

To be kept in strict solitary confinement, and to be closely watched and guarded.

Beneath these lines was written in another hand: "See note above—nothing can be done."

He compared the writing in the bracket with the writing of the certificate placed beneath Morrel's petition, and discovered that the note in the bracket was the same writing as the certificate—that is to say, was in Villefort's handwriting.

20029m

As to the note which accompanied this, the Englishman understood that it

might have been added by some inspector who had taken a momentary interest in Dantès' situation, but who had, from the remarks we have quoted, found it impossible to give any effect to the interest he had felt.

As we have said, the inspector, from discretion, and that he might not disturb the Abbé Faria's pupil in his researches, had seated himself in a corner, and was reading *Le Drapeau Blanc*. He did not see the Englishman fold up and place in his pocket the accusation written by Danglars under the arbor of La Réserve, and which had the postmark, "Marseilles, 27th February, delivery 6 o'clock, P.M."

But it must be said that if he had seen it, he attached so little importance to this scrap of paper, and so much importance to his two hundred thousand francs, that he would not have opposed whatever the Englishman might do, however irregular it might be.

"Thanks," said the latter, closing the register with a slam, "I have all I want; now it is for me to perform my promise. Give me a simple assignment of your debt; acknowledge therein the receipt of the cash, and I will hand you over the money."

He rose, gave his seat to M. de Boville, who took it without ceremony, and quickly drew up the required assignment, while the Englishman counted out the bank-notes on the other side of the desk.

Chapter 29. The House of Morrel & Son

Anyone who had quitted Marseilles a few years previously, well acquainted with the interior of Morrel's warehouse, and had returned at this date, would have found a great change. Instead of that air of life, of comfort, and of happiness that permeates a flourishing and prosperous business establishment—instead of merry faces at the windows, busy clerks hurrying to and fro in the long corridors—instead of the court filled with bales of goods, re-echoing with the cries and the jokes of porters, one would have immediately perceived all aspect of sadness and gloom. Out of all the numerous clerks that used to fill the deserted corridor and the empty office, but two remained. One was a young man of three or four-and-twenty, who was in love with M. Morrel's daughter, and had remained with him in spite of the efforts of his friends to induce him to withdraw; the other was an old one-eyed cashier, called "Cocles," or "Cock-eye," a nickname given him by the young men who used to throng this vast now almost deserted bee-hive, and which had so completely replaced his real name that he would not, in all probability, have replied to anyone who addressed him by it.

Cocles remained in M. Morrel's service, and a most singular change had taken place in his position; he had at the same time risen to the rank of cashier, and sunk to the rank of a servant. He was, however, the same Cocles, good, patient, devoted, but inflexible on the subject of arithmetic, the only point on which he would have stood firm against the world, even against M. Morrel; and strong in the multiplication-table, which he had at his fingers' ends, no matter what scheme or what trap was laid to catch him.

In the midst of the disasters that befell the house, Cocles was the only one unmoved. But this did not arise from a want of affection; on the contrary, from a firm conviction. Like the rats that one by one forsake the doomed ship even before the vessel weighs anchor, so all the numerous clerks had by degrees deserted the office and the warehouse. Cocles had seen them go without thinking of inquiring the cause of their departure. Everything was as we have said, a question of arithmetic to Cocles, and during twenty years he had always seen all payments made with such exactitude, that it seemed as impossible to him that the house should stop payment, as it would to a miller that the river that had so long

turned his mill should cease to flow.

Nothing had as yet occurred to shake Cocles' belief; the last month's payment had been made with the most scrupulous exactitude; Cocles had detected an overbalance of fourteen sous in his cash, and the same evening he had brought them to M. Morrel, who, with a melancholy smile, threw them into an almost empty drawer, saying:

"Thanks, Cocles; you are the pearl of cashiers."

Cocles went away perfectly happy, for this eulogium of M. Morrel, himself the pearl of the honest men of Marseilles, flattered him more than a present of fifty crowns. But since the end of the month M. Morrel had passed many an anxious hour.

In order to meet the payments then due; he had collected all his resources, and, fearing lest the report of his distress should get bruited abroad at Marseilles when he was known to be reduced to such an extremity, he went to the Beaucaire fair to sell his wife's and daughter's jewels and a portion of his plate. By this means the end of the month was passed, but his resources were now exhausted. Credit, owing to the reports afloat, was no longer to be had; and to meet the one hundred thousand francs due on the 15th of the present month, and the one hundred thousand francs due on the 15th of the next month to M. de Boville, M. Morrel had, in reality, no hope but the return of the *Pharaon*, of whose departure he had learnt from a vessel which had weighed anchor at the same time, and which had already arrived in harbor.

But this vessel which, like the *Pharaon*, came from Calcutta, had been in for a fortnight, while no intelligence had been received of the *Pharaon*.

20033m

Such was the state of affairs when, the day after his interview with M. de Boville, the confidential clerk of the house of Thomson & French of Rome, presented himself at M. Morrel's.

Emmanuel received him; this young man was alarmed by the appearance of every new face, for every new face might be that of a new creditor, come in anxiety to question the head of the house. The young man, wishing to spare his employer the pain of this interview, questioned the new-comer; but the stranger declared that he had nothing to say to M. Emmanuel, and that his business was with M. Morrel in person.

Emmanuel sighed, and summoned Cocles. Cocles appeared, and the young man bade him conduct the stranger to M. Morrel's apartment. Cocles went first,

and the stranger followed him. On the staircase they met a beautiful girl of sixteen or seventeen, who looked with anxiety at the stranger.

"M. Morrel is in his room, is he not, Mademoiselle Julie?" said the cashier.

"Yes; I think so, at least," said the young girl hesitatingly. "Go and see, Cocles, and if my father is there, announce this gentleman."

"It will be useless to announce me, mademoiselle," returned the Englishman. "M. Morrel does not know my name; this worthy gentleman has only to announce the confidential clerk of the house of Thomson & French of Rome, with whom your father does business."

The young girl turned pale and continued to descend, while the stranger and Cocles continued to mount the staircase. She entered the office where Emmanuel was, while Cocles, by the aid of a key he possessed, opened a door in the corner of a landing-place on the second staircase, conducted the stranger into an antechamber, opened a second door, which he closed behind him, and after having left the clerk of the house of Thomson & French alone, returned and signed to him that he could enter.

The Englishman entered, and found Morrel seated at a table, turning over the formidable columns of his ledger, which contained the list of his liabilities. At the sight of the stranger, M. Morrel closed the ledger, arose, and offered a seat to the stranger; and when he had seen him seated, resumed his own chair. Fourteen years had changed the worthy merchant, who, in his thirty-sixth year at the opening of this history, was now in his fiftieth; his hair had turned white, time and sorrow had ploughed deep furrows on his brow, and his look, once so firm and penetrating, was now irresolute and wandering, as if he feared being forced to fix his attention on some particular thought or person.

The Englishman looked at him with an air of curiosity, evidently mingled with interest. "Monsieur," said Morrel, whose uneasiness was increased by this examination, "you wish to speak to me?"

"Yes, monsieur; you are aware from whom I come?"

"The house of Thomson & French; at least, so my cashier tells me."

"He has told you rightly. The house of Thomson & French had 300,000 or 400,000 francs to pay this month in France; and, knowing your strict punctuality, have collected all the bills bearing your signature, and charged me as they became due to present them, and to employ the money otherwise."

Morrel sighed deeply, and passed his hand over his forehead, which was covered with perspiration.

“So then, sir,” said Morrel, “you hold bills of mine?”

“Yes, and for a considerable sum.”

“What is the amount?” asked Morrel with a voice he strove to render firm.

20035m

“Here is,” said the Englishman, taking a quantity of papers from his pocket, “an assignment of 200,000 francs to our house by M. de Boville, the inspector of prisons, to whom they are due. You acknowledge, of course, that you owe this sum to him?”

“Yes; he placed the money in my hands at four and a half per cent nearly five years ago.”

“When are you to pay?”

“Half the 15th of this month, half the 15th of next.”

“Just so; and now here are 32,500 francs payable shortly; they are all signed by you, and assigned to our house by the holders.”

“I recognize them,” said Morrel, whose face was suffused, as he thought that, for the first time in his life, he would be unable to honor his own signature. “Is this all?”

“No, I have for the end of the month these bills which have been assigned to us by the house of Pascal, and the house of Wild & Turner of Marseilles, amounting to nearly 55,000 francs; in all, 287,500 francs.”

It is impossible to describe what Morrel suffered during this enumeration. “Two hundred and eighty-seven thousand five hundred francs,” repeated he.

“Yes, sir,” replied the Englishman. “I will not,” continued he, after a moment’s silence, “conceal from you, that while your probity and exactitude up to this moment are universally acknowledged, yet the report is current in Marseilles that you are not able to meet your liabilities.”

At this almost brutal speech Morrel turned deathly pale.

“Sir,” said he, “up to this time—and it is now more than four-and-twenty years since I received the direction of this house from my father, who had himself conducted it for five-and-thirty years—never has anything bearing the signature of Morrel & Son been dishonored.”

“I know that,” replied the Englishman. “But as a man of honor should answer another, tell me fairly, shall you pay these with the same punctuality?”

Morrel shuddered, and looked at the man, who spoke with more assurance than he had hitherto shown.

"To questions frankly put," said he, "a straightforward answer should be given. Yes, I shall pay, if, as I hope, my vessel arrives safely; for its arrival will again procure me the credit which the numerous accidents, of which I have been the victim, have deprived me; but if the *Pharaon* should be lost, and this last resource be gone——"

The poor man's eyes filled with tears.

"Well," said the other, "if this last resource fail you?"

"Well," returned Morrel, "it is a cruel thing to be forced to say, but, already used to misfortune, I must habituate myself to shame. I fear I shall be forced to suspend payment."

"Have you no friends who could assist you?"

Morrel smiled mournfully.

"In business, sir," said he, "one has no friends, only correspondents."

"It is true," murmured the Englishman; "then you have but one hope."

"But one."

"The last?"

"The last."

"So that if this fail——"

"I am ruined,—completely ruined!"

"As I was on my way here, a vessel was coming into port."

"I know it, sir; a young man, who still adheres to my fallen fortunes, passes a part of his time in a belvedere at the top of the house, in hopes of being the first to announce good news to me; he has informed me of the arrival of this ship."

"And it is not yours?"

"No, she is a Bordeaux vessel, *La Gironde*; she comes from India also; but she is not mine."

"Perhaps she has spoken to the *Pharaon*, and brings you some tidings of her?"

"Shall I tell you plainly one thing, sir? I dread almost as much to receive any tidings of my vessel as to remain in doubt. Uncertainty is still hope." Then in a low voice Morrel added,—"This delay is not natural. The *Pharaon* left Calcutta the 5th of February; she ought to have been here a month ago."

"What is that?" said the Englishman. "What is the meaning of that noise?"

"Oh, my God!" cried Morrel, turning pale, "what is it?"

A loud noise was heard on the stairs of people moving hastily, and half-stifled

sobs. Morrel rose and advanced to the door; but his strength failed him and he sank into a chair. The two men remained opposite one another, Morrel trembling in every limb, the stranger gazing at him with an air of profound pity. The noise had ceased; but it seemed that Morrel expected something—something had occasioned the noise, and something must follow. The stranger fancied he heard footsteps on the stairs; and that the footsteps, which were those of several persons, stopped at the door. A key was inserted in the lock of the first door, and the creaking of hinges was audible.

“There are only two persons who have the key to that door,” murmured Morrel, “Cocles and Julie.”

At this instant the second door opened, and the young girl, her eyes bathed with tears, appeared. Morrel rose tremblingly, supporting himself by the arm of the chair. He would have spoken, but his voice failed him.

“Oh, father!” said she, clasping her hands, “forgive your child for being the bearer of evil tidings.”

Morrel again changed color. Julie threw herself into his arms.

“Oh, father, father!” murmured she, “courage!”

“The *Pharaon* has gone down, then?” said Morrel in a hoarse voice. The young girl did not speak; but she made an affirmative sign with her head as she lay on her father’s breast.

“And the crew?” asked Morrel.

“Saved,” said the girl; “saved by the crew of the vessel that has just entered the harbor.”

Morrel raised his two hands to heaven with an expression of resignation and sublime gratitude.

“Thanks, my God,” said he, “at least thou strikest but me alone.”

A tear moistened the eye of the phlegmatic Englishman.

“Come in, come in,” said Morrel, “for I presume you are all at the door.”

Scarcely had he uttered those words when Madame Morrel entered weeping bitterly. Emmanuel followed her, and in the antechamber were visible the rough faces of seven or eight half-naked sailors. At the sight of these men the Englishman started and advanced a step; then restrained himself, and retired into the farthest and most obscure corner of the apartment. Madame Morrel sat down by her husband and took one of his hands in hers, Julie still lay with her head on his shoulder, Emmanuel stood in the centre of the chamber and seemed to form the link between Morrel’s family and the sailors at the door.

"How did this happen?" said Morrel.

"Draw nearer, Penelon," said the young man, "and tell us all about it."

An old seaman, bronzed by the tropical sun, advanced, twirling the remains of a hat between his hands.

"Good-day, M. Morrel," said he, as if he had just quitted Marseilles the previous evening, and had just returned from Aix or Toulon.

"Good-day, Penelon," returned Morrel, who could not refrain from smiling through his tears, "where is the captain?"

"The captain, M. Morrel,—he has stayed behind sick at Palma; but please God, it won't be much, and you will see him in a few days all alive and hearty."

"Well, now tell your story, Penelon."

20039m

Penelon rolled his quid in his cheek, placed his hand before his mouth, turned his head, and sent a long jet of tobacco-juice into the antechamber, advanced his foot, balanced himself, and began.

"You see, M. Morrel," said he, "we were somewhere between Cape Blanc and Cape Boyador, sailing with a fair breeze, south-south-west after a week's calm, when Captain Gaumard comes up to me—I was at the helm I should tell you—and says, 'Penelon, what do you think of those clouds coming up over there?' I was just then looking at them myself. 'What do I think, captain? Why I think that they are rising faster than they have any business to do, and that they would not be so black if they didn't mean mischief.'—'That's my opinion too,' said the captain, 'and I'll take precautions accordingly. We are carrying too much canvas. Avast, there, all hands! Take in the studding-sails and stow the flying jib.' It was time; the squall was on us, and the vessel began to heel. 'Ah,' said the captain, 'we have still too much canvas set; all hands lower the mainsail!' Five minutes after, it was down; and we sailed under mizzen- topsails and top-gallant sails. 'Well, Penelon,' said the captain, 'what makes you shake your head?' 'Why,' I says, 'I still think you've got too much on.' 'I think you're right,' answered he, 'we shall have a gale.' 'A gale? More than that, we shall have a tempest, or I don't know what's what.' You could see the wind coming like the dust at Montredon; luckily the captain understood his business. 'Take in two reefs in the top-sails,' cried the captain; 'let go the bowlin's, haul the brace, lower the top-gallant sails, haul out the reef-tackles on the yards.'"

20041m

"That was not enough for those latitudes," said the Englishman; "I should

have taken four reefs in the topsails and furled the spanker."

His firm, sonorous, and unexpected voice made everyone start. Penelon put his hand over his eyes, and then stared at the man who thus criticized the manœuvres of his captain.

"We did better than that, sir," said the old sailor respectfully; "we put the helm up to run before the tempest; ten minutes after we struck our top-sails and scudded under bare poles."

"The vessel was very old to risk that," said the Englishman.

"Eh, it was that that did the business; after pitching heavily for twelve hours we sprung a leak. 'Penelon,' said the captain, 'I think we are sinking, give me the helm, and go down into the hold.' I gave him the helm, and descended; there was already three feet of water. 'All hands to the pumps!' I shouted; but it was too late, and it seemed the more we pumped the more came in. 'Ah,' said I, after four hours' work, 'since we are sinking, let us sink; we can die but once.' 'Is that the example you set, Penelon?' cries the captain; 'very well, wait a minute.' He went into his cabin and came back with a brace of pistols. 'I will blow the brains out of the first man who leaves the pump,' said he."

"Well done!" said the Englishman.

20043m

"There's nothing gives you so much courage as good reasons," continued the sailor; "and during that time the wind had abated, and the sea gone down, but the water kept rising; not much, only two inches an hour, but still it rose. Two inches an hour does not seem much, but in twelve hours that makes two feet, and three we had before, that makes five. 'Come,' said the captain, 'we have done all in our power, and M. Morrel will have nothing to reproach us with, we have tried to save the ship, let us now save ourselves. To the boats, my lads, as quick as you can.' Now," continued Penelon, "you see, M. Morrel, a sailor is attached to his ship, but still more to his life, so we did not wait to be told twice; the more so, that the ship was sinking under us, and seemed to say, 'Get along—save yourselves.' We soon launched the boat, and all eight of us got into it. The captain descended last, or rather, he did not descend, he would not quit the vessel; so I took him round the waist, and threw him into the boat, and then I jumped after him. It was time, for just as I jumped the deck burst with a noise like the broadside of a man-of-war. Ten minutes after she pitched forward, then the other way, spun round and round, and then good-bye to the *Pharaon*. As for us, we were three days without anything to eat or drink, so that we began to think of drawing lots who should feed the rest, when we saw *La Gironde*; we

made signals of distress, she perceived us, made for us, and took us all on board. There now, M. Morrel, that's the whole truth, on the honor of a sailor; is not it true, you fellows there?" A general murmur of approbation showed that the narrator had faithfully detailed their misfortunes and sufferings.

"Well, well," said M. Morrel, "I know there was no one in fault but destiny. It was the will of God that this should happen, blessed be his name. What wages are due to you?"

"Oh, don't let us talk of that, M. Morrel."

"Yes, but we will talk of it."

"Well, then, three months," said Penelon.

"Cocles, pay two hundred francs to each of these good fellows," said Morrel. "At another time," added he, "I should have said, Give them, besides, two hundred francs over as a present; but times are changed, and the little money that remains to me is not my own, so do not think me mean on this account."

Penelon turned to his companions, and exchanged a few words with them.

"As for that, M. Morrel," said he, again turning his quid, "as for that——"

"As for what?"

"The money."

"Well——"

"Well, we all say that fifty francs will be enough for us at present, and that we will wait for the rest."

"Thanks, my friends, thanks!" cried Morrel gratefully; "take it—take it; and if you can find another employer, enter his service; you are free to do so."

These last words produced a prodigious effect on the seaman. Penelon nearly swallowed his quid; fortunately he recovered.

"What, M. Morrel!" said he in a low voice, "you send us away; you are then angry with us!"

"No, no," said M. Morrel, "I am not angry, quite the contrary, and I do not send you away; but I have no more ships, and therefore I do not want any sailors."

"No more ships!" returned Penelon; "well, then, you'll build some; we'll wait for you."

"I have no money to build ships with, Penelon," said the poor owner mournfully, "so I cannot accept your kind offer."

"No more money? Then you must not pay us; we can scud, like the *Pharaon*,

under bare poles."

"Enough, enough!" cried Morrel, almost overpowered; "leave me, I pray you; we shall meet again in a happier time. Emmanuel, go with them, and see that my orders are executed."

"At least, we shall see each other again, M. Morrel?" asked Penelon.

"Yes; I hope so, at least. Now go." He made a sign to Cocles, who went first; the seamen followed him and Emmanuel brought up the rear. "Now," said the owner to his wife and daughter, "leave me; I wish to speak with this gentleman."

20045m

And he glanced towards the clerk of Thomson & French, who had remained motionless in the corner during this scene, in which he had taken no part, except the few words we have mentioned. The two women looked at this person whose presence they had entirely forgotten, and retired; but, as she left the apartment, Julie gave the stranger a supplicating glance, to which he replied by a smile that an indifferent spectator would have been surprised to see on his stern features. The two men were left alone. "Well, sir," said Morrel, sinking into a chair, "you have heard all, and I have nothing further to tell you."

"I see," returned the Englishman, "that a fresh and unmerited misfortune has overwhelmed you, and this only increases my desire to serve you."

"Oh, sir!" cried Morrel.

"Let me see," continued the stranger, "I am one of your largest creditors."

"Your bills, at least, are the first that will fall due."

"Do you wish for time to pay?"

"A delay would save my honor, and consequently my life."

"How long a delay do you wish for?"

Morrel reflected. "Two months," said he.

"I will give you three," replied the stranger.

"But," asked Morrel, "will the house of Thomson & French consent?"

"Oh, I take everything on myself. Today is the 5th of June."

"Yes."

"Well, renew these bills up to the 5th of September; and on the 5th of September at eleven o'clock (the hand of the clock pointed to eleven), I shall come to receive the money."

"I shall expect you," returned Morrel; "and I will pay you—or I shall be

dead." These last words were uttered in so low a tone that the stranger could not hear them. The bills were renewed, the old ones destroyed, and the poor ship-owner found himself with three months before him to collect his resources. The Englishman received his thanks with the phlegm peculiar to his nation; and Morrel, overwhelming him with grateful blessings, conducted him to the staircase. The stranger met Julie on the stairs; she pretended to be descending, but in reality she was waiting for him. "Oh, sir"—said she, clasping her hands.

"Mademoiselle," said the stranger, "one day you will receive a letter signed 'Sinbad the Sailor.' Do exactly what the letter bids you, however strange it may appear."

"Yes, sir," returned Julie.

"Do you promise?"

"I swear to you I will."

"It is well. Adieu, mademoiselle. Continue to be the good, sweet girl you are at present, and I have great hopes that Heaven will reward you by giving you Emmanuel for a husband."

Julie uttered a faint cry, blushed like a rose, and leaned against the baluster. The stranger waved his hand, and continued to descend. In the court he found Penelon, who, with a rouleau of a hundred francs in either hand, seemed unable to make up his mind to retain them. "Come with me, my friend," said the Englishman; "I wish to speak to you."

Chapter 30. The Fifth of September

The extension provided for by the agent of Thomson & French, at the moment when Morrel expected it least, was to the poor shipowner so decided a stroke of good fortune that he almost dared to believe that fate was at length grown weary of wasting her spite upon him. The same day he told his wife, Emmanuel, and his daughter all that had occurred; and a ray of hope, if not of tranquillity, returned to the family. Unfortunately, however, Morrel had not only engagements with the house of Thomson & French, who had shown themselves so considerate towards him; and, as he had said, in business he had correspondents, and not friends. When he thought the matter over, he could by no means account for this generous conduct on the part of Thomson & French towards him; and could only attribute it to some such selfish argument as this: "We had better help a man who owes us nearly 300,000 francs, and have those 300,000 francs at the end of three months than hasten his ruin, and get only six or eight per cent of our money back again."

Unfortunately, whether through envy or stupidity, all Morrel's correspondents did not take this view; and some even came to a contrary decision. The bills signed by Morrel were presented at his office with scrupulous exactitude, and, thanks to the delay granted by the Englishman, were paid by Cocles with equal punctuality. Cocles thus remained in his accustomed tranquillity. It was Morrel alone who remembered with alarm, that if he had to repay on the 15th the 50,000 francs of M. de Boville, and on the 30th the 32,500 francs of bills, for which, as well as the debt due to the inspector of prisons, he had time granted, he must be a ruined man.

The opinion of all the commercial men was that, under the reverses which had successively weighed down Morrel, it was impossible for him to remain solvent. Great, therefore, was the astonishment when at the end of the month, he cancelled all his obligations with his usual punctuality. Still confidence was not restored to all minds, and the general opinion was that the complete ruin of the unfortunate shipowner had been postponed only until the end of the month.

The month passed, and Morrel made extraordinary efforts to get in all his resources. Formerly his paper, at any date, was taken with confidence, and was even in request. Morrel now tried to negotiate bills at ninety days only, and none

of the banks would give him credit. Fortunately, Morrel had some funds coming in on which he could rely; and, as they reached him, he found himself in a condition to meet his engagements when the end of July came.

The agent of Thomson & French had not been again seen at Marseilles; the day after, or two days after his visit to Morrel, he had disappeared; and as in that city he had had no intercourse but with the mayor, the inspector of prisons, and M. Morrel, his departure left no trace except in the memories of these three persons. As to the sailors of the *Pharaon*, they must have found snug berths elsewhere, for they also had disappeared.

Captain Gaumard, recovered from his illness, had returned from Palma. He delayed presenting himself at Morrel's, but the owner, hearing of his arrival, went to see him. The worthy shipowner knew, from Penelon's recital, of the captain's brave conduct during the storm, and tried to console him. He brought him also the amount of his wages, which Captain Gaumard had not dared to apply for.

As he descended the staircase, Morrel met Penelon, who was going up. Penelon had, it would seem, made good use of his money, for he was newly clad. When he saw his employer, the worthy tar seemed much embarrassed, drew on one side into the corner of the landing-place, passed his quid from one cheek to the other, stared stupidly with his great eyes, and only acknowledged the squeeze of the hand which Morrel as usual gave him by a slight pressure in return. Morrel attributed Penelon's embarrassment to the elegance of his attire; it was evident the good fellow had not gone to such an expense on his own account; he was, no doubt, engaged on board some other vessel, and thus his bashfulness arose from the fact of his not having, if we may so express ourselves, worn mourning for the *Pharaon* longer. Perhaps he had come to tell Captain Gaumard of his good luck, and to offer him employment from his new master.

"Worthy fellows!" said Morrel, as he went away, "may your new master love you as I loved you, and be more fortunate than I have been!"

20049m

August rolled by in unceasing efforts on the part of Morrel to renew his credit or revive the old. On the 20th of August it was known at Marseilles that he had left town in the mailcoach, and then it was said that the bills would go to protest at the end of the month, and that Morrel had gone away and left his chief clerk Emmanuel, and his cashier Cocles, to meet the creditors. But, contrary to all expectation, when the 31st of August came, the house opened as usual, and Cocles appeared behind the grating of the counter, examined all bills presented

with the usual scrutiny, and, from first to last, paid all with the usual precision. There came in, moreover, two drafts which M. Morrel had fully anticipated, and which Cocles paid as punctually as the bills which the shipowner had accepted. All this was incomprehensible, and then, with the tenacity peculiar to prophets of bad news, the failure was put off until the end of September.

On the 1st, Morrel returned; he was awaited by his family with extreme anxiety, for from this journey to Paris they hoped great things. Morrel had thought of Danglars, who was now immensely rich, and had lain under great obligations to Morrel in former days, since to him it was owing that Danglars entered the service of the Spanish banker, with whom he had laid the foundations of his vast wealth. It was said at this moment that Danglars was worth from six to eight millions of francs, and had unlimited credit. Danglars, then, without taking a crown from his pocket, could save Morrel; he had but to pass his word for a loan, and Morrel was saved. Morrel had long thought of Danglars, but had kept away from some instinctive motive, and had delayed as long as possible availing himself of this last resource. And Morrel was right, for he returned home crushed by the humiliation of a refusal.

Yet, on his arrival, Morrel did not utter a complaint, or say one harsh word. He embraced his weeping wife and daughter, pressed Emmanuel's hand with friendly warmth, and then going to his private room on the second floor had sent for Cocles.

"Then," said the two women to Emmanuel, "we are indeed ruined."

It was agreed in a brief council held among them, that Julie should write to her brother, who was in garrison at Nîmes, to come to them as speedily as possible. The poor women felt instinctively that they required all their strength to support the blow that impended. Besides, Maximilian Morrel, though hardly two-and-twenty, had great influence over his father.

He was a strong-minded, upright young man. At the time when he decided on his profession his father had no desire to choose for him, but had consulted young Maximilian's taste. He had at once declared for a military life, and had in consequence studied hard, passed brilliantly through the Polytechnic School, and left it as sub-lieutenant of the 53rd of the line. For a year he had held this rank, and expected promotion on the first vacancy. In his regiment Maximilian Morrel was noted for his rigid observance, not only of the obligations imposed on a soldier, but also of the duties of a man; and he thus gained the name of "the stoic." We need hardly say that many of those who gave him this epithet repeated it because they had heard it, and did not even know what it meant.

This was the young man whom his mother and sister called to their aid to sustain them under the serious trial which they felt they would soon have to endure. They had not mistaken the gravity of this event, for the moment after Morrel had entered his private office with Cocles, Julie saw the latter leave it pale, trembling, and his features betraying the utmost consternation. She would have questioned him as he passed by her, but the worthy creature hastened down the staircase with unusual precipitation, and only raised his hands to heaven and exclaimed:

“Oh, mademoiselle, mademoiselle, what a dreadful misfortune! Who could ever have believed it!”

A moment afterwards Julie saw him go upstairs carrying two or three heavy ledgers, a portfolio, and a bag of money.

Morrel examined the ledgers, opened the portfolio, and counted the money. All his funds amounted to 6,000 or 8,000 francs, his bills receivable up to the 5th to 4,000 or 5,000, which, making the best of everything, gave him 14,000 francs to meet debts amounting to 287,500 francs. He had not even the means for making a possible settlement on account.

However, when Morrel went down to his dinner, he appeared very calm. This calmness was more alarming to the two women than the deepest dejection would have been. After dinner Morrel usually went out and used to take his coffee at the club of the Phocéens, and read the *Semaphore*; this day he did not leave the house, but returned to his office.

As to Cocles, he seemed completely bewildered. For part of the day he went into the courtyard, seated himself on a stone with his head bare and exposed to the blazing sun. Emmanuel tried to comfort the women, but his eloquence faltered. The young man was too well acquainted with the business of the house, not to feel that a great catastrophe hung over the Morrel family. Night came, the two women had watched, hoping that when he left his room Morrel would come to them, but they heard him pass before their door, and trying to conceal the noise of his footsteps. They listened; he went into his sleeping-room, and fastened the door inside. Madame Morrel sent her daughter to bed, and half an hour after Julie had retired, she rose, took off her shoes, and went stealthily along the passage, to see through the keyhole what her husband was doing.

In the passage she saw a retreating shadow; it was Julie, who, uneasy herself, had anticipated her mother. The young lady went towards Madame Morrel.

“He is writing,” she said.

They had understood each other without speaking. Madame Morrel looked

again through the keyhole, Morrel was writing; but Madame Morrel remarked, what her daughter had not observed, that her husband was writing on stamped paper. The terrible idea that he was writing his will flashed across her; she shuddered, and yet had not strength to utter a word.

Next day M. Morrel seemed as calm as ever, went into his office as usual, came to his breakfast punctually, and then, after dinner, he placed his daughter beside him, took her head in his arms, and held her for a long time against his bosom. In the evening, Julie told her mother, that although he was apparently so calm, she had noticed that her father's heart beat violently.

The next two days passed in much the same way. On the evening of the 4th of September, M. Morrel asked his daughter for the key of his study. Julie trembled at this request, which seemed to her of bad omen. Why did her father ask for this key which she always kept, and which was only taken from her in childhood as a punishment? The young girl looked at Morrel.

"What have I done wrong, father," she said, "that you should take this key from me?"

"Nothing, my dear," replied the unhappy man, the tears starting to his eyes at this simple question,—"nothing, only I want it."

Julie made a pretence to feel for the key. "I must have left it in my room," she said.

And she went out, but instead of going to her apartment she hastened to consult Emmanuel.

"Do not give this key to your father," said he, "and tomorrow morning, if possible, do not quit him for a moment."

She questioned Emmanuel, but he knew nothing, or would not say what he knew.

During the night, between the 4th and 5th of September, Madame Morrel remained listening for every sound, and, until three o'clock in the morning, she heard her husband pacing the room in great agitation. It was three o'clock when he threw himself on the bed. The mother and daughter passed the night together. They had expected Maximilian since the previous evening. At eight o'clock in the morning Morrel entered their chamber. He was calm; but the agitation of the night was legible in his pale and careworn visage. They did not dare to ask him how he had slept. Morrel was kinder to his wife, more affectionate to his daughter, than he had ever been. He could not cease gazing at and kissing the sweet girl. Julie, mindful of Emmanuel's request, was following her father when he quitted the room, but he said to her quickly:

“Remain with your mother, dearest.” Julie wished to accompany him. “I wish you to do so,” said he.

This was the first time Morrel had ever so spoken, but he said it in a tone of paternal kindness, and Julie did not dare to disobey. She remained at the same spot standing mute and motionless. An instant afterwards the door opened, she felt two arms encircle her, and a mouth pressed her forehead. She looked up and uttered an exclamation of joy.

20053m

“Maximilian, my dearest brother!” she cried.

At these words Madame Morrel rose, and threw herself into her son’s arms.

“Mother,” said the young man, looking alternately at Madame Morrel and her daughter, “what has occurred—what has happened? Your letter has frightened me, and I have come hither with all speed.”

“Julie,” said Madame Morrel, making a sign to the young man, “go and tell your father that Maximilian has just arrived.”

The young lady rushed out of the apartment, but on the first step of the staircase she found a man holding a letter in his hand.

“Are you not Mademoiselle Julie Morrel?” inquired the man, with a strong Italian accent.

“Yes, sir,” replied Julie with hesitation; “what is your pleasure? I do not know you.”

“Read this letter,” he said, handing it to her. Julie hesitated. “It concerns the best interests of your father,” said the messenger.

The young girl hastily took the letter from him. She opened it quickly and read:

“Go this moment to the Allées de Meilhan, enter the house No. 15, ask the porter for the key of the room on the fifth floor, enter the apartment, take from the corner of the mantelpiece a purse netted in red silk, and give it to your father. It is important that he should receive it before eleven o’clock. You promised to obey me implicitly. Remember your oath.

“Sinbad the Sailor.”

The young girl uttered a joyful cry, raised her eyes, looked round to question the messenger, but he had disappeared. She cast her eyes again over the note to peruse it a second time, and saw there was a postscript. She read:

“It is important that you should fulfil this mission in person and alone. If you

go accompanied by any other person, or should anyone else go in your place, the porter will reply that he does not know anything about it."

This postscript decreased greatly the young girl's happiness. Was there nothing to fear? was there not some snare laid for her? Her innocence had kept her in ignorance of the dangers that might assail a young girl of her age. But there is no need to know danger in order to fear it; indeed, it may be observed, that it is usually unknown perils that inspire the greatest terror.

Julie hesitated, and resolved to take counsel. Yet, through a singular impulse, it was neither to her mother nor her brother that she applied, but to Emmanuel. She hastened down and told him what had occurred on the day when the agent of Thomson & French had come to her father's, related the scene on the staircase, repeated the promise she had made, and showed him the letter.

"You must go, then, mademoiselle," said Emmanuel.

"Go there?" murmured Julie.

"Yes; I will accompany you."

"But did you not read that I must be alone?" said Julie.

"And you shall be alone," replied the young man. "I will await you at the corner of the Rue du Musée, and if you are so long absent as to make me uneasy, I will hasten to rejoin you, and woe to him of whom you shall have cause to complain to me!"

"Then, Emmanuel?" said the young girl with hesitation, "it is your opinion that I should obey this invitation?"

"Yes. Did not the messenger say your father's safety depended upon it?"

"But what danger threatens him, then, Emmanuel?" she asked.

Emmanuel hesitated a moment, but his desire to make Julie decide immediately made him reply.

"Listen," he said; "today is the 5th of September, is it not?"

"Yes."

"Today, then, at eleven o'clock, your father has nearly three hundred thousand francs to pay?"

"Yes, we know that."

"Well, then," continued Emmanuel, "we have not fifteen thousand francs in the house."

"What will happen then?"

"Why, if today before eleven o'clock your father has not found someone who

will come to his aid, he will be compelled at twelve o'clock to declare himself a bankrupt."

"Oh, come, then, come!" cried she, hastening away with the young man.

During this time, Madame Morrel had told her son everything. The young man knew quite well that, after the succession of misfortunes which had befallen his father, great changes had taken place in the style of living and housekeeping; but he did not know that matters had reached such a point. He was thunderstruck. Then, rushing hastily out of the apartment, he ran upstairs, expecting to find his father in his study, but he rapped there in vain.

While he was yet at the door of the study he heard the bedroom door open, turned, and saw his father. Instead of going direct to his study, M. Morrel had returned to his bedchamber, which he was only this moment quitting. Morrel uttered a cry of surprise at the sight of his son, of whose arrival he was ignorant. He remained motionless on the spot, pressing with his left hand something he had concealed under his coat. Maximilian sprang down the staircase, and threw his arms round his father's neck; but suddenly he recoiled, and placed his right hand on Morrel's breast.

"Father," he exclaimed, turning pale as death, "what are you going to do with that brace of pistols under your coat?"

"Oh, this is what I feared!" said Morrel.

"Father, father, in Heaven's name," exclaimed the young man, "what are these weapons for?"

"Maximilian," replied Morrel, looking fixedly at his son, "you are a man, and a man of honor. Come, and I will explain to you."

And with a firm step Morrel went up to his study, while Maximilian followed him, trembling as he went. Morrel opened the door, and closed it behind his son; then, crossing the anteroom, went to his desk on which he placed the pistols, and pointed with his finger to an open ledger. In this ledger was made out an exact balance-sheet of his affairs. Morrel had to pay, within half an hour, 287,500 francs. All he possessed was 15,257 francs.

"Read!" said Morrel.

The young man was overwhelmed as he read. Morrel said not a word. What could he say? What need he add to such a desperate proof in figures?

"And have you done all that is possible, father, to meet this disastrous result?" asked the young man, after a moment's pause.

"I have," replied Morrel.

“You have no money coming in on which you can rely?”

“None.”

“You have exhausted every resource?”

“All.”

“And in half an hour,” said Maximilian in a gloomy voice, “our name is dishonored!”

“Blood washes out dishonor,” said Morrel.

“You are right, father; I understand you.” Then extending his hand towards one of the pistols, he said, “There is one for you and one for me—thanks!”

Morrel caught his hand. “Your mother—your sister! Who will support them?”

A shudder ran through the young man’s frame. “Father,” he said, “do you reflect that you are bidding me to live?”

“Yes, I do so bid you,” answered Morrel, “it is your duty. You have a calm, strong mind, Maximilian. Maximilian, you are no ordinary man. I make no requests or commands; I only ask you to examine my position as if it were your own, and then judge for yourself.”

The young man reflected for a moment, then an expression of sublime resignation appeared in his eyes, and with a slow and sad gesture he took off his two epaulets, the insignia of his rank.

“Be it so, then, my father,” he said, extending his hand to Morrel, “die in peace, my father; I will live.”

Morrel was about to cast himself on his knees before his son, but Maximilian caught him in his arms, and those two noble hearts were pressed against each other for a moment.

“You know it is not my fault,” said Morrel.

20057m

Maximilian smiled. “I know, father, you are the most honorable man I have ever known.”

“Good, my son. And now there is no more to be said; go and rejoin your mother and sister.”

“My father,” said the young man, bending his knee, “bless me!” Morrel took the head of his son between his two hands, drew him forward, and kissing his forehead several times said:

“Oh, yes, yes, I bless you in my own name, and in the name of three

generations of irreproachable men, who say through me, ‘The edifice which misfortune has destroyed, Providence may build up again.’ On seeing me die such a death, the most inexorable will have pity on you. To you, perhaps, they will accord the time they have refused to me. Then do your best to keep our name free from dishonor. Go to work, labor, young man, struggle ardently and courageously; live, yourself, your mother and sister, with the most rigid economy, so that from day to day the property of those whom I leave in your hands may augment and fructify. Reflect how glorious a day it will be, how grand, how solemn, that day of complete restoration, on which you will say in this very office, ‘My father died because he could not do what I have this day done; but he died calmly and peaceably, because in dying he knew what I should do.’”

“My father, my father!” cried the young man, “why should you not live?”

“If I live, all would be changed; if I live, interest would be converted into doubt, pity into hostility; if I live I am only a man who has broken his word, failed in his engagements—in fact, only a bankrupt. If, on the contrary, I die, remember, Maximilian, my corpse is that of an honest but unfortunate man. Living, my best friends would avoid my house; dead, all Marseilles will follow me in tears to my last home. Living, you would feel shame at my name; dead, you may raise your head and say, ‘I am the son of him you killed, because, for the first time, he has been compelled to break his word.’”

The young man uttered a groan, but appeared resigned.

“And now,” said Morrel, “leave me alone, and endeavor to keep your mother and sister away.”

“Will you not see my sister once more?” asked Maximilian. A last but final hope was concealed by the young man in the effect of this interview, and therefore he had suggested it. Morrel shook his head. “I saw her this morning, and bade her adieu.”

“Have you no particular commands to leave with me, my father?” inquired Maximilian in a faltering voice.

“Yes; my son, and a sacred command.”

“Say it, my father.”

“The house of Thomson & French is the only one who, from humanity, or, it may be, selfishness—it is not for me to read men’s hearts—has had any pity for me. Its agent, who will in ten minutes present himself to receive the amount of a bill of 287,500 francs, I will not say granted, but offered me three months. Let this house be the first repaid, my son, and respect this man.”

“Father, I will,” said Maximilian.

“And now, once more, adieu,” said Morrel. “Go, leave me; I would be alone. You will find my will in the secretaire in my bedroom.”

The young man remained standing and motionless, having but the force of will and not the power of execution.

“Hear me, Maximilian,” said his father. “Suppose I were a soldier like you, and ordered to carry a certain redoubt, and you knew I must be killed in the assault, would you not say to me, as you said just now, ‘Go, father; for you are dishonored by delay, and death is preferable to shame!’”

“Yes, yes,” said the young man, “yes;” and once again embracing his father with convulsive pressure, he said, “Be it so, my father.”

And he rushed out of the study. When his son had left him, Morrel remained an instant standing with his eyes fixed on the door; then putting forth his arm, he pulled the bell. After a moment’s interval, Cocles appeared.

It was no longer the same man—the fearful revelations of the three last days had crushed him. This thought—the house of Morrel is about to stop payment—bent him to the earth more than twenty years would otherwise have done.

“My worthy Cocles,” said Morrel in a tone impossible to describe, “do you remain in the antechamber. When the gentleman who came three months ago—the agent of Thomson & French—arrives, announce his arrival to me.”

Cocles made no reply; he made a sign with his head, went into the anteroom, and seated himself. Morrel fell back in his chair, his eyes fixed on the clock; there were seven minutes left, that was all. The hand moved on with incredible rapidity, he seemed to see its motion.

What passed in the mind of this man at the supreme moment of his agony cannot be told in words. He was still comparatively young, he was surrounded by the loving care of a devoted family, but he had convinced himself by a course of reasoning, illogical perhaps, yet certainly plausible, that he must separate himself from all he held dear in the world, even life itself. To form the slightest idea of his feelings, one must have seen his face with its expression of enforced resignation and its tear-moistened eyes raised to heaven. The minute hand moved on. The pistols were loaded; he stretched forth his hand, took one up, and murmured his daughter’s name. Then he laid it down, seized his pen, and wrote a few words. It seemed to him as if he had not taken a sufficient farewell of his beloved daughter. Then he turned again to the clock, counting time now not by minutes, but by seconds.

He took up the deadly weapon again, his lips parted and his eyes fixed on the clock, and then shuddered at the click of the trigger as he cocked the pistol. At this moment of mortal anguish the cold sweat came forth upon his brow, a pang stronger than death clutched at his heart-strings. He heard the door of the staircase creak on its hinges—the clock gave its warning to strike eleven—the door of his study opened. Morrel did not turn round—he expected these words of Cocles, “The agent of Thomson & French.”

He placed the muzzle of the pistol between his teeth. Suddenly he heard a cry—it was his daughter’s voice. He turned and saw Julie. The pistol fell from his hands.

“My father!” cried the young girl, out of breath, and half dead with joy—“saved, you are saved!” And she threw herself into his arms, holding in her extended hand a red, netted silk purse.

20061m

“Saved, my child!” said Morrel; “what do you mean?”

“Yes, saved—saved! See, see!” said the young girl.

Morrel took the purse, and started as he did so, for a vague remembrance reminded him that it once belonged to himself. At one end was the receipted bill for the 287,000 francs, and at the other was a diamond as large as a hazel-nut, with these words on a small slip of parchment: *Julie’s Dowry*.

Morrel passed his hand over his brow; it seemed to him a dream. At this moment the clock struck eleven. He felt as if each stroke of the hammer fell upon his heart.

“Explain, my child,” he said, “Explain, my child,” he said, “explain—where did you find this purse?”

“In a house in the Allées de Meilhan, No. 15, on the corner of a mantelpiece in a small room on the fifth floor.”

“But,” cried Morrel, “this purse is not yours!” Julie handed to her father the letter she had received in the morning.

“And did you go alone?” asked Morrel, after he had read it.

“Emmanuel accompanied me, father. He was to have waited for me at the corner of the Rue du Musée, but, strange to say, he was not there when I returned.”

“Monsieur Morrel!” exclaimed a voice on the stairs; “Monsieur Morrel!”

“It is his voice!” said Julie. At this moment Emmanuel entered, his

countenance full of animation and joy.

“The *Pharaon!*” he cried; “the *Pharaon!*”

“What!—what!—the *Pharaon!* Are you mad, Emmanuel? You know the vessel is lost.”

“The *Pharaon*, sir—they signal the *Pharaon!* The *Pharaon* is entering the harbor!”

Morrel fell back in his chair, his strength was failing him; his understanding weakened by such events, refused to comprehend such incredible, unheard-of, fabulous facts. But his son came in.

“Father,” cried Maximilian, “how could you say the *Pharaon* was lost? The lookout has signalled her, and they say she is now coming into port.”

20063m

“My dear friends,” said Morrel, “if this be so, it must be a miracle of heaven! Impossible, impossible!”

But what was real and not less incredible was the purse he held in his hand, the acceptance receipted—the splendid diamond.

“Ah, sir,” exclaimed Coclès, “what can it mean?—the *Pharaon?*”

“Come, dear ones,” said Morrel, rising from his seat, “let us go and see, and Heaven have pity upon us if it be false intelligence!”

They all went out, and on the stairs met Madame Morrel, who had been afraid to go up into the study. In a moment they were at the Canebière. There was a crowd on the pier. All the crowd gave way before Morrel. “The *Pharaon!* the *Pharaon!*” said every voice.

And, wonderful to see, in front of the tower of Saint-Jean, was a ship bearing on her stern these words, printed in white letters, “The *Pharaon*, Morrel & Son, of Marseilles.” She was the exact duplicate of the other *Pharaon*, and loaded, as that had been, with cochineal and indigo. She cast anchor, clued up sails, and on the deck was Captain Gaumard giving orders, and good old Penelon making signals to M. Morrel. To doubt any longer was impossible; there was the evidence of the senses, and ten thousand persons who came to corroborate the testimony.

As Morrel and his son embraced on the pier-head, in the presence and amid the applause of the whole city witnessing this event, a man, with his face half-covered by a black beard, and who, concealed behind the sentry-box, watched the scene with delight, uttered these words in a low tone:

“Be happy, noble heart, be blessed for all the good thou hast done and wilt do hereafter, and let my gratitude remain in obscurity like your good deeds.”

20064m

And with a smile expressive of supreme content, he left his hiding-place, and without being observed, descended one of the flights of steps provided for debarkation, and hailing three times, shouted “Jacopo, Jacopo, Jacopo!”

Then a launch came to shore, took him on board, and conveyed him to a yacht splendidly fitted up, on whose deck he sprung with the activity of a sailor; thence he once again looked towards Morrel, who, weeping with joy, was shaking hands most cordially with all the crowd around him, and thanking with a look the unknown benefactor whom he seemed to be seeking in the skies.

“And now,” said the unknown, “farewell kindness, humanity, and gratitude! Farewell to all the feelings that expand the heart! I have been Heaven’s substitute to recompense the good—now the god of vengeance yields to me his power to punish the wicked!”

At these words he gave a signal, and, as if only awaiting this signal, the yacht instantly put out to sea.

Chapter 31. Italy: Sinbad the Sailor

Towards the beginning of the year 1838, two young men belonging to the first society of Paris, the Viscount Albert de Morcerf and the Baron Franz d'Épinay, were at Florence. They had agreed to see the Carnival at Rome that year, and that Franz, who for the last three or four years had inhabited Italy, should act as *cicerone* to Albert.

As it is no inconsiderable affair to spend the Carnival at Rome, especially when you have no great desire to sleep on the Piazza del Popolo, or the Campo Vaccino, they wrote to Signor Pastrini, the proprietor of the Hôtel de Londres, Piazza di Spagna, to reserve comfortable apartments for them. Signor Pastrini replied that he had only two rooms and a parlor on the third floor, which he offered at the low charge of a louis per diem. They accepted his offer; but wishing to make the best use of the time that was left, Albert started for Naples. As for Franz, he remained at Florence, and after having passed a few days in exploring the paradise of the Cascine, and spending two or three evenings at the houses of the Florentine nobility, he took a fancy into his head (having already visited Corsica, the cradle of Bonaparte) to visit Elba, the waiting-place of Napoleon.

One evening he cast off the painter of a sailboat from the iron ring that secured it to the dock at Leghorn, wrapped himself in his coat and lay down, and said to the crew,—“To the Island of Elba!”

The boat shot out of the harbor like a bird and the next morning Franz disembarked at Porto-Ferrajo. He traversed the island, after having followed the traces which the footsteps of the giant have left, and re-embarked for Marciana.

Two hours after he again landed at Pianosa, where he was assured that red partridges abounded. The sport was bad; Franz only succeeded in killing a few partridges, and, like every unsuccessful sportsman, he returned to the boat very much out of temper.

“Ah, if your excellency chose,” said the captain, “you might have capital sport.”

“Where?”

“Do you see that island?” continued the captain, pointing to a conical pile

rising from the indigo sea.

“Well, what is this island?”

“The Island of Monte Cristo.”

“But I have no permission to shoot over this island.”

“Your excellency does not require a permit, for the island is uninhabited.”

“Ah, indeed!” said the young man. “A desert island in the midst of the Mediterranean must be a curiosity.”

“It is very natural; this island is a mass of rocks, and does not contain an acre of land capable of cultivation.”

“To whom does this island belong?”

“To Tuscany.”

“What game shall I find there!”

“Thousands of wild goats.”

“Who live upon the stones, I suppose,” said Franz with an incredulous smile.

“No, but by browsing the shrubs and trees that grow out of the crevices of the rocks.”

“Where can I sleep?”

“On shore in the grottos, or on board in your cloak; besides, if your excellency pleases, we can leave as soon as you like—we can sail as well by night as by day, and if the wind drops we can use our oars.”

As Franz had sufficient time, and his apartments at Rome were not yet available, he accepted the proposition. Upon his answer in the affirmative, the sailors exchanged a few words together in a low tone. “Well,” asked he, “what now? Is there any difficulty in the way?”

“No.” replied the captain, “but we must warn your excellency that the island is an infected port.”

“What do you mean?”

“Monte Cristo although uninhabited, yet serves occasionally as a refuge for the smugglers and pirates who come from Corsica, Sardinia, and Africa, and if it becomes known that we have been there, we shall have to perform quarantine for six days on our return to Leghorn.”

“The deuce! That puts a different face on the matter. Six days! Why, that’s as long as the Almighty took to make the world! Too long a wait—too long.”

“But who will say your excellency has been to Monte Cristo?”

“Oh, I shall not,” cried Franz.

“Nor I, nor I,” chorused the sailors.

“Then steer for Monte Cristo.”

The captain gave his orders, the helm was put up, and the boat was soon sailing in the direction of the island. Franz waited until all was in order, and when the sail was filled, and the four sailors had taken their places—three forward, and one at the helm—he resumed the conversation. “Gaetano,” said he to the captain, “you tell me Monte Cristo serves as a refuge for pirates, who are, it seems to me, a very different kind of game from the goats.”

“Yes, your excellency, and it is true.”

“I knew there were smugglers, but I thought that since the capture of Algiers, and the destruction of the regency, pirates existed only in the romances of Cooper and Captain Marryat.”

“Your excellency is mistaken; there are pirates, like the bandits who were believed to have been exterminated by Pope Leo XII., and who yet, every day, rob travellers at the gates of Rome. Has not your excellency heard that the French *chargé d'affaires* was robbed six months ago within five hundred paces of Velletri?”

“Oh, yes, I heard that.”

“Well, then, if, like us, your excellency lived at Leghorn, you would hear, from time to time, that a little merchant vessel, or an English yacht that was expected at Bastia, at Porto-Ferrajo, or at Civita Vecchia, has not arrived; no one knows what has become of it, but, doubtless, it has struck on a rock and foundered. Now this rock it has met has been a long and narrow boat, manned by six or eight men, who have surprised and plundered it, some dark and stormy night, near some desert and gloomy island, as bandits plunder a carriage in the recesses of a forest.”

“But,” asked Franz, who lay wrapped in his cloak at the bottom of the boat, “why do not those who have been plundered complain to the French, Sardinian, or Tuscan governments?”

“Why?” said Gaetano with a smile.

“Yes, why?”

“Because, in the first place, they transfer from the vessel to their own boat whatever they think worth taking, then they bind the crew hand and foot, they attach to everyone’s neck a four-and-twenty-pound ball, a large hole is chopped in the vessel’s bottom, and then they leave her. At the end of ten minutes the

vessel begins to roll heavily and settle down. First one gun'l goes under, then the other. Then they lift and sink again, and both go under at once. All at once there's a noise like a cannon—that's the air blowing up the deck. Soon the water rushes out of the scupper-holes like a whale spouting, the vessel gives a last groan, spins round and round, and disappears, forming a vast whirlpool in the ocean, and then all is over, so that in five minutes nothing but the eye of God can see the vessel where she lies at the bottom of the sea. Do you understand now," said the captain, "why no complaints are made to the government, and why the vessel never reaches port?"

It is probable that if Gaetano had related this previous to proposing the expedition, Franz would have hesitated, but now that they had started, he thought it would be cowardly to draw back. He was one of those men who do not rashly court danger, but if danger presents itself, combat it with the most unalterable coolness. Calm and resolute, he treated any peril as he would an adversary in a duel,—calculated its probable method of approach; retreated, if at all, as a point of strategy and not from cowardice; was quick to see an opening for attack, and won victory at a single thrust.

"Bah!" said he, "I have travelled through Sicily and Calabria—I have sailed two months in the Archipelago, and yet I never saw even the shadow of a bandit or a pirate."

"I did not tell your excellency this to deter you from your project," replied Gaetano, "but you questioned me, and I have answered; that's all."

"Yes, and your conversation is most interesting; and as I wish to enjoy it as long as possible, steer for Monte Cristo."

The wind blew strongly, the boat made six or seven knots an hour, and they were rapidly reaching the end of their voyage. As they drew near the island seemed to lift from the sea, and the air was so clear that they could already distinguish the rocks heaped on one another, like cannon balls in an arsenal, with green bushes and trees growing in the crevices. As for the sailors, although they appeared perfectly tranquil yet it was evident that they were on the alert, and that they carefully watched the glassy surface over which they were sailing, and on which a few fishing-boats, with their white sails, were alone visible.

They were within fifteen miles of Monte Cristo when the sun began to set behind Corsica, whose mountains appeared against the sky, showing their rugged peaks in bold relief; this mass of rock, like the giant Adamastor, rose dead ahead, a formidable barrier, and intercepting the light that gilded its massive peaks so that the voyagers were in shadow. Little by little the shadow rose higher and

seemed to drive before it the last rays of the expiring day; at last the reflection rested on the summit of the mountain, where it paused an instant, like the fiery crest of a volcano, then gloom gradually covered the summit as it had covered the base, and the island now only appeared to be a gray mountain that grew continually darker; half an hour after, the night was quite dark.

Fortunately, the mariners were used to these latitudes, and knew every rock in the Tuscan Archipelago; for in the midst of this obscurity Franz was not without uneasiness—Corsica had long since disappeared, and Monte Cristo itself was invisible; but the sailors seemed, like the lynx, to see in the dark, and the pilot who steered did not evince the slightest hesitation.

An hour had passed since the sun had set, when Franz fancied he saw, at a quarter of a mile to the left, a dark mass, but he could not precisely make out what it was, and fearing to excite the mirth of the sailors by mistaking a floating cloud for land, he remained silent; suddenly a great light appeared on the strand; land might resemble a cloud, but the fire was not a meteor.

“What is this light?” asked he.

“Hush!” said the captain; “it is a fire.”

“But you told me the island was uninhabited?”

“I said there were no fixed habitations on it, but I said also that it served sometimes as a harbor for smugglers.”

“And for pirates?”

“And for pirates,” returned Gaetano, repeating Franz’s words. “It is for that reason I have given orders to pass the island, for, as you see, the fire is behind us.”

“But this fire?” continued Franz. “It seems to me rather reassuring than otherwise; men who did not wish to be seen would not light a fire.”

“Oh, that goes for nothing,” said Gaetano. “If you can guess the position of the island in the darkness, you will see that the fire cannot be seen from the side or from Pianosa, but only from the sea.”

“You think, then, this fire indicates the presence of unpleasant neighbors?”

“That is what we must find out,” returned Gaetano, fixing his eyes on this terrestrial star.

“How can you find out?”

“You shall see.”

Gaetano consulted with his companions, and after five minutes’ discussion a

manceuvre was executed which caused the vessel to tack about, they returned the way they had come, and in a few minutes the fire disappeared, hidden by an elevation of the land. The pilot again changed the course of the boat, which rapidly approached the island, and was soon within fifty paces of it. Gaetano lowered the sail, and the boat came to rest. All this was done in silence, and from the moment that their course was changed not a word was spoken.

Gaetano, who had proposed the expedition, had taken all the responsibility on himself; the four sailors fixed their eyes on him, while they got out their oars and held themselves in readiness to row away, which, thanks to the darkness, would not be difficult. As for Franz, he examined his arms with the utmost coolness; he had two double-barrelled guns and a rifle; he loaded them, looked at the priming, and waited quietly.

During this time the captain had thrown off his vest and shirt, and secured his trousers round his waist; his feet were naked, so he had no shoes and stockings to take off; after these preparations he placed his finger on his lips, and lowering himself noiselessly into the sea, swam towards the shore with such precaution that it was impossible to hear the slightest sound; he could only be traced by the phosphorescent line in his wake. This track soon disappeared; it was evident that he had touched the shore.

Everyone on board remained motionless for half an hour, when the same luminous track was again observed, and the swimmer was soon on board.

“Well?” exclaimed Franz and the sailors in unison.

“They are Spanish smugglers,” said he; “they have with them two Corsican bandits.”

“And what are these Corsican bandits doing here with Spanish smugglers?”

“Alas,” returned the captain with an accent of the most profound pity, “we ought always to help one another. Very often the bandits are hard pressed by gendarmes or carbineers; well, they see a vessel, and good fellows like us on board, they come and demand hospitality of us; you can’t refuse help to a poor hunted devil; we receive them, and for greater security we stand out to sea. This costs us nothing, and saves the life, or at least the liberty, of a fellow-creature, who on the first occasion returns the service by pointing out some safe spot where we can land our goods without interruption.”

“Ah!” said Franz, “then you are a smuggler occasionally, Gaetano?”

“Your excellency, we must live somehow,” returned the other, smiling impenetrably.

“Then you know the men who are now on Monte Cristo?”

“Oh, yes, we sailors are like freemasons, and recognize each other by signs.”

“And do you think we have nothing to fear if we land?”

“Nothing at all; smugglers are not thieves.”

“But these two Corsican bandits?” said Franz, calculating the chances of peril.

“It is not their fault that they are bandits, but that of the authorities.”

“How so?”

“Because they are pursued for having made a stiff, as if it was not in a Corsican’s nature to revenge himself.”

“What do you mean by having made a stiff?—having assassinated a man?” said Franz, continuing his investigation.

“I mean that they have killed an enemy, which is a very different thing,” returned the captain.

“Well,” said the young man, “let us demand hospitality of these smugglers and bandits. Do you think they will grant it?”

“Without doubt.”

“How many are they?”

“Four, and the two bandits make six.”

“Just our number, so that if they prove troublesome, we shall be able to hold them in check; so, for the last time, steer to Monte Cristo.”

“Yes, but your excellency will permit us to take all due precautions.”

“By all means, be as wise as Nestor and as prudent as Ulysses; I do more than permit, I exhort you.”

“Silence, then!” said Gaetano.

Everyone obeyed. For a man who, like Franz, viewed his position in its true light, it was a grave one. He was alone in the darkness with sailors whom he did not know, and who had no reason to be devoted to him; who knew that he had several thousand francs in his belt, and who had often examined his weapons,—which were very beautiful,—if not with envy, at least with curiosity. On the other hand, he was about to land, without any other escort than these men, on an island which had, indeed, a very religious name, but which did not seem to Franz likely to afford him much hospitality, thanks to the smugglers and bandits. The history of the scuttled vessels, which had appeared improbable during the day, seemed very probable at night; placed as he was between two possible sources of danger, he kept his eye on the crew, and his gun in his hand.

The sailors had again hoisted sail, and the vessel was once more cleaving the waves. Through the darkness Franz, whose eyes were now more accustomed to it, could see the looming shore along which the boat was sailing, and then, as they rounded a rocky point, he saw the fire more brilliant than ever, and about it five or six persons seated. The blaze illumined the sea for a hundred paces around. Gaetano skirted the light, carefully keeping the boat in the shadow; then, when they were opposite the fire, he steered to the centre of the circle, singing a fishing song, of which his companions sung the chorus.

At the first words of the song the men seated round the fire arose and approached the landing-place, their eyes fixed on the boat, evidently seeking to know who the new-comers were and what were their intentions. They soon appeared satisfied and returned (with the exception of one, who remained at the shore) to their fire, at which the carcass of a goat was roasting. When the boat was within twenty paces of the shore, the man on the beach, who carried a carbine, presented arms after the manner of a sentinel, and cried, "Who comes there?" in Sardinian.

Franz coolly cocked both barrels. Gaetano then exchanged a few words with this man which the traveller did not understand, but which evidently concerned him.

"Will your excellency give your name, or remain *incognito*?" asked the captain.

"My name must rest unknown," replied Franz; "merely say I am a Frenchman travelling for pleasure."

As soon as Gaetano had transmitted this answer, the sentinel gave an order to one of the men seated round the fire, who rose and disappeared among the rocks. Not a word was spoken, everyone seemed occupied, Franz with his disembarkment, the sailors with their sails, the smugglers with their goat; but in the midst of all this carelessness it was evident that they mutually observed each other.

The man who had disappeared returned suddenly on the opposite side to that by which he had left; he made a sign with his head to the sentinel, who, turning to the boat, said, "*S'accommodi.*" The Italian *s'accommodi* is untranslatable; it means at once, "Come, enter, you are welcome; make yourself at home; you are the master." It is like that Turkish phrase of Molière's that so astonished the bourgeois gentleman by the number of things implied in its utterance.

The sailors did not wait for a second invitation; four strokes of the oar brought them to land; Gaetano sprang to shore, exchanged a few words with the sentinel,

then his comrades disembarked, and lastly came Franz. One of his guns was swung over his shoulder, Gaetano had the other, and a sailor held his rifle; his dress, half artist, half dandy, did not excite any suspicion, and, consequently, no disquietude. The boat was moored to the shore, and they advanced a few paces to find a comfortable bivouac; but, doubtless, the spot they chose did not suit the smuggler who filled the post of sentinel, for he cried out:

“Not that way, if you please.”

Gaetano faltered an excuse, and advanced to the opposite side, while two sailors kindled torches at the fire to light them on their way.

They advanced about thirty paces, and then stopped at a small esplanade surrounded with rocks, in which seats had been cut, not unlike sentry-boxes. Around in the crevices of the rocks grew a few dwarf oaks and thick bushes of myrtles. Franz lowered a torch, and saw by the mass of cinders that had accumulated that he was not the first to discover this retreat, which was, doubtless, one of the halting-places of the wandering visitors of Monte Cristo.

As for his suspicions, once on *terra firma*, once that he had seen the indifferent, if not friendly, appearance of his hosts, his anxiety had quite disappeared, or rather, at sight of the goat, had turned to appetite. He mentioned this to Gaetano, who replied that nothing could be more easy than to prepare a supper when they had in their boat, bread, wine, half a dozen partridges, and a good fire to roast them by.

“Besides,” added he, “if the smell of their roast meat tempts you, I will go and offer them two of our birds for a slice.”

“You are a born diplomat,” returned Franz; “go and try.”

Meanwhile the sailors had collected dried sticks and branches with which they made a fire. Franz waited impatiently, inhaling the aroma of the roasted meat, when the captain returned with a mysterious air.

“Well,” said Franz, “anything new?—do they refuse?”

“On the contrary,” returned Gaetano, “the chief, who was told you were a young Frenchman, invites you to sup with him.”

“Well,” observed Franz, “this chief is very polite, and I see no objection—the more so as I bring my share of the supper.”

“Oh, it is not that; he has plenty, and to spare, for supper; but he makes one condition, and rather a peculiar one, before he will receive you at his house.”

“His house? Has he built one here, then?”

“No, but he has a very comfortable one all the same, so they say.”

“You know this chief, then?”

“I have heard talk of him.”

“Favorably or otherwise?”

“Both.”

“The deuce!—and what is this condition?”

“That you are blindfolded, and do not take off the bandage until he himself bids you.”

Franz looked at Gaetano, to see, if possible, what he thought of this proposal.
“Ah,” replied he, guessing Franz’s thought, “I know this is a serious matter.”

“What should you do in my place?”

“I, who have nothing to lose,—I should go.”

20075m

“You would accept?”

“Yes, were it only out of curiosity.”

“There is something very peculiar about this chief, then?”

“Listen,” said Gaetano, lowering his voice, “I do not know if what they say is true”—he stopped to see if anyone was near.

“What do they say?”

“That this chief inhabits a cavern to which the Pitti Palace is nothing.”

“What nonsense!” said Franz, reseating himself.

“It is no nonsense; it is quite true. Cama, the pilot of the *Saint Ferdinand*, went in once, and he came back amazed, vowing that such treasures were only to be heard of in fairy tales.”

“Do you know,” observed Franz, “that with such stories you make me think of Ali Baba’s enchanted cavern?”

“I tell you what I have been told.”

“Then you advise me to accept?”

“Oh, I don’t say that; your excellency will do as you please; I should be sorry to advise you in the matter.”

Franz pondered the matter for a few moments, concluded that a man so rich could not have any intention of plundering him of what little he had, and seeing only the prospect of a good supper, accepted. Gaetano departed with the reply. Franz was prudent, and wished to learn all he possibly could concerning his host. He turned towards the sailor, who, during this dialogue, had sat gravely plucking

the partridges with the air of a man proud of his office, and asked him how these men had landed, as no vessel of any kind was visible.

“Never mind that,” returned the sailor, “I know their vessel.”

“Is it a very beautiful vessel?”

“I would not wish for a better to sail round the world.”

“Of what burden is she?”

“About a hundred tons; but she is built to stand any weather. She is what the English call a yacht.”

“Where was she built?”

“I know not; but my own opinion is she is a Genoese.”

“And how did a leader of smugglers,” continued Franz, “venture to build a vessel designed for such a purpose at Genoa?”

“I did not say that the owner was a smuggler,” replied the sailor.

“No; but Gaetano did, I thought.”

“Gaetano had only seen the vessel from a distance, he had not then spoken to anyone.”

“And if this person be not a smuggler, who is he?”

“A wealthy signor, who travels for his pleasure.”

“Come,” thought Franz, “he is still more mysterious, since the two accounts do not agree.”

“What is his name?”

“If you ask him, he says Sinbad the Sailor; but I doubt if it be his real name.”

“Sinbad the Sailor?”

“Yes.”

“And where does he reside?”

“On the sea.”

“What country does he come from?”

“I do not know.”

“Have you ever seen him?”

“Sometimes.”

“What sort of a man is he?”

“Your excellency will judge for yourself.”

“Where will he receive me?”

"No doubt in the subterranean palace Gaetano told you of."

"Have you never had the curiosity, when you have landed and found this island deserted, to seek for this enchanted palace?"

"Oh, yes, more than once, but always in vain; we examined the grotto all over, but we never could find the slightest trace of any opening; they say that the door is not opened by a key, but a magic word."

"Decidedly," muttered Franz, "this is an Arabian Nights' adventure."

"His excellency waits for you," said a voice, which he recognized as that of the sentinel. He was accompanied by two of the yacht's crew.

Franz drew his handkerchief from his pocket, and presented it to the man who had spoken to him. Without uttering a word, they bandaged his eyes with a care that showed their apprehensions of his committing some indiscretion. Afterwards he was made to promise that he would not make the least attempt to raise the bandage. He promised.

Then his two guides took his arms, and he went on, guided by them, and preceded by the sentinel. After going about thirty paces, he smelt the appetizing odor of the kid that was roasting, and knew thus that he was passing the bivouac; they then led him on about fifty paces farther, evidently advancing towards that part of the shore where they would not allow Gaetano to go—a refusal he could now comprehend.

Presently, by a change in the atmosphere, he knew that they were entering a cave; after going on for a few seconds more he heard a crackling, and it seemed to him as though the atmosphere again changed, and became balmy and perfumed. At length his feet touched on a thick and soft carpet, and his guides let go their hold of him. There was a moment's silence, and then a voice, in excellent French, although, with a foreign accent, said:

"Welcome, sir. I beg you will remove your bandage."

It may be supposed, then, Franz did not wait for a repetition of this permission, but took off the handkerchief, and found himself in the presence of a man from thirty-eight to forty years of age, dressed in a Tunisian costume, that is to say, a red cap with a long blue silk tassel, a vest of black cloth embroidered with gold, pantaloons of deep red, large and full gaiters of the same color, embroidered with gold like the vest, and yellow slippers; he had a splendid cashmere round his waist, and a small sharp and crooked cangiar was passed through his girdle.

Although of a paleness that was almost livid, this man had a remarkably

handsome face; his eyes were penetrating and sparkling; his nose, quite straight, and projecting direct from the brow, was of the pure Greek type, while his teeth, as white as pearls, were set off to admiration by the black moustache that encircled them.

His pallor was so peculiar, that it seemed to pertain to one who had been long entombed, and who was incapable of resuming the healthy glow and hue of life. He was not particularly tall, but extremely well made, and, like the men of the South, had small hands and feet. But what astonished Franz, who had treated Gaetano's description as a fable, was the splendor of the apartment in which he found himself.

The entire chamber was lined with crimson brocade, worked with flowers of gold. In a recess was a kind of divan, surmounted with a stand of Arabian swords in silver scabbards, and the handles resplendent with gems; from the ceiling hung a lamp of Venetian glass, of beautiful shape and color, while the feet rested on a Turkey carpet, in which they sunk to the instep; tapestry hung before the door by which Franz had entered, and also in front of another door, leading into a second apartment which seemed to be brilliantly illuminated.

The host gave Franz time to recover from his surprise, and, moreover, returned look for look, not even taking his eyes off him.

“Sir,” he said, after a pause, “a thousand excuses for the precaution taken in your introduction hither; but as, during the greater portion of the year, this island is deserted, if the secret of this abode were discovered, I should doubtless, find on my return my temporary retirement in a state of great disorder, which would be exceedingly annoying, not for the loss it occasioned me, but because I should not have the certainty I now possess of separating myself from all the rest of mankind at pleasure. Let me now endeavor to make you forget this temporary unpleasantness, and offer you what no doubt you did not expect to find here—that is to say, a tolerable supper and pretty comfortable beds.”

“*Ma foi*, my dear sir,” replied Franz, “make no apologies. I have always observed that they bandage people's eyes who penetrate enchanted palaces, for instance, those of Raoul in the *Huguenots*, and really I have nothing to complain of, for what I see makes me think of the wonders of the *Arabian Nights*.”

20079m

“Alas! I may say with Lucullus, if I could have anticipated the honor of your visit, I would have prepared for it. But such as is my hermitage, it is at your disposal; such as is my supper, it is yours to share, if you will. Ali, is the supper ready?”

At this moment the tapestry moved aside, and a Nubian, black as ebony, and dressed in a plain white tunic, made a sign to his master that all was prepared in the dining-room.

“Now,” said the unknown to Franz, “I do not know if you are of my opinion, but I think nothing is more annoying than to remain two or three hours together without knowing by name or appellation how to address one another. Pray observe, that I too much respect the laws of hospitality to ask your name or title. I only request you to give me one by which I may have the pleasure of addressing you. As for myself, that I may put you at your ease, I tell you that I am generally called ‘Sinbad the Sailor.’”

“And I,” replied Franz, “will tell you, as I only require his wonderful lamp to make me precisely like Aladdin, that I see no reason why at this moment I should not be called Aladdin. That will keep us from going away from the East whither I am tempted to think I have been conveyed by some good genius.”

“Well, then, Signor Aladdin,” replied the singular Amphitryon, “you heard our repast announced, will you now take the trouble to enter the dining-room, your humble servant going first to show the way?”

At these words, moving aside the tapestry, Sinbad preceded his guest. Franz now looked upon another scene of enchantment; the table was splendidly covered, and once convinced of this important point he cast his eyes around him. The dining-room was scarcely less striking than the room he had just left; it was entirely of marble, with antique bas-reliefs of priceless value; and at the four corners of this apartment, which was oblong, were four magnificent statues, having baskets in their hands. These baskets contained four pyramids of most splendid fruit; there were Sicily pine-apples, pomegranates from Malaga, oranges from the Balearic Isles, peaches from France, and dates from Tunis.

The supper consisted of a roast pheasant garnished with Corsican blackbirds; a boar’s ham with jelly, a quarter of a kid with tartar sauce, a glorious turbot, and a gigantic lobster. Between these large dishes were smaller ones containing various dainties. The dishes were of silver, and the plates of Japanese china.

Franz rubbed his eyes in order to assure himself that this was not a dream. Ali alone was present to wait at table, and acquitted himself so admirably, that the guest complimented his host thereupon.

“Yes,” replied he, while he did the honors of the supper with much ease and grace—“yes, he is a poor devil who is much devoted to me, and does all he can to prove it. He remembers that I saved his life, and as he has a regard for his head, he feels some gratitude towards me for having kept it on his shoulders.”

Ali approached his master, took his hand, and kissed it.

"Would it be impertinent, Signor Sinbad," said Franz, "to ask you the particulars of this kindness?"

20081m

"Oh, they are simple enough," replied the host. "It seems the fellow had been caught wandering nearer to the harem of the Bey of Tunis than etiquette permits to one of his color, and he was condemned by the Bey to have his tongue cut out, and his hand and head cut off; the tongue the first day, the hand the second, and the head the third. I always had a desire to have a mute in my service, so learning the day his tongue was cut out, I went to the Bey, and proposed to give him for Ali a splendid double-barreled gun, which I knew he was very desirous of having. He hesitated a moment, he was so very desirous to complete the poor devil's punishment. But when I added to the gun an English cutlass with which I had shivered his highness's yataghan to pieces, the Bey yielded, and agreed to forgive the hand and head, but on condition that the poor fellow never again set foot in Tunis. This was a useless clause in the bargain, for whenever the coward sees the first glimpse of the shores of Africa, he runs down below, and can only be induced to appear again when we are out of sight of that quarter of the globe."

Franz remained a moment silent and pensive, hardly knowing what to think of the half-kindness, half-cruelty, with which his host related the brief narrative.

"And like the celebrated sailor whose name you have assumed," he said, by way of changing the conversation, "you pass your life in travelling?"

"Yes. I made a vow at a time when I little thought I should ever be able to accomplish it," said the unknown with a singular smile; "and I made some others also which I hope I may fulfil in due season."

Although Sinbad pronounced these words with much calmness, his eyes gave forth gleams of extraordinary ferocity.

"You have suffered a great deal, sir?" said Franz inquiringly.

Sinbad started and looked fixedly at him, as he replied, "What makes you suppose so?"

"Everything," answered Franz,—"your voice, your look, your pallid complexion, and even the life you lead."

"I?—I live the happiest life possible, the real life of a pasha. I am king of all creation. I am pleased with one place, and stay there; I get tired of it, and leave it; I am free as a bird and have wings like one; my attendants obey my slightest wish. Sometimes I amuse myself by delivering some bandit or criminal from the

bonds of the law. Then I have my mode of dispensing justice, silent and sure, without respite or appeal, which condemns or pardons, and which no one sees. Ah, if you had tasted my life, you would not desire any other, and would never return to the world unless you had some great project to accomplish there."

"Revenge, for instance!" observed Franz.

The unknown fixed on the young man one of those looks which penetrate into the depth of the heart and thoughts. "And why revenge?" he asked.

"Because," replied Franz, "you seem to me like a man who, persecuted by society, has a fearful account to settle with it."

"Ah!" responded Sinbad, laughing with his singular laugh, which displayed his white and sharp teeth. "You have not guessed rightly. Such as you see me I am, a sort of philosopher, and one day perhaps I shall go to Paris to rival Monsieur Appert, and the man in the little blue cloak."

"And will that be the first time you ever took that journey?"

"Yes; it will. I must seem to you by no means curious, but I assure you that it is not my fault I have delayed it so long—it will happen one day or the other."

20083m

"And do you propose to make this journey very shortly?"

"I do not know; it depends on circumstances which depend on certain arrangements."

"I should like to be there at the time you come, and I will endeavor to repay you, as far as lies in my power, for your liberal hospitality displayed to me at Monte Cristo."

"I should avail myself of your offer with pleasure," replied the host, "but, unfortunately, if I go there, it will be, in all probability, *incognito*."

The supper appeared to have been supplied solely for Franz, for the unknown scarcely touched one or two dishes of the splendid banquet to which his guest did ample justice. Then Ali brought on the dessert, or rather took the baskets from the hands of the statues and placed them on the table. Between the two baskets he placed a small silver cup with a silver cover. The care with which Ali placed this cup on the table roused Franz's curiosity. He raised the cover and saw a kind of greenish paste, something like preserved angelica, but which was perfectly unknown to him. He replaced the lid, as ignorant of what the cup contained as he was before he had looked at it, and then casting his eyes towards his host he saw him smile at his disappointment.

"You cannot guess," said he, "what there is in that small vase, can you?"

“No, I really cannot.”

“Well, then, that green preserve is nothing less than the ambrosia which Hebe served at the table of Jupiter.”

“But,” replied Franz, “this ambrosia, no doubt, in passing through mortal hands has lost its heavenly appellation and assumed a human name; in vulgar phrase, what may you term this composition, for which, to tell the truth, I do not feel any particular desire?”

“Ah, thus it is that our material origin is revealed,” cried Sinbad; “we frequently pass so near to happiness without seeing, without regarding it, or if we do see and regard it, yet without recognizing it. Are you a man for the substantials, and is gold your god? taste this, and the mines of Peru, Guzerat, and Golconda are opened to you. Are you a man of imagination—a poet? taste this, and the boundaries of possibility disappear; the fields of infinite space open to you, you advance free in heart, free in mind, into the boundless realms of unfettered reverie. Are you ambitious, and do you seek after the greatnesses of the earth? taste this, and in an hour you will be a king, not a king of a petty kingdom hidden in some corner of Europe like France, Spain, or England, but king of the world, king of the universe, king of creation; without bowing at the feet of Satan, you will be king and master of all the kingdoms of the earth. Is it not tempting what I offer you, and is it not an easy thing, since it is only to do thus? look!”

At these words he uncovered the small cup which contained the substance so lauded, took a teaspoonful of the magic sweetmeat, raised it to his lips, and swallowed it slowly with his eyes half shut and his head bent backwards. Franz did not disturb him whilst he absorbed his favorite sweetmeat, but when he had finished, he inquired:

“What, then, is this precious stuff?”

“Did you ever hear,” he replied, “of the Old Man of the Mountain, who attempted to assassinate Philippe Auguste?”

“Of course I have.”

“Well, you know he reigned over a rich valley which was overhung by the mountain whence he derived his picturesque name. In this valley were magnificent gardens planted by Hassen-ben-Sabah, and in these gardens isolated pavilions. Into these pavilions he admitted the elect, and there, says Marco Polo, gave them to eat a certain herb, which transported them to Paradise, in the midst of ever-blooming shrubs, ever-ripe fruit, and ever-lovely virgins. What these happy persons took for reality was but a dream; but it was a dream so soft, so

voluptuous, so entralling, that they sold themselves body and soul to him who gave it to them, and obedient to his orders as to those of a deity, struck down the designated victim, died in torture without a murmur, believing that the death they underwent was but a quick transition to that life of delights of which the holy herb, now before you, had given them a slight foretaste."

"Then," cried Franz, "it is hashish! I know that—by name at least."

"That is it precisely, Signor Aladdin; it is hashish—the purest and most unadulterated hashish of Alexandria,—the hashish of Abou-Gor, the celebrated maker, the only man, the man to whom there should be built a palace, inscribed with these words, *A grateful world to the dealer in happiness.*"

"Do you know," said Franz, "I have a very great inclination to judge for myself of the truth or exaggeration of your eulogies."

"Judge for yourself, Signor Aladdin—judge, but do not confine yourself to one trial. Like everything else, we must habituate the senses to a fresh impression, gentle or violent, sad or joyous. There is a struggle in nature against this divine substance,—in nature which is not made for joy and clings to pain. Nature subdued must yield in the combat, the dream must succeed to reality, and then the dream reigns supreme, then the dream becomes life, and life becomes the dream. But what changes occur! It is only by comparing the pains of actual being with the joys of the assumed existence, that you would desire to live no longer, but to dream thus forever. When you return to this mundane sphere from your visionary world, you would seem to leave a Neapolitan spring for a Lapland winter—to quit paradise for earth—heaven for hell! Taste the hashish, guest of mine—taste the hashish."

Franz's only reply was to take a teaspoonful of the marvellous preparation, about as much in quantity as his host had eaten, and lift it to his mouth.

"*Diable!*" he said, after having swallowed the divine preserve. "I do not know if the result will be as agreeable as you describe, but the thing does not appear to me as palatable as you say."

"Because your palate has not yet been attuned to the sublimity of the substances it flavors. Tell me, the first time you tasted oysters, tea, porter, truffles, and sundry other dainties which you now adore, did you like them? Could you comprehend how the Romans stuffed their pheasants with assafoetida, and the Chinese eat swallows' nests? Eh? no! Well, it is the same with hashish; only eat for a week, and nothing in the world will seem to you to equal the delicacy of its flavor, which now appears to you flat and distasteful. Let us now go into the adjoining chamber, which is your apartment, and Ali will bring us

coffee and pipes."

They both arose, and while he who called himself Sinbad—and whom we have occasionally named so, that we might, like his guest, have some title by which to distinguish him—gave some orders to the servant, Franz entered still another apartment.

It was simply yet richly furnished. It was round, and a large divan completely encircled it. Divan, walls, ceiling, floor, were all covered with magnificent skins as soft and downy as the richest carpets; there were heavy-maned lion-skins from Atlas, striped tiger-skins from Bengal; panther-skins from the Cape, spotted beautifully, like those that appeared to Dante; bear-skins from Siberia, fox-skins from Norway, and so on; and all these skins were strewn in profusion one on the other, so that it seemed like walking over the most mossy turf, or reclining on the most luxurious bed.

Both laid themselves down on the divan; chibouques with jasmine tubes and amber mouthpieces were within reach, and all prepared so that there was no need to smoke the same pipe twice. Each of them took one, which Ali lighted and then retired to prepare the coffee.

There was a moment's silence, during which Sinbad gave himself up to thoughts that seemed to occupy him incessantly, even in the midst of his conversation; and Franz abandoned himself to that mute reverie, into which we always sink when smoking excellent tobacco, which seems to remove with its fume all the troubles of the mind, and to give the smoker in exchange all the visions of the soul. Ali brought in the coffee.

"How do you take it?" inquired the unknown; "in the French or Turkish style, strong or weak, sugar or none, cool or boiling? As you please; it is ready in all ways."

"I will take it in the Turkish style," replied Franz.

"And you are right," said his host; "it shows you have a tendency for an Oriental life. Ah, those Orientals; they are the only men who know how to live. As for me," he added, with one of those singular smiles which did not escape the young man, "when I have completed my affairs in Paris, I shall go and die in the East; and should you wish to see me again, you must seek me at Cairo, Bagdad, or Ispahan."

20087m

"*Ma foi,*" said Franz, "it would be the easiest thing in the world; for I feel eagle's wings springing out at my shoulders, and with those wings I could make

a tour of the world in four-and-twenty hours."

"Ah, yes, the hashish is beginning its work. Well, unfurl your wings, and fly into superhuman regions; fear nothing, there is a watch over you; and if your wings, like those of Icarus, melt before the sun, we are here to ease your fall."

He then said something in Arabic to Ali, who made a sign of obedience and withdrew, but not to any distance.

As to Franz a strange transformation had taken place in him. All the bodily fatigue of the day, all the preoccupation of mind which the events of the evening had brought on, disappeared as they do at the first approach of sleep, when we are still sufficiently conscious to be aware of the coming of slumber. His body seemed to acquire an airy lightness, his perception brightened in a remarkable manner, his senses seemed to redouble their power, the horizon continued to expand; but it was not the gloomy horizon of vague alarms, and which he had seen before he slept, but a blue, transparent, unbounded horizon, with all the blue of the ocean, all the spangles of the sun, all the perfumes of the summer breeze; then, in the midst of the songs of his sailors,—songs so clear and sonorous, that they would have made a divine harmony had their notes been taken down,—he saw the Island of Monte Cristo, no longer as a threatening rock in the midst of the waves, but as an oasis in the desert; then, as his boat drew nearer, the songs became louder, for an enchanting and mysterious harmony rose to heaven, as if some Loreley had decreed to attract a soul thither, or Amphion, the enchanter, intended there to build a city.

At length the boat touched the shore, but without effort, without shock, as lips touch lips; and he entered the grotto amidst continued strains of most delicious melody. He descended, or rather seemed to descend, several steps, inhaling the fresh and balmy air, like that which may be supposed to reign around the grotto of Circe, formed from such perfumes as set the mind a-dreaming, and such fires as burn the very senses; and he saw again all he had seen before his sleep, from Sinbad, his singular host, to Ali, the mute attendant; then all seemed to fade away and become confused before his eyes, like the last shadows of the magic lantern before it is extinguished, and he was again in the chamber of statues, lighted only by one of those pale and antique lamps which watch in the dead of the night over the sleep of pleasure.

They were the same statues, rich in form, in attraction, and poesy, with eyes of fascination, smiles of love, and bright and flowing hair. They were Phryne, Cleopatra, Messalina, those three celebrated courtesans. Then among them glided like a pure ray, like a Christian angel in the midst of Olympus, one of those chaste figures, those calm shadows, those soft visions, which seemed to

veil its virgin brow before these marble wantons.

Then the three statues advanced towards him with looks of love, and approached the couch on which he was reposing, their feet hidden in their long white tunics, their throats bare, hair flowing like waves, and assuming attitudes which the gods could not resist, but which saints withstood, and looks inflexible and ardent like those with which the serpent charms the bird; and then he gave way before looks that held him in a torturing grasp and delighted his senses as with a voluptuous kiss.

It seemed to Franz that he closed his eyes, and in a last look about him saw the vision of modesty completely veiled; and then followed a dream of passion like that promised by the Prophet to the elect. Lips of stone turned to flame, breasts of ice became like heated lava, so that to Franz, yielding for the first time to the sway of the drug, love was a sorrow and voluptuousness a torture, as burning mouths were pressed to his thirsty lips, and he was held in cool serpent-like embraces. The more he strove against this unhallowed passion the more his senses yielded to its thrall, and at length, weary of a struggle that taxed his very soul, he gave way and sank back breathless and exhausted beneath the kisses of these marble goddesses, and the enchantment of his marvellous dream.

Chapter 32. The Waking

When Franz returned to himself, he seemed still to be in a dream. He thought himself in a sepulchre, into which a ray of sunlight in pity scarcely penetrated. He stretched forth his hand, and touched stone; he rose to his seat, and found himself lying on his bournous in a bed of dry heather, very soft and odoriferous. The vision had fled; and as if the statues had been but shadows from the tomb, they had vanished at his waking.

He advanced several paces towards the point whence the light came, and to all the excitement of his dream succeeded the calmness of reality. He found that he was in a grotto, went towards the opening, and through a kind of fanlight saw a blue sea and an azure sky. The air and water were shining in the beams of the morning sun; on the shore the sailors were sitting, chatting and laughing; and at ten yards from them the boat was at anchor, undulating gracefully on the water.

There for some time he enjoyed the fresh breeze which played on his brow, and listened to the dash of the waves on the beach, that left against the rocks a lace of foam as white as silver. He was for some time without reflection or thought for the divine charm which is in the things of nature, specially after a fantastic dream; then gradually this view of the outer world, so calm, so pure, so grand, reminded him of the illusiveness of his vision, and once more awakened memory. He recalled his arrival on the island, his presentation to a smuggler chief, a subterranean palace full of splendor, an excellent supper, and a spoonful of hashish.

It seemed, however, even in the very face of open day, that at least a year had elapsed since all these things had passed, so deep was the impression made in his mind by the dream, and so strong a hold had it taken of his imagination. Thus every now and then he saw in fancy amid the sailors, seated on a rock, or undulating in the vessel, one of the shadows which had shared his dream with looks and kisses. Otherwise, his head was perfectly clear, and his body refreshed; he was free from the slightest headache; on the contrary, he felt a certain degree of lightness, a faculty for absorbing the pure air, and enjoying the bright sunshine more vividly than ever.

He went gayly up to the sailors, who rose as soon as they perceived him; and

the patron, accosting him, said:

"The Signor Sinbad has left his compliments for your excellency, and desires us to express the regret he feels at not being able to take his leave in person; but he trusts you will excuse him, as very important business calls him to Malaga."

"So, then, Gaetano," said Franz, "this is, then, all reality; there exists a man who has received me in this island, entertained me right royally, and has departed while I was asleep?"

"He exists as certainly as that you may see his small yacht with all her sails spread; and if you will use your glass, you will, in all probability, recognize your host in the midst of his crew."

So saying, Gaetano pointed in a direction in which a small vessel was making sail towards the southern point of Corsica. Franz adjusted his telescope, and directed it towards the yacht. Gaetano was not mistaken. At the stern the mysterious stranger was standing up looking towards the shore, and holding a spy-glass in his hand. He was attired as he had been on the previous evening, and waved his pocket-handkerchief to his guest in token of adieu. Franz returned the salute by shaking his handkerchief as an exchange of signals. After a second, a slight cloud of smoke was seen at the stern of the vessel, which rose gracefully as it expanded in the air, and then Franz heard a slight report.

"There, do you hear?" observed Gaetano; "he is bidding you adieu."

The young man took his carbine and fired it in the air, but without any idea that the noise could be heard at the distance which separated the yacht from the shore.

"What are your excellency's orders?" inquired Gaetano.

"In the first place, light me a torch."

"Ah, yes, I understand," replied the patron, "to find the entrance to the enchanted apartment. With much pleasure, your excellency, if it would amuse you; and I will get you the torch you ask for. But I too have had the idea you have, and two or three times the same fancy has come over me; but I have always given it up. Giovanni, light a torch," he added, "and give it to his excellency."

Giovanni obeyed. Franz took the lamp, and entered the subterranean grotto, followed by Gaetano. He recognized the place where he had awaked by the bed of heather that was there; but it was in vain that he carried his torch all round the exterior surface of the grotto. He saw nothing, unless that, by traces of smoke, others had before him attempted the same thing, and, like him, in vain. Yet he

did not leave a foot of this granite wall, as impenetrable as futurity, without strict scrutiny; he did not see a fissure without introducing the blade of his hunting sword into it, or a projecting point on which he did not lean and press in the hopes it would give way. All was vain; and he lost two hours in his attempts, which were at last utterly useless. At the end of this time he gave up his search, and Gaetano smiled.

When Franz appeared again on the shore, the yacht only seemed like a small white speck on the horizon. He looked again through his glass, but even then he could not distinguish anything.

Gaetano reminded him that he had come for the purpose of shooting goats, which he had utterly forgotten. He took his fowling-piece, and began to hunt over the island with the air of a man who is fulfilling a duty, rather than enjoying a pleasure; and at the end of a quarter of an hour he had killed a goat and two kids. These animals, though wild and agile as chamois, were too much like domestic goats, and Franz could not consider them as game. Moreover, other ideas, much more entralling, occupied his mind. Since, the evening before, he had really been the hero of one of the tales of the *Thousand and One Nights*, and he was irresistibly attracted towards the grotto.

Then, in spite of the failure of his first search, he began a second, after having told Gaetano to roast one of the two kids. The second visit was a long one, and when he returned the kid was roasted and the repast ready. Franz was sitting on the spot where he was on the previous evening when his mysterious host had invited him to supper; and he saw the little yacht, now like a sea-gull on the wave, continuing her flight towards Corsica.

“Why,” he remarked to Gaetano, “you told me that Signor Sinbad was going to Malaga, while it seems he is in the direction of Porto-Vecchio.”

“Don’t you remember,” said the patron, “I told you that among the crew there were two Corsican brigands?”

“True; and he is going to land them,” added Franz.

“Precisely so,” replied Gaetano. “Ah, he is one who fears neither God nor Satan, they say, and would at any time run fifty leagues out of his course to do a poor devil a service.”

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“But such services as these might involve him with the authorities of the country in which he practices this kind of philanthropy,” said Franz.

“And what cares he for that,” replied Gaetano with a laugh, “or any

authorities? He smiles at them. Let them try to pursue him! Why, in the first place, his yacht is not a ship, but a bird, and he would beat any frigate three knots in every nine; and if he were to throw himself on the coast, why, is he not certain of finding friends everywhere?"

It was perfectly clear that the Signor Sinbad, Franz's host, had the honor of being on excellent terms with the smugglers and bandits along the whole coast of the Mediterranean, and so enjoyed exceptional privileges. As to Franz, he had no longer any inducement to remain at Monte Cristo. He had lost all hope of detecting the secret of the grotto; he consequently despatched his breakfast, and, his boat being ready, he hastened on board, and they were soon under way. At the moment the boat began her course they lost sight of the yacht, as it disappeared in the gulf of Porto-Vecchio. With it was effaced the last trace of the preceding night; and then supper, Sinbad, hashish, statues,—all became a dream for Franz.

The boat sailed on all day and all night, and next morning, when the sun rose, they had lost sight of Monte Cristo.

When Franz had once again set foot on shore, he forgot, for the moment at least, the events which had just passed, while he finished his affairs of pleasure at Florence, and then thought of nothing but how he should rejoin his companion, who was awaiting him at Rome.

He set out, and on the Saturday evening reached the Place de la Douane by the mail-coach. An apartment, as we have said, had been retained beforehand, and thus he had but to go to Signor Pastrini's hotel. But this was not so easy a matter, for the streets were thronged with people, and Rome was already a prey to that low and feverish murmur which precedes all great events; and at Rome there are four great events in every year,—the Carnival, Holy Week, Corpus Christi, and the Feast of St. Peter.

All the rest of the year the city is in that state of dull apathy, between life and death, which renders it similar to a kind of station between this world and the next—a sublime spot, a resting-place full of poetry and character, and at which Franz had already halted five or six times, and at each time found it more marvellous and striking.

At last he made his way through the mob, which was continually increasing and getting more and more turbulent, and reached the hotel. On his first inquiry he was told, with the impertinence peculiar to hired hackney-coachmen and innkeepers with their houses full, that there was no room for him at the Hôtel de Londres. Then he sent his card to Signor Pastrini, and asked for Albert de

Morcerf. This plan succeeded; and Signor Pastrini himself ran to him, excusing himself for having made his excellency wait, scolding the waiters, taking the candlestick from the porter, who was ready to pounce on the traveller and was about to lead him to Albert, when Morcerf himself appeared.

The apartment consisted of two small rooms and a parlor. The two rooms looked on to the street—a fact which Signor Pastrini commented upon as an inappreciable advantage. The rest of the floor was hired by a very rich gentleman who was supposed to be a Sicilian or Maltese; but the host was unable to decide to which of the two nations the traveller belonged.

“Very good, signor Pastrini,” said Franz; “but we must have some supper instantly, and a carriage for tomorrow and the following days.”

“As to supper,” replied the landlord, “you shall be served immediately; but as for the carriage——”

“What as to the carriage?” exclaimed Albert. “Come, come, Signor Pastrini, no joking; we must have a carriage.”

“Sir,” replied the host, “we will do all in our power to procure you one—this is all I can say.”

“And when shall we know?” inquired Franz.

“Tomorrow morning,” answered the innkeeper.

“Oh, the deuce! then we shall pay the more, that’s all, I see plainly enough. At Drake’s or Aaron’s one pays twenty-five lire for common days, and thirty or thirty-five lire a day more for Sundays and feast days; add five lire a day more for extras, that will make forty, and there’s an end of it.”

“I am afraid if we offer them double that we shall not procure a carriage.”

“Then they must put horses to mine. It is a little worse for the journey, but that’s no matter.”

“There are no horses.”

Albert looked at Franz like a man who hears a reply he does not understand.

“Do you understand that, my dear Franz—no horses?” he said, “but can’t we have post-horses?”

“They have been all hired this fortnight, and there are none left but those absolutely requisite for posting.”

“What are we to say to this?” asked Franz.

“I say, that when a thing completely surpasses my comprehension, I am accustomed not to dwell on that thing, but to pass to another. Is supper ready,

Signor Pastrini?"

"Yes, your excellency."

"Well, then, let us sup."

"But the carriage and horses?" said Franz.

"Be easy, my dear boy; they will come in due season; it is only a question of how much shall be charged for them." Morcerf then, with that delighted philosophy which believes that nothing is impossible to a full purse or well-lined pocketbook, supped, went to bed, slept soundly, and dreamed he was racing all over Rome at Carnival time in a coach with six horses.

Chapter 33. Roman Bandits

The next morning Franz woke first, and instantly rang the bell. The sound had not yet died away when Signor Pastrini himself entered.

"Well, excellency," said the landlord triumphantly, and without waiting for Franz to question him, "I feared yesterday, when I would not promise you anything, that you were too late—there is not a single carriage to be had—that is, for the three last days"

"Yes," returned Franz, "for the very three days it is most needed."

"What is the matter?" said Albert, entering; "no carriage to be had?"

"Just so," returned Franz, "you have guessed it."

"Well, your Eternal City is a nice sort of place."

"That is to say, excellency," replied Pastrini, who was desirous of keeping up the dignity of the capital of the Christian world in the eyes of his guest, "that there are no carriages to be had from Sunday to Tuesday evening, but from now till Sunday you can have fifty if you please."

"Ah, that is something," said Albert; "today is Thursday, and who knows what may arrive between this and Sunday?"

"Ten or twelve thousand travellers will arrive," replied Franz, "which will make it still more difficult."

"My friend," said Morcerf, "let us enjoy the present without gloomy forebodings for the future."

"At least we can have a window?"

"Where?"

"In the Corso."

"Ah, a window!" exclaimed Signor Pastrini,—"utterly impossible; there was only one left on the fifth floor of the Doria Palace, and that has been let to a Russian prince for twenty sequins a day."

The two young men looked at each other with an air of stupefaction.

"Well," said Franz to Albert, "do you know what is the best thing we can do? It is to pass the Carnival at Venice; there we are sure of obtaining gondolas if we

cannot have carriages."

"Ah, the devil, no," cried Albert; "I came to Rome to see the Carnival, and I will, though I see it on stilts."

"Bravo! an excellent idea. We will disguise ourselves as monster pulchinellos or shepherds of the Landes, and we shall have complete success."

"Do your excellencies still wish for a carriage from now to Sunday morning?"

"*Parbleu!*" said Albert, "do you think we are going to run about on foot in the streets of Rome, like lawyers' clerks?"

"I hasten to comply with your excellencies' wishes; only, I tell you beforehand, the carriage will cost you six piastres a day."

"And, as I am not a millionaire, like the gentleman in the next apartments," said Franz, "I warn you, that as I have been four times before at Rome, I know the prices of all the carriages; we will give you twelve piastres for today, tomorrow, and the day after, and then you will make a good profit."

"But, excellency"—said Pastrini, still striving to gain his point.

"Now go," returned Franz, "or I shall go myself and bargain with your *affettatore*, who is mine also; he is an old friend of mine, who has plundered me pretty well already, and, in the hope of making more out of me, he will take a less price than the one I offer you; you will lose the preference, and that will be your fault."

"Do not give yourselves the trouble, excellency," returned Signor Pastrini, with the smile peculiar to the Italian speculator when he confesses defeat; "I will do all I can, and I hope you will be satisfied."

"And now we understand each other."

"When do you wish the carriage to be here?"

"In an hour."

"In an hour it will be at the door."

An hour after the vehicle was at the door; it was a hack conveyance which was elevated to the rank of a private carriage in honor of the occasion, but, in spite of its humble exterior, the young men would have thought themselves happy to have secured it for the last three days of the Carnival.

"Excellency," cried the *cicerone*, seeing Franz approach the window, "shall I bring the carriage nearer to the palace?"

Accustomed as Franz was to the Italian phraseology, his first impulse was to look round him, but these words were addressed to him. Franz was the

“excellency,” the vehicle was the “carriage,” and the Hôtel de Londres was the “palace.” The genius for laudation characteristic of the race was in that phrase.

Franz and Albert descended, the carriage approached the palace; their excellencies stretched their legs along the seats; the *cicerone* sprang into the seat behind.

“Where do your excellencies wish to go?” asked he.

“To Saint Peter’s first, and then to the Colosseum,” returned Albert. But Albert did not know that it takes a day to see Saint Peter’s, and a month to study it. The day was passed at Saint Peter’s alone.

Suddenly the daylight began to fade away; Franz took out his watch—it was half-past four. They returned to the hotel; at the door Franz ordered the coachman to be ready at eight. He wished to show Albert the Colosseum by moonlight, as he had shown him Saint Peter’s by daylight. When we show a friend a city one has already visited, we feel the same pride as when we point out a woman whose lover we have been.

He was to leave the city by the Porta del Popolo, skirt the outer wall, and re-enter by the Porta San Giovanni; thus they would behold the Colosseum without finding their impressions dulled by first looking on the Capitol, the Forum, the Arch of Septimus Severus, the Temple of Antoninus and Faustina, and the Via Sacra.

They sat down to dinner. Signor Pastrini had promised them a banquet; he gave them a tolerable repast. At the end of the dinner he entered in person. Franz thought that he came to hear his dinner praised, and began accordingly, but at the first words he was interrupted.

“Excellency,” said Pastrini, “I am delighted to have your approbation, but it was not for that I came.”

“Did you come to tell us you have procured a carriage?” asked Albert, lighting his cigar.

“No; and your excellencies will do well not to think of that any longer; at Rome things can or cannot be done; when you are told anything cannot be done, there is an end of it.”

“It is much more convenient at Paris,—when anything cannot be done, you pay double, and it is done directly.”

“That is what all the French say,” returned Signor Pastrini, somewhat piqued; “for that reason, I do not understand why they travel.”

“But,” said Albert, emitting a volume of smoke and balancing his chair on its

hind legs, “only madmen, or blockheads like us, ever do travel. Men in their senses do not quit their hotel in the Rue du Helder, their walk on the Boulevard de Gand, and the Café de Paris.”

It is of course understood that Albert resided in the aforesaid street, appeared every day on the fashionable walk, and dined frequently at the only restaurant where you can really dine, that is, if you are on good terms with its waiters.

Signor Pastrini remained silent a short time; it was evident that he was musing over this answer, which did not seem very clear.

“But,” said Franz, in his turn interrupting his host’s meditations, “you had some motive for coming here, may I beg to know what it was?”

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“Ah, yes; you have ordered your carriage at eight o’clock precisely?”

“I have.”

“You intend visiting *Il Colosseo*.”

“You mean the Colosseum?”

“It is the same thing. You have told your coachman to leave the city by the Porta del Popolo, to drive round the walls, and re-enter by the Porta San Giovanni?”

“These are my words exactly.”

“Well, this route is impossible.”

“Impossible!”

“Very dangerous, to say the least.”

“Dangerous!—and why?”

“On account of the famous Luigi Vampa.”

“Pray, who may this famous Luigi Vampa be?” inquired Albert; “he may be very famous at Rome, but I can assure you he is quite unknown at Paris.”

“What! do you not know him?”

“I have not that honor.”

“You have never heard his name?”

“Never.”

“Well, then, he is a bandit, compared to whom the Decesaris and the Gasparones were mere children.”

“Now then, Albert,” cried Franz, “here is a bandit for you at last.”

"I forewarn you, Signor Pastrini, that I shall not believe one word of what you are going to tell us; having told you this, begin. 'Once upon a time——' Well, go on."

Signor Pastrini turned toward Franz, who seemed to him the more reasonable of the two; we must do him justice,—he had had a great many Frenchmen in his house, but had never been able to comprehend them.

"Excellency," said he gravely, addressing Franz, "if you look upon me as a liar, it is useless for me to say anything; it was for your interest I——"

"Albert does not say you are a liar, Signor Pastrini," said Franz, "but that he will not believe what you are going to tell us,—but I will believe all you say; so proceed."

"But if your excellency doubt my veracity——"

"Signor Pastrini," returned Franz, "you are more susceptible than Cassandra, who was a prophetess, and yet no one believed her; while you, at least, are sure of the credence of half your audience. Come, sit down, and tell us all about this Signor Vampa."

"I had told your excellency he is the most famous bandit we have had since the days of Mastrilla."

"Well, what has this bandit to do with the order I have given the coachman to leave the city by the Porta del Popolo, and to re-enter by the Porta San Giovanni?"

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"This," replied Signor Pastrini, "that you will go out by one, but I very much doubt your returning by the other."

"Why?" asked Franz.

"Because, after nightfall, you are not safe fifty yards from the gates."

"On your honor, is that true?" cried Albert.

"Count," returned Signor Pastrini, hurt at Albert's repeated doubts of the truth of his assertions, "I do not say this to you, but to your companion, who knows Rome, and knows, too, that these things are not to be laughed at."

"My dear fellow," said Albert, turning to Franz, "here is an admirable adventure; we will fill our carriage with pistols, blunderbusses, and double-barrelled guns. Luigi Vampa comes to take us, and we take him—we bring him back to Rome, and present him to his holiness the Pope, who asks how he can repay so great a service; then we merely ask for a carriage and a pair of horses,

and we see the Carnival in the carriage, and doubtless the Roman people will crown us at the Capitol, and proclaim us, like Curtius and Horatius Cocles, the preservers of their country."

Whilst Albert proposed this scheme, Signor Pastrini's face assumed an expression impossible to describe.

"And pray," asked Franz, "where are these pistols, blunderbusses, and other deadly weapons with which you intend filling the carriage?"

"Not out of my armory, for at Terracina I was plundered even of my hunting-knife. And you?"

"I shared the same fate at Aquapendente."

"Do you know, Signor Pastrini," said Albert, lighting a second cigar at the first, "that this practice is very convenient for bandits, and that it seems to be due to an arrangement of their own."

Doubtless Signor Pastrini found this pleasantry compromising, for he only answered half the question, and then he spoke to Franz, as the only one likely to listen with attention. "Your excellency knows that it is not customary to defend yourself when attacked by bandits."

"What!" cried Albert, whose courage revolted at the idea of being plundered tamely, "not make any resistance!"

"No, for it would be useless. What could you do against a dozen bandits who spring out of some pit, ruin, or aqueduct, and level their pieces at you?"

"Eh, *parbleu!*—they should kill me."

The innkeeper turned to Franz with an air that seemed to say, "Your friend is decidedly mad."

"My dear Albert," returned Franz, "your answer is sublime, and worthy the '*Let him die,*' of Corneille, only, when Horace made that answer, the safety of Rome was concerned; but, as for us, it is only to gratify a whim, and it would be ridiculous to risk our lives for so foolish a motive."

Albert poured himself out a glass of *lacryma Christi*, which he sipped at intervals, muttering some unintelligible words.

"Well, Signor Pastrini," said Franz, "now that my companion is quieted, and you have seen how peaceful my intentions are, tell me who is this Luigi Vampa. Is he a shepherd or a nobleman?—young or old?—tall or short? Describe him, in order that, if we meet him by chance, like Jean Sbogar or Lara, we may recognize him."

"You could not apply to anyone better able to inform you on all these points,

for I knew him when he was a child, and one day that I fell into his hands, going from Ferentino to Alatri, he, fortunately for me, recollected me, and set me free, not only without ransom, but made me a present of a very splendid watch, and related his history to me."

"Let us see the watch," said Albert.

Signor Pastrini drew from his fob a magnificent Bréguet, bearing the name of its maker, of Parisian manufacture, and a count's coronet.

"Here it is," said he.

"*Peste!*" returned Albert, "I compliment you on it; I have its fellow"—he took his watch from his waistcoat pocket—"and it cost me 3,000 francs."

"Let us hear the history," said Franz, motioning Signor Pastrini to seat himself.

"Your excellencies permit it?" asked the host.

"*Pardieu!*" cried Albert, "you are not a preacher, to remain standing!"

The host sat down, after having made each of them a respectful bow, which meant that he was ready to tell them all they wished to know concerning Luigi Vampa.

"You tell me," said Franz, at the moment Signor Pastrini was about to open his mouth, "that you knew Luigi Vampa when he was a child—he is still a young man, then?"

"A young man? he is only two-and-twenty;—he will gain himself a reputation."

"What do you think of that, Albert?—at two-and-twenty to be thus famous?"

"Yes, and at his age, Alexander, Cæsar, and Napoleon, who have all made some noise in the world, were quite behind him."

"So," continued Franz, "the hero of this history is only two-and-twenty?"

"Scarcely so much."

"Is he tall or short?"

"Of the middle height—about the same stature as his excellency," returned the host, pointing to Albert.

"Thanks for the comparison," said Albert, with a bow.

"Go on, Signor Pastrini," continued Franz, smiling at his friend's susceptibility. "To what class of society does he belong?"

"He was a shepherd-boy attached to the farm of the Count of San-Felice, situated between Palestrina and the Lake of Gabi; he was born at Pampinara,

and entered the count's service when he was five years old; his father was also a shepherd, who owned a small flock, and lived by the wool and the milk, which he sold at Rome. When quite a child, the little Vampa displayed a most extraordinary precocity. One day, when he was seven years old, he came to the curate of Palestrina, and asked to be taught to read; it was somewhat difficult, for he could not quit his flock; but the good curate went every day to say mass at a little hamlet too poor to pay a priest and which, having no other name, was called Borgo; he told Luigi that he might meet him on his return, and that then he would give him a lesson, warning him that it would be short, and that he must profit as much as possible by it. The child accepted joyfully. Every day Luigi led his flock to graze on the road that leads from Palestrina to Borgo; every day, at nine o'clock in the morning, the priest and the boy sat down on a bank by the wayside, and the little shepherd took his lesson out of the priest's breviary. At the end of three months he had learned to read. This was not enough—he must now learn to write. The priest had a writing teacher at Rome make three alphabets—one large, one middling, and one small; and pointed out to him that by the help of a sharp instrument he could trace the letters on a slate, and thus learn to write. The same evening, when the flock was safe at the farm, the little Luigi hastened to the smith at Palestrina, took a large nail, heated and sharpened it, and formed a sort of stylus. The next morning he gathered an armful of pieces of slate and began. At the end of three months he had learned to write. The curate, astonished at his quickness and intelligence, made him a present of pens, paper, and a penknife. This demanded new effort, but nothing compared to the first; at the end of a week he wrote as well with this pen as with the stylus. The curate related the incident to the Count of San-Felice, who sent for the little shepherd, made him read and write before him, ordered his attendant to let him eat with the domestics, and to give him two piastres a month. With this, Luigi purchased books and pencils. He applied his imitative powers to everything, and, like Giotto, when young, he drew on his slate sheep, houses, and trees. Then, with his knife, he began to carve all sorts of objects in wood; it was thus that Pinelli, the famous sculptor, had commenced.

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“A girl of six or seven—that is, a little younger than Vampa—tended sheep on a farm near Palestrina; she was an orphan, born at Valmontone and was named Teresa. The two children met, sat down near each other, let their flocks mingle together, played, laughed, and conversed together; in the evening they separated the Count of San-Felice's flock from those of Baron Cervetri, and the children returned to their respective farms, promising to meet the next morning. The next

day they kept their word, and thus they grew up together. Vampa was twelve, and Teresa eleven. And yet their natural disposition revealed itself. Beside his taste for the fine arts, which Luigi had carried as far as he could in his solitude, he was given to alternating fits of sadness and enthusiasm, was often angry and capricious, and always sarcastic. None of the lads of Pampinara, Palestrina, or Valmontone had been able to gain any influence over him or even to become his companion. His disposition (always inclined to exact concessions rather than to make them) kept him aloof from all friendships. Teresa alone ruled by a look, a word, a gesture, this impetuous character, which yielded beneath the hand of a woman, and which beneath the hand of a man might have broken, but could never have been bended. Teresa was lively and gay, but coquettish to excess. The two piastres that Luigi received every month from the Count of San-Felice's steward, and the price of all the little carvings in wood he sold at Rome, were expended in ear-rings, necklaces, and gold hairpins. So that, thanks to her friend's generosity, Teresa was the most beautiful and the best-attired peasant near Rome.

"The two children grew up together, passing all their time with each other, and giving themselves up to the wild ideas of their different characters. Thus, in all their dreams, their wishes, and their conversations, Vampa saw himself the captain of a vessel, general of an army, or governor of a province. Teresa saw herself rich, superbly attired, and attended by a train of liveried domestics. Then, when they had thus passed the day in building castles in the air, they separated their flocks, and descended from the elevation of their dreams to the reality of their humble position.

"One day the young shepherd told the count's steward that he had seen a wolf come out of the Sabine mountains, and prowl around his flock. The steward gave him a gun; this was what Vampa longed for. This gun had an excellent barrel, made at Brescia, and carrying a ball with the precision of an English rifle; but one day the count broke the stock, and had then cast the gun aside. This, however, was nothing to a sculptor like Vampa; he examined the broken stock, calculated what change it would require to adapt the gun to his shoulder, and made a fresh stock, so beautifully carved that it would have fetched fifteen or twenty piastres, had he chosen to sell it. But nothing could be farther from his thoughts.

"For a long time a gun had been the young man's greatest ambition. In every country where independence has taken the place of liberty, the first desire of a manly heart is to possess a weapon, which at once renders him capable of defence or attack, and, by rendering its owner terrible, often makes him feared.

From this moment Vampa devoted all his leisure time to perfecting himself in the use of his precious weapon; he purchased powder and ball, and everything served him for a mark—the trunk of some old and moss-grown olive-tree, that grew on the Sabine mountains; the fox, as he quitted his earth on some marauding excursion; the eagle that soared above their heads: and thus he soon became so expert, that Teresa overcame the terror she at first felt at the report, and amused herself by watching him direct the ball wherever he pleased, with as much accuracy as if he placed it by hand.

20107m

“One evening a wolf emerged from a pine-wood near which they were usually stationed, but the wolf had scarcely advanced ten yards ere he was dead. Proud of this exploit, Vampa took the dead animal on his shoulders, and carried him to the farm. These exploits had gained Luigi considerable reputation. The man of superior abilities always finds admirers, go where he will. He was spoken of as the most adroit, the strongest, and the most courageous *contadino* for ten leagues around; and although Teresa was universally allowed to be the most beautiful girl of the Sabines, no one had ever spoken to her of love, because it was known that she was beloved by Vampa. And yet the two young people had never declared their affection; they had grown together like two trees whose roots are mingled, whose branches intertwined, and whose intermingled perfume rises to the heavens. Only their wish to see each other had become a necessity, and they would have preferred death to a day’s separation.

“Teresa was sixteen, and Vampa seventeen. About this time, a band of brigands that had established itself in the Lepini mountains began to be much spoken of. The brigands have never been really extirpated from the neighborhood of Rome. Sometimes a chief is wanted, but when a chief presents himself he rarely has to wait long for a band of followers.

“The celebrated Cucumetto, pursued in the Abruzzo, driven out of the kingdom of Naples, where he had carried on a regular war, had crossed the Garigliano, like Manfred, and had taken refuge on the banks of the Amasine between Sonnino and Juperno. He strove to collect a band of followers, and followed the footsteps of Decesaris and Gasparone, whom he hoped to surpass. Many young men of Palestrina, Frascati, and Pampinara had disappeared. Their disappearance at first caused much disquietude; but j^etude; but j^etude;

mind, were it even by an emissary from the realms of darkness. All these women had been, or were, beautiful. The same flower of innocence had flourished, or was still flourishing, on their brow, that is seen on the brow of the culprit in your house."

40120m

Villefort shrieked, clasped his hands, and looked at the doctor with a supplicating air. But the latter went on without pity:

"Seek whom the crime will profit,' says an axiom of jurisprudence."

"Doctor," cried Villefort, "alas, doctor, how often has man's justice been deceived by those fatal words. I know not why, but I feel that this crime——"

"You acknowledge, then, the existence of the crime?"

"Yes, I see too plainly that it does exist. But it seems that it is intended to affect me personally. I fear an attack myself, after all these disasters."

"Oh, man!" murmured d'Avrigny, "the most selfish of all animals, the most personal of all creatures, who believes the earth turns, the sun shines, and death strikes for him alone,—an ant cursing God from the top of a blade of grass! And have those who have lost their lives lost nothing?—M. de Saint-Méran, Madame de Saint-Méran, M. Noirtier——"

"How? M. Noirtier?"

"Yes; think you it was the poor servant's life was coveted? No, no; like Shakespeare's Polonius, he died for another. It was Noirtier the lemonade was intended for—it is Noirtier, logically speaking, who drank it. The other drank it only by accident, and, although Barrois is dead, it was Noirtier whose death was wished for."

"But why did it not kill my father?"

"I told you one evening in the garden after Madame de Saint-Méran's death—because his system is accustomed to that very poison, and the dose was trifling to him, which would be fatal to another; because no one knows, not even the assassin, that, for the last twelve months, I have given M. Noirtier brucine for his paralytic affection, while the assassin is not ignorant, for he has proved that brucine is a violent poison."

"Oh, have pity—have pity!" murmured Villefort, wringing his hands.

"Follow the culprit's steps; he first kills M. de Saint-Méran——"

"Oh, doctor!"

"I would swear to it; what I heard of his symptoms agrees too well with what I

have seen in the other cases.” Villefort ceased to contend; he only groaned. “He first kills M. de Saint-Méran,” repeated the doctor, “then Madame de Saint-Méran,—a double fortune to inherit.” Villefort wiped the perspiration from his forehead. “Listen attentively.”

“Alas,” stammered Villefort, “I do not lose a single word.”

“M. Noirtier,” resumed M. d’Avrigny in the same pitiless tone,—“M. Noirtier had once made a will against you—against your family—in favor of the poor, in fact; M. Noirtier is spared, because nothing is expected from him. But he has no sooner destroyed his first will and made a second, than, for fear he should make a third, he is struck down. The will was made the day before yesterday, I believe; you see there has been no time lost.”

“Oh, mercy, M. d’Avrigny!”

“No mercy, sir! The physician has a sacred mission on earth; and to fulfil it he begins at the source of life, and goes down to the mysterious darkness of the tomb. When crime has been committed, and God, doubtless in anger, turns away his face, it is for the physician to bring the culprit to justice.”

40122m

“Have mercy on my child, sir,” murmured Villefort.

“You see it is yourself who have first named her—you, her father.”

“Have pity on Valentine! Listen, it is impossible. I would as willingly accuse myself! Valentine, whose heart is pure as a diamond or a lily!”

“No pity, procureur; the crime is fragrant. Mademoiselle herself packed all the medicines which were sent to M. de Saint-Méran; and M. de Saint-Méran is dead. Mademoiselle de Villefort prepared all the cooling draughts which Madame de Saint-Méran took, and Madame de Saint-Méran is dead. Mademoiselle de Villefort took from the hands of Barrois, who was sent out, the lemonade which M. Noirtier had every morning, and he has escaped by a miracle. Mademoiselle de Villefort is the culprit—she is the poisoner! To you, as the king’s attorney, I denounce Mademoiselle de Villefort, do your duty.”

“Doctor, I resist no longer—I can no longer defend myself—I believe you; but, for pity’s sake, spare my life, my honor!”

“M. de Villefort,” replied the doctor, with increased vehemence, “there are occasions when I dispense with all foolish human circumspection. If your daughter had committed only one crime, and I saw her meditating another, I would say ‘Warn her, punish her, let her pass the remainder of her life in a convent, weeping and praying.’ If she had committed two crimes, I would say,

‘Here, M. de Villefort, is a poison that the prisoner is not acquainted with,—one that has no known antidote, quick as thought, rapid as lightning, mortal as the thunderbolt; give her that poison, recommending her soul to God, and save your honor and your life, for it is yours she aims at; and I can picture her approaching your pillow with her hypocritical smiles and her sweet exhortations. Woe to you, M. de Villefort, if you do not strike first!’ This is what I would say had she only killed two persons but she has seen three deaths,—has contemplated three murdered persons,—has knelt by three corpses! To the scaffold with the prisoner —to the scaffold! Do you talk of your honor? Do what I tell you, and immortality awaits you!”

Villefort fell on his knees.

“Listen,” said he; “I have not the strength of mind you have, or rather that which you would not have, if instead of my daughter Valentine your daughter Madeleine were concerned.” The doctor turned pale. “Doctor, every son of woman is born to suffer and to die; I am content to suffer and to await death.”

“Beware,” said M. d’Avrigny, “it may come slowly; you will see it approach after having struck your father, your wife, perhaps your son.”

Villefort, suffocating, pressed the doctor’s arm.

40124m

“Listen,” cried he; “pity me—help me! No, my daughter is not guilty. If you drag us both before a tribunal I will still say, ‘No, my daughter is not guilty;—there is no crime in my house. I will not acknowledge a crime in my house; for when crime enters a dwelling, it is like death—it does not come alone.’ Listen. What does it signify to you if I am murdered? Are you my friend? Are you a man? Have you a heart? No, you are a physician! Well, I tell you I will not drag my daughter before a tribunal, and give her up to the executioner! The bare idea would kill me—would drive me like a madman to dig my heart out with my finger-nails! And if you were mistaken, doctor—if it were not my daughter—if I should come one day, pale as a spectre, and say to you, ‘Assassin, you have killed my child!’—hold—if that should happen, although I am a Christian, M. d’Avrigny, I should kill myself.”

“Well,” said the doctor, after a moment’s silence, “I will wait.”

Villefort looked at him as if he had doubted his words.

“Only,” continued M. d’Avrigny, with a slow and solemn tone, “if anyone falls ill in your house, if you feel yourself attacked, do not send for me, for I will come no more. I will consent to share this dreadful secret with you, but I will not

allow shame and remorse to grow and increase in my conscience, as crime and misery will in your house."

"Then you abandon me, doctor?"

"Yes, for I can follow you no farther, and I only stop at the foot of the scaffold. Some further discovery will be made, which will bring this dreadful tragedy to a close. Adieu."

"I entreat you, doctor!"

"All the horrors that disturb my thoughts make your house odious and fatal. Adieu, sir."

"One word—one single word more, doctor! You go, leaving me in all the horror of my situation, after increasing it by what you have revealed to me. But what will be reported of the sudden death of the poor old servant?"

"True," said M. d'Avrigny; "we will return."

The doctor went out first, followed by M. de Villefort. The terrified servants were on the stairs and in the passage where the doctor would pass.

"Sir," said d'Avrigny to Villefort, so loud that all might hear, "poor Barrois has led too sedentary a life of late; accustomed formerly to ride on horseback, or in the carriage, to the four corners of Europe, the monotonous walk around that armchair has killed him—his blood has thickened. He was stout, had a short, thick neck; he was attacked with apoplexy, and I was called in too late. By the way," added he in a low tone, "take care to throw away that cup of syrup of violets in the ashes."

The doctor, without shaking hands with Villefort, without adding a word to what he had said, went out, amid the tears and lamentations of the whole household. The same evening all Villefort's servants, who had assembled in the kitchen, and had a long consultation, came to tell Madame de Villefort that they wished to leave. No entreaty, no proposition of increased wages, could induce them to remain; to every argument they replied, "We must go, for death is in this house."

They all left, in spite of prayers and entreaties, testifying their regret at leaving so good a master and mistress, and especially Mademoiselle Valentine, so good, so kind, and so gentle.

Villefort looked at Valentine as they said this. She was in tears, and, strange as it was, in spite of the emotions he felt at the sight of these tears, he looked also at Madame de Villefort, and it appeared to him as if a slight gloomy smile had passed over her thin lips, like a meteor seen passing inauspiciously between two

clouds in a stormy sky.

Chapter 81. The Room of the Retired Baker

The evening of the day on which the Count of Morcerf had left Danglars' house with feelings of shame and anger at the rejection of the projected alliance, M. Andrea Cavalcanti, with curled hair, moustaches in perfect order, and white gloves which fitted admirably, had entered the courtyard of the banker's house in Rue de la Chaussée d'Antin. He had not been more than ten minutes in the drawing-room before he drew Danglars aside into the recess of a bow-window, and, after an ingenious preamble, related to him all his anxieties and cares since his noble father's departure. He acknowledged the extreme kindness which had been shown him by the banker's family, in which he had been received as a son, and where, besides, his warmest affections had found an object on which to centre in Mademoiselle Danglars.

Danglars listened with the most profound attention; he had expected this declaration for the last two or three days, and when at last it came his eyes glistened as much as they had lowered on listening to Morcerf. He would not, however, yield immediately to the young man's request, but made a few conscientious objections.

"Are you not rather young, M. Andrea, to think of marrying?"

"I think not, sir," replied M. Cavalcanti; "in Italy the nobility generally marry young. Life is so uncertain, that we ought to secure happiness while it is within our reach."

"Well, sir," said Danglars, "in case your proposals, which do me honor, are accepted by my wife and daughter, by whom shall the preliminary arrangements be settled? So important a negotiation should, I think, be conducted by the respective fathers of the young people."

"Sir, my father is a man of great foresight and prudence. Thinking that I might wish to settle in France, he left me at his departure, together with the papers establishing my identity, a letter promising, if he approved of my choice, 150,000 livres per annum from the day I was married. So far as I can judge, I suppose this to be a quarter of my father's revenue."

"I," said Danglars, "have always intended giving my daughter 500,000 francs as her dowry; she is, besides, my sole heiress."

"All would then be easily arranged if the baroness and her daughter are willing. We should command an annuity of 175,000 livres. Supposing, also, I should persuade the marquis to give me my capital, which is not likely, but still is possible, we would place these two or three millions in your hands, whose talent might make it realize ten per cent."

"I never give more than four per cent, and generally only three and a half; but to my son-in-law I would give five, and we would share the profits."

"Very good, father-in-law," said Cavalcanti, yielding to his low-born nature, which would escape sometimes through the aristocratic gloss with which he sought to conceal it. Correcting himself immediately, he said, "Excuse me, sir; hope alone makes me almost mad,—what will not reality do?"

"But," said Danglars, who, on his part, did not perceive how soon the conversation, which was at first disinterested, was turning to a business transaction, "there is, doubtless, a part of your fortune your father could not refuse you?"

"Which?" asked the young man.

"That you inherit from your mother."

"Truly, from my mother, Leonora Corsinari."

"How much may it amount to?"

"Indeed, sir," said Andrea, "I assure you I have never given the subject a thought, but I suppose it must have been at least two millions."

Danglars felt as much overcome with joy as the miser who finds a lost treasure, or as the shipwrecked mariner who feels himself on solid ground instead of in the abyss which he expected would swallow him up.

"Well, sir," said Andrea, bowing to the banker respectfully, "may I hope?"

"You may not only hope," said Danglars, "but consider it a settled thing, if no obstacle arises on your part."

"I am, indeed, rejoiced," said Andrea.

"But," said Danglars thoughtfully, "how is it that your patron, M. de Monte Cristo, did not make his proposal for you?"

Andrea blushed imperceptibly.

"I have just left the count, sir," said he; "he is, doubtless, a delightful man but inconceivably peculiar in his ideas. He esteems me highly. He even told me he had not the slightest doubt that my father would give me the capital instead of the interest of my property. He has promised to use his influence to obtain it for

me; but he also declared that he never had taken on himself the responsibility of making proposals for another, and he never would. I must, however, do him the justice to add that he assured me if ever he had regretted the repugnance he felt to such a step it was on this occasion, because he thought the projected union would be a happy and suitable one. Besides, if he will do nothing officially, he will answer any questions you propose to him. And now," continued he, with one of his most charming smiles, "having finished talking to the father-in-law, I must address myself to the banker."

"And what may you have to say to him?" said Danglars, laughing in his turn.

"That the day after tomorrow I shall have to draw upon you for about four thousand francs; but the count, expecting my bachelor's revenue could not suffice for the coming month's outlay, has offered me a draft for twenty thousand francs. It bears his signature, as you see, which is all-sufficient."

"Bring me a million such as that," said Danglars, "I shall be well pleased," putting the draft in his pocket. "Fix your own hour for tomorrow, and my cashier shall call on you with a check for eighty thousand francs."

"At ten o'clock then, if you please; I should like it early, as I am going into the country tomorrow."

"Very well, at ten o'clock; you are still at the Hôtel des Princes?"

"Yes."

The following morning, with the banker's usual punctuality, the eighty thousand francs were placed in the young man's hands, as he was on the point of starting, after having left two hundred francs for Caderousse. He went out chiefly to avoid this dangerous enemy, and returned as late as possible in the evening.

But scarcely had he stepped out of his carriage when the porter met him with a parcel in his hand.

"Sir," said he, "that man has been here."

"What man?" said Andrea carelessly, apparently forgetting him whom he but too well recollected.

"Him to whom your excellency pays that little annuity."

"Oh," said Andrea, "my father's old servant. Well, you gave him the two hundred francs I had left for him?"

"Yes, your excellency." Andrea had expressed a wish to be thus addressed. "But," continued the porter, "he would not take them."

Andrea turned pale, but as it was dark his pallor was not perceptible. "What?

he would not take them?" said he with slight emotion.

40130m

"No, he wished to speak to your excellency; I told him you were gone out, and after some dispute he believed me and gave me this letter, which he had brought with him already sealed."

"Give it me," said Andrea, and he read by the light of his carriage-lamp:

"You know where I live; I expect you tomorrow morning at nine o'clock."

Andrea examined it carefully, to ascertain if the letter had been opened, or if any indiscreet eyes had seen its contents; but it was so carefully folded, that no one could have read it, and the seal was perfect.

"Very well," said he. "Poor man, he is a worthy creature." He left the porter to ponder on these words, not knowing which most to admire, the master or the servant.

"Take out the horses quickly, and come up to me," said Andrea to his groom. In two seconds the young man had reached his room and burnt Caderousse's letter. The servant entered just as he had finished.

"You are about my height, Pierre," said he.

"I have that honor, your excellency."

"You had a new livery yesterday?"

"Yes, sir."

"I have an engagement with a pretty little girl for this evening, and do not wish to be known; lend me your livery till tomorrow. I may sleep, perhaps, at an inn."

Pierre obeyed. Five minutes after, Andrea left the hotel, completely disguised, took a cabriolet, and ordered the driver to take him to the Cheval Rouge, at Picpus. The next morning he left that inn as he had left the Hôtel des Princes, without being noticed, walked down the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, along the boulevard to Rue Ménilmontant, and stopping at the door of the third house on the left looked for someone of whom to make inquiry in the porter's absence.

"For whom are you looking, my fine fellow?" asked the fruiteress on the opposite side.

"Monsieur Pailletin, if you please, my good woman," replied Andrea.

"A retired baker?" asked the fruiteress.

"Exactly."

“He lives at the end of the yard, on the left, on the third story.”

40132m

Andrea went as she directed him, and on the third floor he found a hare’s paw, which, by the hasty ringing of the bell, it was evident he pulled with considerable ill-temper. A moment after Caderousse’s face appeared at the grating in the door.

“Ah! you are punctual,” said he, as he drew back the door.

“Confound you and your punctuality!” said Andrea, throwing himself into a chair in a manner which implied that he would rather have flung it at the head of his host.

“Come, come, my little fellow, don’t be angry. See, I have thought about you —look at the good breakfast we are going to have; nothing but what you are fond of.”

Andrea, indeed, inhaled the scent of something cooking which was not unwelcome to him, hungry as he was; it was that mixture of fat and garlic peculiar to Provençal kitchens of an inferior order, added to that of dried fish, and above all, the pungent smell of musk and cloves. These odors escaped from two deep dishes which were covered and placed on a stove, and from a copper pan placed in an old iron pot. In an adjoining room Andrea saw also a tolerably clean table prepared for two, two bottles of wine sealed, the one with green, the other with yellow, a supply of brandy in a decanter, and a measure of fruit in a cabbage-leaf, cleverly arranged on an earthenware plate.

“What do you think of it, my little fellow?” said Caderousse. “Ay, that smells good! You know I used to be a good cook; do you recollect how you used to lick your fingers? You were among the first who tasted any of my dishes, and I think you relished them tolerably.” While speaking, Caderousse went on peeling a fresh supply of onions.

“But,” said Andrea, ill-temperedly, “by my faith, if it was only to breakfast with you, that you disturbed me, I wish the devil had taken you!”

“My boy,” said Caderousse sententiously, “one can talk while eating. And then, you ungrateful being, you are not pleased to see an old friend? I am weeping with joy.”

He was truly crying, but it would have been difficult to say whether joy or the onions produced the greatest effect on the lachrymal glands of the old innkeeper of the Pont-du-Gard.

“Hold your tongue, hypocrite,” said Andrea; “you love me!”

"Yes, I do, or may the devil take me. I know it is a weakness," said Caderousse, "but it overpowers me."

"And yet it has not prevented your sending for me to play me some trick."

"Come," said Caderousse, wiping his large knife on his apron, "if I did not like you, do you think I should endure the wretched life you lead me? Think for a moment. You have your servant's clothes on—you therefore keep a servant; I have none, and am obliged to prepare my own meals. You abuse my cookery because you dine at the table d'hôte of the Hôtel des Princes, or the Café de Paris. Well, I too could keep a servant; I too could have a tilbury; I too could dine where I like; but why do I not? Because I would not annoy my little Benedetto. Come, just acknowledge that I could, eh?"

This address was accompanied by a look which was by no means difficult to understand.

"Well," said Andrea, "admitting your love, why do you want me to breakfast with you?"

"That I may have the pleasure of seeing you, my little fellow."

"What is the use of seeing me after we have made all our arrangements?"

"Eh, dear friend," said Caderousse, "are wills ever made without codicils? But you first came to breakfast, did you not? Well, sit down, and let us begin with these pilchards, and this fresh butter; which I have put on some vine-leaves to please you, wicked one. Ah, yes; you look at my room, my four straw chairs, my images, three francs each. But what do you expect? This is not the Hôtel des Princes."

"Come, you are growing discontented, you are no longer happy; you, who only wish to live like a retired baker."

Caderousse sighed.

"Well, what have you to say? you have seen your dream realized."

"I can still say it is a dream; a retired baker, my poor Benedetto, is rich—he has an annuity."

"Well, you have an annuity."

"I have?"

40134m

"Yes, since I bring you your two hundred francs."

Caderousse shrugged his shoulders.

"It is humiliating," said he, "thus to receive money given grudgingly,—an

uncertain supply which may soon fail. You see I am obliged to economize, in case your prosperity should cease. Well, my friend, fortune is inconstant, as the chaplain of the regiment said. I know your prosperity is great, you rascal; you are to marry the daughter of Danglars."

"What? of Danglars?"

"Yes, to be sure; must I say Baron Danglars? I might as well say Count Benedetto. He was an old friend of mine and if he had not so bad a memory he ought to invite me to your wedding, seeing he came to mine. Yes, yes, to mine; gad, he was not so proud then,—he was an under-clerk to the good M. Morrel. I have dined many times with him and the Count of Morcerf, so you see I have some high connections and were I to cultivate them a little, we might meet in the same drawing-rooms."

"Come, your jealousy represents everything to you in the wrong light."

"That is all very fine, Benedetto mio, but I know what I am saying. Perhaps I may one day put on my best coat, and presenting myself at the great gate, introduce myself. Meanwhile let us sit down and eat."

Caderousse set the example and attacked the breakfast with good appetite, praising each dish he set before his visitor. The latter seemed to have resigned himself; he drew the corks, and partook largely of the fish with the garlic and fat.

"Ah, mate," said Caderousse, "you are getting on better terms with your old landlord!"

"Faith, yes," replied Andrea, whose hunger prevailed over every other feeling.

"So you like it, you rogue?"

"So much that I wonder how a man who can cook thus can complain of hard living."

"Do you see," said Caderousse, "all my happiness is marred by one thought?"

"What is that?"

"That I am dependent on another, I who have always gained my own livelihood honestly."

"Do not let that disturb you, I have enough for two."

"No, truly; you may believe me if you will; at the end of every month I am tormented by remorse."

"Good Caderousse!"

"So much so, that yesterday I would not take the two hundred francs."

"Yes, you wished to speak to me; but was it indeed remorse, tell me?"

“True remorse; and, besides, an idea had struck me.”

Andrea shuddered; he always did so at Caderousse’s ideas.

“It is miserable—do you see?—always to wait till the end of the month.”

“Oh,” said Andrea philosophically, determined to watch his companion narrowly, “does not life pass in waiting? Do I, for instance, fare better? Well, I wait patiently, do I not?”

“Yes; because instead of expecting two hundred wretched francs, you expect five or six thousand, perhaps ten, perhaps even twelve, for you take care not to let anyone know the utmost. Down there, you always had little presents and Christmas-boxes, which you tried to hide from your poor friend Caderousse. Fortunately he is a cunning fellow, that friend Caderousse.”

“There you are beginning again to ramble, to talk again and again of the past! But what is the use of teasing me with going all over that again?”

“Ah, you are only one-and-twenty, and can forget the past; I am fifty, and am obliged to recollect it. But let us return to business.”

“Yes.”

“I was going to say, if I were in your place——”

“Well.”

“I would realize——”

“How would you realize?”

“I would ask for six months’ in advance, under pretence of being able to purchase a farm, then with my six months I would decamp.”

“Well, well,” said Andrea, “that isn’t a bad idea.”

“My dear friend,” said Caderousse, “eat of my bread, and take my advice; you will be none the worse off, physically or morally.”

“But,” said Andrea, “why do you not act on the advice you gave me? Why do you not realize a six months’, a year’s advance even, and retire to Brussels? Instead of living the retired baker, you might live as a bankrupt, using his privileges; that would be very good.”

“But how the devil would you have me retire on twelve hundred francs?”

“Ah, Caderousse,” said Andrea, “how covetous you are! Two months ago you were dying with hunger.”

“The appetite grows by what it feeds on,” said Caderousse, grinning and showing his teeth, like a monkey laughing or a tiger growling. “And,” added he, biting off with his large white teeth an enormous mouthful of bread, “I have

formed a plan."

Caderousse's plans alarmed Andrea still more than his ideas; ideas were but the germ, the plan was reality.

"Let me see your plan; I dare say it is a pretty one."

"Why not? Who formed the plan by which we left the establishment of M —! eh? was it not I? and it was no bad one I believe, since here we are!"

"I do not say," replied Andrea, "that you never make a good one; but let us see your plan."

"Well," pursued Caderousse, "can you without expending one sou, put me in the way of getting fifteen thousand francs? No, fifteen thousand are not enough, —I cannot again become an honest man with less than thirty thousand francs."

"No," replied Andrea, dryly, "no, I cannot."

"I do not think you understand me," replied Caderousse, calmly; "I said without your laying out a sou."

"Do you want me to commit a robbery, to spoil all my good fortune—and yours with mine—and both of us to be dragged down there again?"

"It would make very little difference to me," said Caderousse, "if I were retaken, I am a poor creature to live alone, and sometimes pine for my old comrades; not like you, heartless creature, who would be glad never to see them again."

Andrea did more than tremble this time, he turned pale.

"Come, Caderousse, no nonsense!" said he.

"Don't alarm yourself, my little Benedetto, but just point out to me some means of gaining those thirty thousand francs without your assistance, and I will contrive it."

"Well, I'll see—I'll try to contrive some way," said Andrea.

"Meanwhile you will raise my monthly allowance to five hundred francs, my little fellow? I have a fancy, and mean to get a housekeeper."

"Well, you shall have your five hundred francs," said Andrea; "but it is very hard for me, my poor Caderousse—you take advantage——"

"Bah," said Caderousse, "when you have access to countless stores."

One would have said Andrea anticipated his companion's words, so did his eye flash like lightning, but it was but for a moment.

"True," he replied, "and my protector is very kind."

"That dear protector," said Caderousse; "and how much does he give you

monthly?"

"Five thousand francs."

"As many thousands as you give me hundreds! Truly, it is only bastards who are thus fortunate. Five thousand francs per month! What the devil can you do with all that?"

"Oh, it is no trouble to spend that; and I am like you, I want capital."

"Capital?—yes—I understand—everyone would like capital."

"Well, and I shall get it."

"Who will give it to you—your prince?"

"Yes, my prince. But unfortunately I must wait."

40138m

"You must wait for what?" asked Caderousse.

"For his death."

"The death of your prince?"

"Yes."

"How so?"

"Because he has made his will in my favor."

"Indeed?"

"On my honor."

"For how much?"

"For five hundred thousand."

"Only that? It's little enough."

"But so it is."

"No, it cannot be!"

"Are you my friend, Caderousse?"

"Yes, in life or death."

"Well, I will tell you a secret."

"What is it?"

"But remember——"

"Ah! *pardieu!* mute as a carp."

"Well, I think——"

Andrea stopped and looked around.

“You think? Do not fear; *pardieu!* we are alone.”

“I think I have discovered my father.”

“Your true father?”

“Yes.”

“Not old Cavalcanti?”

“No, for he has gone again; the true one, as you say.”

“And that father is——”

“Well, Caderousse, it is Monte Cristo.”

“Bah!”

“Yes, you understand, that explains all. He cannot acknowledge me openly, it appears, but he does it through M. Cavalcanti, and gives him fifty thousand francs for it.”

“Fifty thousand francs for being your father? I would have done it for half that, for twenty thousand, for fifteen thousand; why did you not think of me, ungrateful man?”

“Did I know anything about it, when it was all done when I was down there?”

“Ah, truly? And you say that by his will——”

“He leaves me five hundred thousand livres.”

“Are you sure of it?”

“He showed it me; but that is not all—there is a codicil, as I said just now.”

“Probably.”

“And in that codicil he acknowledges me.”

“Oh, the good father, the brave father, the very honest father!” said Caderousse, twirling a plate in the air between his two hands.

“Now, say if I conceal anything from you?”

“No, and your confidence makes you honorable in my opinion; and your princely father, is he rich, very rich?”

“Yes, he is that; he does not himself know the amount of his fortune.”

“Is it possible?”

“It is evident enough to me, who am always at his house. The other day a banker’s clerk brought him fifty thousand francs in a portfolio about the size of your plate; yesterday his banker brought him a hundred thousand francs in gold.”

Caderousse was filled with wonder; the young man’s words sounded to him

like metal, and he thought he could hear the rushing of cascades of louis.

“And you go into that house?” cried he briskly.

“When I like.”

Caderousse was thoughtful for a moment. It was easy to perceive he was revolving some unfortunate idea in his mind. Then suddenly,—

“How I should like to see all that,” cried he; “how beautiful it must be!”

“It is, in fact, magnificent,” said Andrea.

“And does he not live in the Champs-Élysées?”

“Yes, No. 30.”

“Ah,” said Caderousse, “No. 30.”

“Yes, a fine house standing alone, between a courtyard and a garden,—you must know it.”

“Possibly; but it is not the exterior I care for, it is the interior. What beautiful furniture there must be in it!”

“Have you ever seen the Tuileries?”

“No.”

“Well, it surpasses that.”

“It must be worth one’s while to stoop, Andrea, when that good M. Monte Cristo lets fall his purse.”

“It is not worthwhile to wait for that,” said Andrea; “money is as plentiful in that house as fruit in an orchard.”

“But you should take me there one day with you.”

“How can I? On what plea?”

“You are right; but you have made my mouth water. I must absolutely see it; I shall find a way.”

“No nonsense, Caderousse!”

“I will offer myself as floor-polisher.”

“The rooms are all carpeted.”

“Well, then, I must be contented to imagine it.”

“That is the best plan, believe me.”

“Try, at least, to give me an idea of what it is.”

“How can I?”

“Nothing is easier. Is it large?”

“Middling.”

“How is it arranged?”

“Faith, I should require pen, ink, and paper to make a plan.”

“They are all here,” said Caderousse, briskly. He fetched from an old secretaire a sheet of white paper and pen and ink. “Here,” said Caderousse, “draw me all that on the paper, my boy.”

Andrea took the pen with an imperceptible smile and began.

“The house, as I said, is between the court and the garden; in this way, do you see?” Andrea drew the garden, the court and the house.

40142m

“High walls?”

“Not more than eight or ten feet.”

“That is not prudent,” said Caderousse.

“In the court are orange-trees in pots, turf, and clumps of flowers.”

“And no steel-traps?”

“No.”

“The stables?”

“Are on either side of the gate, which you see there.” And Andrea continued his plan.

“Let us see the ground floor,” said Caderousse.

“On the ground floor, dining-room, two drawing-rooms, billiard-room, staircase in the hall, and a little back staircase.”

“Windows?”

“Magnificent windows, so beautiful, so large, that I believe a man of your size should pass through each frame.”

“Why the devil have they any stairs with such windows?”

“Luxury has everything.”

“But shutters?”

“Yes, but they are never used. That Count of Monte Cristo is an original, who loves to look at the sky even at night.”

“And where do the servants sleep?”

“Oh, they have a house to themselves. Picture to yourself a pretty coach-house at the right-hand side where the ladders are kept. Well, over that coach-house are

the servants' rooms, with bells corresponding with the different apartments."

"Ah, *diable!* bells did you say?"

"What do you mean?"

"Oh, nothing! I only say they cost a load of money to hang, and what is the use of them, I should like to know?"

"There used to be a dog let loose in the yard at night, but it has been taken to the house at Auteuil, to that you went to, you know."

"Yes."

"I was saying to him only yesterday, 'You are imprudent, Monsieur Count; for when you go to Auteuil and take your servants the house is left unprotected.' 'Well,' said he, 'what next?' 'Well, next, some day you will be robbed.'"

"What did he answer?"

"He quietly said, 'What do I care if I am?'"

"Andrea, he has some secretaire with a spring."

"How do you know?"

"Yes, which catches the thief in a trap and plays a tune. I was told there were such at the last exhibition."

"He has simply a mahogany secretaire, in which the key is always kept."

"And he is not robbed?"

"No; his servants are all devoted to him."

"There ought to be some money in that secretaire?"

"There may be. No one knows what there is."

"And where is it?"

"On the first floor."

"Sketch me the plan of that floor, as you have done of the ground floor, my boy."

"That is very simple." Andrea took the pen. "On the first story, do you see, there is the anteroom and the drawing-room; to the right of the drawing-room, a library and a study; to the left, a bedroom and a dressing-room. The famous secretaire is in the dressing-room."

"Is there a window in the dressing-room?"

"Two,—one here and one there." Andrea sketched two windows in the room, which formed an angle on the plan, and appeared as a small square added to the rectangle of the bedroom. Caderousse became thoughtful.

“Does he often go to Auteuil?” added he.

“Two or three times a week. Tomorrow, for instance, he is going to spend the day and night there.”

“Are you sure of it?”

“He has invited me to dine there.”

“There’s a life for you,” said Caderousse; “a town house and a country house.”

“That is what it is to be rich.”

“And shall you dine there?”

“Probably.”

“When you dine there, do you sleep there?”

“If I like; I am at home there.”

Caderousse looked at the young man, as if to get at the truth from the bottom of his heart. But Andrea drew a cigar-case from his pocket, took a Havana, quietly lit it, and began smoking.

“When do you want your twelve hundred francs?” said he to Caderousse.

“Now, if you have them.” Andrea took five-and-twenty louis from his pocket.

“Yellow boys?” said Caderousse; “no, I thank you.”

“Oh, you despise them.”

“On the contrary, I esteem them, but will not have them.”

“You can change them, idiot; gold is worth five sous.”

“Exactly; and he who changes them will follow friend Caderousse, lay hands on him, and demand what farmers pay him their rent in gold. No nonsense, my good fellow; silver simply, round coins with the head of some monarch or other on them. Anybody may possess a five-franc piece.”

“But do you suppose I carry five hundred francs about with me? I should want a porter.”

“Well, leave them with your porter; he is to be trusted. I will call for them.”

“Today?”

“No, tomorrow; I shall not have time today.”

“Well, tomorrow I will leave them when I go to Auteuil.”

“May I depend on it?”

“Certainly.”

“Because I shall secure my housekeeper on the strength of it.”

“Now see here, will that be all? Eh? And will you not torment me any more?”

“Never.”

Caderousse had become so gloomy that Andrea feared he should be obliged to notice the change. He redoubled his gayety and carelessness.

“How sprightly you are,” said Caderousse; “One would say you were already in possession of your property.”

“No, unfortunately; but when I do obtain it——”

“Well?”

“I shall remember old friends, I can tell you that.”

“Yes, since you have such a good memory.”

“What do you want? It looks as if you were trying to fleece me?”

“I? What an idea! I, who am going to give you another piece of good advice.”

“What is it?”

“To leave behind you the diamond you have on your finger. We shall both get into trouble. You will ruin both yourself and me by your folly.”

“How so?” said Andrea.

“How? You put on a livery, you disguise yourself as a servant, and yet keep a diamond on your finger worth four or five thousand francs.”

“You guess well.”

“I know something of diamonds; I have had some.”

“You do well to boast of it,” said Andrea, who, without becoming angry, as Caderousse feared, at this new extortion, quietly resigned the ring. Caderousse looked so closely at it that Andrea well knew that he was examining to see if all the edges were perfect.

“It is a false diamond,” said Caderousse.

“You are joking now,” replied Andrea.

“Do not be angry, we can try it.” Caderousse went to the window, touched the glass with it, and found it would cut.

“*Confiteor!*” said Caderousse, putting the diamond on his little finger; “I was mistaken; but those thieves of jewellers imitate so well that it is no longer worthwhile to rob a jeweller’s shop—it is another branch of industry paralyzed.”

“Have you finished?” said Andrea,—“do you want anything more?—will you have my waistcoat or my hat? Make free, now you have begun.”

"No; you are, after all, a good companion; I will not detain you, and will try to cure myself of my ambition."

"But take care the same thing does not happen to you in selling the diamond you feared with the gold."

"I shall not sell it—do not fear."

"Not at least till the day after tomorrow," thought the young man.

"Happy rogue," said Caderousse; "you are going to find your servants, your horses, your carriage, and your betrothed!"

"Yes," said Andrea.

"Well, I hope you will make a handsome wedding-present the day you marry Mademoiselle Danglars."

"I have already told you it is a fancy you have taken in your head."

"What fortune has she?"

"But I tell you——"

"A million?"

Andrea shrugged his shoulders.

"Let it be a million," said Caderousse; "you can never have so much as I wish you."

"Thank you," said the young man.

"Oh, I wish it you with all my heart!" added Caderousse with his hoarse laugh. "Stop, let me show you the way."

"It is not worthwhile."

"Yes, it is."

"Why?"

"Because there is a little secret, a precaution I thought it desirable to take, one of Huret & Fichet's locks, revised and improved by Gaspard Caderousse; I will manufacture you a similar one when you are a capitalist."

"Thank you," said Andrea; "I will let you know a week beforehand."

They parted. Caderousse remained on the landing until he had not only seen Andrea go down the three stories, but also cross the court. Then he returned hastily, shut his door carefully, and began to study, like a clever architect, the plan Andrea had left him.

"Dear Benedetto," said he, "I think he will not be sorry to inherit his fortune, and he who hastens the day when he can touch his five hundred thousand will

not be his worst friend.”

Chapter 82. The Burglary

The day following that on which the conversation we have related took place, the Count of Monte Cristo set out for Auteuil, accompanied by Ali and several attendants, and also taking with him some horses whose qualities he was desirous of ascertaining. He was induced to undertake this journey, of which the day before he had not even thought and which had not occurred to Andrea either, by the arrival of Bertuccio from Normandy with intelligence respecting the house and sloop. The house was ready, and the sloop which had arrived a week before lay at anchor in a small creek with her crew of six men, who had observed all the requisite formalities and were ready again to put to sea.

The count praised Bertuccio's zeal, and ordered him to prepare for a speedy departure, as his stay in France would not be prolonged more than a month.

"Now," said he, "I may require to go in one night from Paris to Tréport; let eight fresh horses be in readiness on the road, which will enable me to go fifty leagues in ten hours."

"Your highness had already expressed that wish," said Bertuccio, "and the horses are ready. I have bought them, and stationed them myself at the most desirable posts, that is, in villages, where no one generally stops."

"That's well," said Monte Cristo; "I remain here a day or two—arrange accordingly."

As Bertuccio was leaving the room to give the requisite orders, Baptistin opened the door: he held a letter on a silver waiter.

"What are you doing here?" asked the count, seeing him covered with dust; "I did not send for you, I think?"

Baptistin, without answering, approached the count, and presented the letter. "Important and urgent," said he.

The count opened the letter, and read:

"M. de Monte Cristo is apprised that this night a man will enter his house in the Champs-Élysées with the intention of carrying off some papers supposed to be in the secretaire in the dressing-room. The count's well-known courage will render unnecessary

the aid of the police, whose interference might seriously affect him who sends this advice. The count, by any opening from the bedroom, or by concealing himself in the dressing-room, would be able to defend his property himself. Many attendants or apparent precautions would prevent the villain from the attempt, and M. de Monte Cristo would lose the opportunity of discovering an enemy whom chance has revealed to him who now sends this warning to the count,—a warning he might not be able to send another time, if this first attempt should fail and another be made.””

The count’s first idea was that this was an artifice—a gross deception, to draw his attention from a minor danger in order to expose him to a greater. He was on the point of sending the letter to the commissary of police, notwithstanding the advice of his anonymous friend, or perhaps because of that advice, when suddenly the idea occurred to him that it might be some personal enemy, whom he alone should recognize and over whom, if such were the case, he alone would gain any advantage, as Fiesco¹⁷ had done over the Moor who would have killed him. We know the count’s vigorous and daring mind, denying anything to be impossible, with that energy which marks the great man.

From his past life, from his resolution to shrink from nothing, the count had acquired an inconceivable relish for the contests in which he had engaged, sometimes against nature, that is to say, against God, and sometimes against the world, that is, against the devil.

“They do not want my papers,” said Monte Cristo, “they want to kill me; they are no robbers, but assassins. I will not allow the prefect of police to interfere with my private affairs. I am rich enough, forsooth, to distribute his authority on this occasion.”

The count recalled Baptistin, who had left the room after delivering the letter.

“Return to Paris,” said he; “assemble the servants who remain there. I want all my household at Auteuil.”

“But will no one remain in the house, my lord?” asked Baptistin.

“Yes, the porter.”

“My lord will remember that the lodge is at a distance from the house.”

“Well?”

“The house might be stripped without his hearing the least noise.”

“By whom?”

“By thieves.”

“You are a fool, M. Baptistin. Thieves might strip the house—it would annoy me less than to be disobeyed.” Baptistin bowed.

40150m

“You understand me?” said the count. “Bring your comrades here, one and all; but let everything remain as usual, only close the shutters of the ground floor.”

“And those of the first floor?”

“You know they are never closed. Go!”

The count signified his intention of dining alone, and that no one but Ali should attend him. Having dined with his usual tranquillity and moderation, the count, making a signal to Ali to follow him, went out by the side-gate and on reaching the Bois de Boulogne turned, apparently without design towards Paris and at twilight; found himself opposite his house in the Champs-Élysées. All was dark; one solitary, feeble light was burning in the porter’s lodge, about forty paces distant from the house, as Baptistin had said.

Monte Cristo leaned against a tree, and with that scrutinizing glance which was so rarely deceived, looked up and down the avenue, examined the passers-by, and carefully looked down the neighboring streets, to see that no one was concealed. Ten minutes passed thus, and he was convinced that no one was watching him. He hastened to the side-door with Ali, entered hurriedly, and by the servants’ staircase, of which he had the key, gained his bedroom without opening or disarranging a single curtain, without even the porter having the slightest suspicion that the house, which he supposed empty, contained its chief occupant.

Arrived in his bedroom, the count motioned to Ali to stop; then he passed into the dressing-room, which he examined. Everything appeared as usual—the precious secretaire in its place, and the key in the secretaire. He double locked it, took the key, returned to the bedroom door, removed the double staple of the bolt, and went in. Meanwhile Ali had procured the arms the count required—namely, a short carbine and a pair of double-barrelled pistols, with which as sure an aim might be taken as with a single-barrelled one. Thus armed, the count held the lives of five men in his hands. It was about half-past nine.

The count and Ali ate in haste a crust of bread and drank a glass of Spanish wine; then Monte Cristo slipped aside one of the movable panels, which enabled him to see into the adjoining room. He had within his reach his pistols and carbine, and Ali, standing near him, held one of the small Arabian hatchets,

whose form has not varied since the Crusades. Through one of the windows of the bedroom, on a line with that in the dressing-room, the count could see into the street.

Two hours passed thus. It was intensely dark; still Ali, thanks to his wild nature, and the count, thanks doubtless to his long confinement, could distinguish in the darkness the slightest movement of the trees. The little light in the lodge had long been extinct. It might be expected that the attack, if indeed an attack was projected, would be made from the staircase of the ground floor, and not from a window; in Monte Cristo's opinion, the villains sought his life, not his money. It would be his bedroom they would attack, and they must reach it by the back staircase, or by the window in the dressing-room.

The clock of the Invalides struck a quarter to twelve; the west wind bore on its moistened gusts the doleful vibration of the three strokes.

40152m

As the last stroke died away, the count thought he heard a slight noise in the dressing-room; this first sound, or rather this first grinding, was followed by a second, then a third; at the fourth, the count knew what to expect. A firm and well-practised hand was engaged in cutting the four sides of a pane of glass with a diamond. The count felt his heart beat more rapidly.

Inured as men may be to danger, forewarned as they may be of peril, they understand, by the fluttering of the heart and the shuddering of the frame, the enormous difference between a dream and a reality, between the project and the execution. However, Monte Cristo only made a sign to apprise Ali, who, understanding that danger was approaching from the other side, drew nearer to his master. Monte Cristo was eager to ascertain the strength and number of his enemies.

The window whence the noise proceeded was opposite the opening by which the count could see into the dressing-room. He fixed his eyes on that window—he distinguished a shadow in the darkness; then one of the panes became quite opaque, as if a sheet of paper were stuck on the outside, then the square cracked without falling. Through the opening an arm was passed to find the fastening, then a second; the window turned on its hinges, and a man entered. He was alone.

“That's a daring rascal,” whispered the count.

At that moment Ali touched him slightly on the shoulder. He turned; Ali pointed to the window of the room in which they were, facing the street.

"I see!" said he, "there are two of them; one does the work while the other stands guard." He made a sign to Ali not to lose sight of the man in the street, and turned to the one in the dressing-room.

The glass-cutter had entered, and was feeling his way, his arms stretched out before him. At last he appeared to have made himself familiar with his surroundings. There were two doors; he bolted them both.

When he drew near to the bedroom door, Monte Cristo expected that he was coming in, and raised one of his pistols; but he simply heard the sound of the bolts sliding in their copper rings. It was only a precaution. The nocturnal visitor, ignorant of the fact that the count had removed the staples, might now think himself at home, and pursue his purpose with full security. Alone and free to act as he wished, the man then drew from his pocket something which the count could not discern, placed it on a stand, then went straight to the secretaire, felt the lock, and contrary to his expectation found that the key was missing. But the glass-cutter was a prudent man who had provided for all emergencies. The count soon heard the rattling of a bunch of skeleton keys, such as the locksmith brings when called to force a lock, and which thieves call nightingales, doubtless from the music of their nightly song when they grind against the bolt.

"Ah, ha," whispered Monte Cristo with a smile of disappointment, "he is only a thief."

But the man in the dark could not find the right key. He reached the instrument he had placed on the stand, touched a spring, and immediately a pale light, just bright enough to render objects distinct, was reflected on his hands and countenance.

"By heavens," exclaimed Monte Cristo, starting back, "it is——"

Ali raised his hatchet.

"Don't stir," whispered Monte Cristo, "and put down your hatchet; we shall require no arms."

40154m

Then he added some words in a low tone, for the exclamation which surprise had drawn from the count, faint as it had been, had startled the man who remained in the pose of the old knife-grinder.

It was an order the count had just given, for immediately Ali went noiselessly, and returned, bearing a black dress and a three-cornered hat. Meanwhile Monte Cristo had rapidly taken off his greatcoat, waistcoat, and shirt, and one might distinguish by the glimmering through the open panel that he wore a pliant tunic

of steel mail, of which the last in France, where daggers are no longer dreaded, was worn by King Louis XVI., who feared the dagger at his breast, and whose head was cleft with a hatchet. The tunic soon disappeared under a long cassock, as did his hair under a priest's wig; the three-cornered hat over this effectually transformed the count into an abbé.

The man, hearing nothing more, stood erect, and while Monte Cristo was completing his disguise had advanced straight to the secretaire, whose lock was beginning to crack under his nightingale.

"Try again," whispered the count, who depended on the secret spring, which was unknown to the picklock, clever as he might be—"try again, you have a few minutes' work there."

And he advanced to the window. The man whom he had seen seated on a fence had got down, and was still pacing the street; but, strange as it appeared, he cared not for those who might pass from the avenue of the Champs-Élysées or by the Faubourg Saint-Honoré; his attention was engrossed with what was passing at the count's, and his only aim appeared to be to discern every movement in the dressing-room.

Monte Cristo suddenly struck his finger on his forehead and a smile passed over his lips; then drawing near to Ali, he whispered:

"Remain here, concealed in the dark, and whatever noise you hear, whatever passes, only come in or show yourself if I call you."

Ali bowed in token of strict obedience. Monte Cristo then drew a lighted taper from a closet, and when the thief was deeply engaged with his lock, silently opened the door, taking care that the light should shine directly on his face. The door opened so quietly that the thief heard no sound; but, to his astonishment, the room was suddenly illuminated. He turned.

"Ah, good-evening, my dear M. Caderousse," said Monte Cristo; "what are you doing here, at such an hour?"

40156m

"The Abbé Busoni!" exclaimed Caderousse; and, not knowing how this strange apparition could have entered when he had bolted the doors, he let fall his bunch of keys, and remained motionless and stupefied. The count placed himself between Caderousse and the window, thus cutting off from the thief his only chance of retreat.

"The Abbé Busoni!" repeated Caderousse, fixing his haggard gaze on the count.

"Yes, undoubtedly, the Abbé Busoni himself," replied Monte Cristo. "And I am very glad you recognize me, dear M. Caderousse; it proves you have a good memory, for it must be about ten years since we last met."

This calmness of Busoni, combined with his irony and boldness, staggered Caderousse.

"The abbé, the abbé!" murmured he, clenching his fists, and his teeth chattering.

"So you would rob the Count of Monte Cristo?" continued the false abbé.

"Reverend sir," murmured Caderousse, seeking to regain the window, which the count pitilessly blocked—"reverend sir, I don't know—believe me—I take my oath——"

"A pane of glass out," continued the count, "a dark lantern, a bunch of false keys, a secretaire half forced—it is tolerably evident——"

Caderousse was choking; he looked around for some corner to hide in, some way of escape.

"Come, come," continued the count, "I see you are still the same,—an assassin."

"Reverend sir, since you know everything, you know it was not I—it was La Carconte; that was proved at the trial, since I was only condemned to the galleys."

"Is your time, then, expired, since I find you in a fair way to return there?"

"No, reverend sir; I have been liberated by someone."

"That someone has done society a great kindness."

"Ah," said Caderousse, "I had promised——"

"And you are breaking your promise!" interrupted Monte Cristo.

"Alas, yes!" said Caderousse very uneasily.

"A bad relapse, that will lead you, if I mistake not, to the Place de Grève. So much the worse, so much the worse—*diavolo!* as they say in my country."

"Reverend sir, I am impelled——"

"Every criminal says the same thing."

"Poverty——"

"Pshaw!" said Busoni disdainfully; "poverty may make a man beg, steal a loaf of bread at a baker's door, but not cause him to open a secretaire in a house supposed to be inhabited. And when the jeweller Johannes had just paid you 45,000 francs for the diamond I had given you, and you killed him to get the

diamond and the money both, was that also poverty?"

"Pardon, reverend sir," said Caderousse; "you have saved my life once, save me again!"

"That is but poor encouragement."

"Are you alone, reverend sir, or have you there soldiers ready to seize me?"

"I am alone," said the abbé, "and I will again have pity on you, and will let you escape, at the risk of the fresh miseries my weakness may lead to, if you tell me the truth."

"Ah, reverend sir," cried Caderousse, clasping his hands, and drawing nearer to Monte Cristo, "I may indeed say you are my deliverer!"

"You mean to say you have been freed from confinement?"

"Yes, that is true, reverend sir."

"Who was your liberator?"

"An Englishman."

"What was his name?"

"Lord Wilmore."

"I know him; I shall know if you lie."

"Ah, reverend sir, I tell you the simple truth."

"Was this Englishman protecting you?"

"No, not me, but a young Corsican, my companion."

"What was this young Corsican's name?"

"Benedetto."

"Is that his Christian name?"

"He had no other; he was a foundling."

"Then this young man escaped with you?"

"He did."

"In what way?"

"We were working at Saint-Mandrier, near Toulon. Do you know Saint-Mandrier?"

"I do."

"In the hour of rest, between noon and one o'clock——"

"Galley-slaves having a nap after dinner! We may well pity the poor fellows!" said the abbé.

“Nay,” said Caderousse, “one can’t always work—one is not a dog.”

“So much the better for the dogs,” said Monte Cristo.

“While the rest slept, then, we went away a short distance; we severed our fetters with a file the Englishman had given us, and swam away.”

“And what is become of this Benedetto?”

“I don’t know.”

“You ought to know.”

“No, in truth; we parted at Hyères.” And, to give more weight to his protestation, Caderousse advanced another step towards the abbé, who remained motionless in his place, as calm as ever, and pursuing his interrogation.

“You lie,” said the Abbé Busoni, with a tone of irresistible authority.

“Reverend sir!”

“You lie! This man is still your friend, and you, perhaps, make use of him as your accomplice.”

40160m

“Oh, reverend sir!”

“Since you left Toulon what have you lived on? Answer me!”

“On what I could get.”

“You lie,” repeated the abbé a third time, with a still more imperative tone. Caderousse, terrified, looked at the count. “You have lived on the money he has given you.”

“True,” said Caderousse; “Benedetto has become the son of a great lord.”

“How can he be the son of a great lord?”

“A natural son.”

“And what is that great lord’s name?”

“The Count of Monte Cristo, the very same in whose house we are.”

“Benedetto the count’s son?” replied Monte Cristo, astonished in his turn.

“Well, I should think so, since the count has found him a false father—since the count gives him four thousand francs a month, and leaves him 500,000 francs in his will.”

“Ah, yes,” said the factitious abbé, who began to understand; “and what name does the young man bear meanwhile?”

“Andrea Cavalcanti.”

"Is it, then, that young man whom my friend the Count of Monte Cristo has received into his house, and who is going to marry Mademoiselle Danglars?"

"Exactly."

"And you suffer that, you wretch!—you, who know his life and his crime?"

"Why should I stand in a comrade's way?" said Caderousse.

"You are right; it is not you who should apprise M. Danglars, it is I."

"Do not do so, reverend sir."

"Why not?"

"Because you would bring us to ruin."

"And you think that to save such villains as you I will become an abettor of their plot, an accomplice in their crimes?"

"Reverend sir," said Caderousse, drawing still nearer.

"I will expose all."

"To whom?"

"To M. Danglars."

"By Heaven!" cried Caderousse, drawing from his waistcoat an open knife, and striking the count in the breast, "you shall disclose nothing, reverend sir!"

To Caderousse's great astonishment, the knife, instead of piercing the count's breast, flew back blunted. At the same moment the count seized with his left hand the assassin's wrist, and wrung it with such strength that the knife fell from his stiffened fingers, and Caderousse uttered a cry of pain. But the count, disregarding his cry, continued to wring the bandit's wrist, until, his arm being dislocated, he fell first on his knees, then flat on the floor.

The count then placed his foot on his head, saying, "I know not what restrains me from crushing thy skull, rascal."

"Ah, mercy—mercy!" cried Caderousse.

The count withdrew his foot.

40162m

"Rise!" said he. Caderousse rose.

"What a wrist you have, reverend sir!" said Caderousse, stroking his arm, all bruised by the fleshy pincers which had held it; "what a wrist!"

"Silence! God gives me strength to overcome a wild beast like you; in the name of that God I act,—remember that, wretch,—and to spare thee at this moment is still serving him."

“Oh!” said Caderousse, groaning with pain.

“Take this pen and paper, and write what I dictate.”

“I don’t know how to write, reverend sir.”

“You lie! Take this pen, and write!”

Caderousse, awed by the superior power of the abbé, sat down and wrote:

“Sir,—The man whom you are receiving at your house, and to whom you intend to marry your daughter, is a felon who escaped with me from confinement at Toulon. He was No. 59, and I No. 58. He was called Benedetto, but he is ignorant of his real name, having never known his parents.”

“Sign it!” continued the count.

“But would you ruin me?”

“If I sought your ruin, fool, I should drag you to the first guard-house; besides, when that note is delivered, in all probability you will have no more to fear. Sign it, then!”

Caderousse signed it.

“The address, ‘To monsieur the Baron Danglars, banker, Rue de la Chaussée d’Antin.’”

Caderousse wrote the address. The abbé took the note.

“Now,” said he, “that suffices—begone!”

“Which way?”

“The way you came.”

“You wish me to get out at that window?”

“You got in very well.”

“Oh, you have some design against me, reverend sir.”

“Idiot! what design can I have?”

“Why, then, not let me out by the door?”

“What would be the advantage of waking the porter?”

“Ah, reverend sir, tell me, do you wish me dead?”

“I wish what God wills.”

“But swear that you will not strike me as I go down.”

“Cowardly fool!”

“What do you intend doing with me?”

“I ask you what can I do? I have tried to make you a happy man, and you have turned out a murderer.”

“Oh, monsieur,” said Caderousse, “make one more attempt—try me once more!”

“I will,” said the count. “Listen—you know if I may be relied on.”

“Yes,” said Caderousse.

“If you arrive safely at home——”

“What have I to fear, except from you?”

“If you reach your home safely, leave Paris, leave France, and wherever you may be, so long as you conduct yourself well, I will send you a small annuity; for, if you return home safely, then——”

“Then?” asked Caderousse, shuddering.

40164m

“Then I shall believe God has forgiven you, and I will forgive you too.”

“As true as I am a Christian,” stammered Caderousse, “you will make me die of fright!”

“Now begone,” said the count, pointing to the window.

Caderousse, scarcely yet relying on this promise, put his legs out of the window and stood on the ladder.

“Now go down,” said the abbé, folding his arms. Understanding he had nothing more to fear from him, Caderousse began to go down. Then the count brought the taper to the window, that it might be seen in the Champs-Élysées that a man was getting out of the window while another held a light.

“What are you doing, reverend sir? Suppose a watchman should pass?” And he blew out the light. He then descended, but it was only when he felt his foot touch the ground that he was satisfied of his safety.

Monte Cristo returned to his bedroom, and, glancing rapidly from the garden to the street, he saw first Caderousse, who after walking to the end of the garden, fixed his ladder against the wall at a different part from where he came in. The count then looking over into the street, saw the man who appeared to be waiting run in the same direction, and place himself against the angle of the wall where Caderousse would come over. Caderousse climbed the ladder slowly, and looked over the coping to see if the street was quiet. No one could be seen or heard. The clock of the Invalides struck one. Then Caderousse sat astride the coping, and

drawing up his ladder passed it over the wall; then he began to descend, or rather to slide down by the two stanchions, which he did with an ease which proved how accustomed he was to the exercise. But, once started, he could not stop. In vain did he see a man start from the shadow when he was halfway down—in vain did he see an arm raised as he touched the ground.

Before he could defend himself that arm struck him so violently in the back that he let go the ladder, crying, “Help!” A second blow struck him almost immediately in the side, and he fell, calling, “Help, murder!” Then, as he rolled on the ground, his adversary seized him by the hair, and struck him a third blow in the chest.

This time Caderousse endeavored to call again, but he could only utter a groan, and he shuddered as the blood flowed from his three wounds. The assassin, finding that he no longer cried out, lifted his head up by the hair; his eyes were closed, and the mouth was distorted. The murderer, supposing him dead, let fall his head and disappeared.

Then Caderousse, feeling that he was leaving him, raised himself on his elbow, and with a dying voice cried with great effort:

“Murder! I am dying! Help, reverend sir,—help!”

This mournful appeal pierced the darkness. The door of the back-staircase opened, then the side-gate of the garden, and Ali and his master were on the spot with lights.

Chapter 83. The Hand of God

Caderousse continued to call piteously, “Help, reverend sir, help!”

“What is the matter?” asked Monte Cristo.

“Help,” cried Caderousse; “I am murdered!”

“We are here;—take courage.”

“Ah, it’s all over! You are come too late—you are come to see me die. What blows, what blood!”

He fainted. Ali and his master conveyed the wounded man into a room. Monte Cristo motioned to Ali to undress him, and he then examined his dreadful wounds.

“My God!” he exclaimed, “thy vengeance is sometimes delayed, but only that it may fall the more effectually.” Ali looked at his master for further instructions. “Bring here immediately the king’s attorney, M. de Villefort, who lives in the Faubourg Saint-Honoré. As you pass the lodge, wake the porter, and send him for a surgeon.”

Ali obeyed, leaving the abbé alone with Caderousse, who had not yet revived.

When the wretched man again opened his eyes, the count looked at him with a mournful expression of pity, and his lips moved as if in prayer. “A surgeon, reverend sir—a surgeon!” said Caderousse.

“I have sent for one,” replied the abbé.

“I know he cannot save my life, but he may strengthen me to give my evidence.”

“Against whom?”

“Against my murderer.”

“Did you recognize him?”

“Yes; it was Benedetto.”

“The young Corsican?”

“Himself.”

“Your comrade?”

“Yes. After giving me the plan of this house, doubtless hoping I should kill the count and he thus become his heir, or that the count would kill me and I should be out of his way, he waylaid me, and has murdered me.”

“I have also sent for the procureur.”

“He will not come in time; I feel my life fast ebbing.”

“Wait a moment,” said Monte Cristo. He left the room, and returned in five minutes with a phial. The dying man’s eyes were all the time riveted on the door, through which he hoped succor would arrive.

“Hasten, reverend sir, hasten! I shall faint again!” Monte Cristo approached, and dropped on his purple lips three or four drops of the contents of the phial. Caderousse drew a deep breath. “Oh,” said he, “that is life to me; more, more!”

“Two drops more would kill you,” replied the abbé.

“Oh, send for someone to whom I can denounce the wretch!”

“Shall I write your deposition? You can sign it.”

“Yes, yes,” said Caderousse; and his eyes glistened at the thought of this posthumous revenge. Monte Cristo wrote:

“I die, murdered by the Corsican Benedetto, my comrade in the galleys at Toulon, No. 59.”

“Quick, quick!” said Caderousse, “or I shall be unable to sign it.”

Monte Cristo gave the pen to Caderousse, who collected all his strength, signed it, and fell back on his bed, saying:

“You will relate all the rest, reverend sir; you will say he calls himself Andrea Cavalcanti. He lodges at the Hôtel des Princes. Oh, I am dying!” He again fainted. The abbé made him smell the contents of the phial, and he again opened his eyes. His desire for revenge had not forsaken him.

“Ah, you will tell all I have said, will you not, reverend sir?”

“Yes, and much more.”

“What more will you say?”

“I will say he had doubtless given you the plan of this house, in the hope the count would kill you. I will say, likewise, he had apprised the count, by a note, of your intention, and, the count being absent, I read the note and sat up to await you.”

“And he will be guillotined, will be not?” said Caderousse. “Promise me that, and I will die with that hope.”

"I will say," continued the count, "that he followed and watched you the whole time, and when he saw you leave the house, ran to the angle of the wall to conceal himself."

"Did you see all that?"

"Remember my words: 'If you return home safely, I shall believe God has forgiven you, and I will forgive you also.'"

"And you did not warn me!" cried Caderousse, raising himself on his elbows. "You knew I should be killed on leaving this house, and did not warn me!"

40168m

"No; for I saw God's justice placed in the hands of Benedetto, and should have thought it sacrilege to oppose the designs of Providence."

"God's justice! Speak not of it, reverend sir. If God were just, you know how many would be punished who now escape."

"Patience," said the abbé, in a tone which made the dying man shudder; "have patience!"

Caderousse looked at him with amazement.

"Besides," said the abbé, "God is merciful to all, as he has been to you; he is first a father, then a judge."

"Do you then believe in God?" said Caderousse.

"Had I been so unhappy as not to believe in him until now," said Monte Cristo, "I must believe on seeing you."

Caderousse raised his clenched hands towards heaven.

"Listen," said the abbé, extending his hand over the wounded man, as if to command him to believe; "this is what the God in whom, on your death-bed, you refuse to believe, has done for you—he gave you health, strength, regular employment, even friends—a life, in fact, which a man might enjoy with a calm conscience. Instead of improving these gifts, rarely granted so abundantly, this has been your course—you have given yourself up to sloth and drunkenness, and in a fit of intoxication have ruined your best friend."

"Help!" cried Caderousse; "I require a surgeon, not a priest; perhaps I am not mortally wounded—I may not die; perhaps they can yet save my life."

"Your wounds are so far mortal that, without the three drops I gave you, you would now be dead. Listen, then."

"Ah," murmured Caderousse, "what a strange priest you are; you drive the dying to despair, instead of consoling them."

“Listen,” continued the abbé. “When you had betrayed your friend, God began not to strike, but to warn you. Poverty overtook you. You had already passed half your life in coveting that which you might have honorably acquired; and already you contemplated crime under the excuse of want, when God worked a miracle in your behalf, sending you, by my hands, a fortune—brilliant, indeed, for you, who had never possessed any. But this unexpected, un hoped-for, unheard-of fortune sufficed you no longer when you once possessed it; you wished to double it, and how?—by a murder! You succeeded, and then God snatched it from you, and brought you to justice.”

“It was not I who wished to kill the Jew,” said Caderousse; “it was La Carconte.”

“Yes,” said Monte Cristo, “and God,—I cannot say in justice, for his justice would have slain you,—but God, in his mercy, spared your life.”

“*Pardieu!* to transport me for life, how merciful!”

“You thought it a mercy then, miserable wretch! The coward who feared death rejoiced at perpetual disgrace; for like all galley-slaves, you said, ‘I may escape from prison, I cannot from the grave.’ And you said truly; the way was opened for you unexpectedly. An Englishman visited Toulon, who had vowed to rescue two men from infamy, and his choice fell on you and your companion. You received a second fortune, money and tranquillity were restored to you, and you, who had been condemned to a felon’s life, might live as other men. Then, wretched creature, then you tempted God a third time. ‘I have not enough,’ you said, when you had more than you before possessed, and you committed a third crime, without reason, without excuse. God is wearied; he has punished you.”

Caderousse was fast sinking. “Give me drink,” said he: “I thirst—I burn!” Monte Cristo gave him a glass of water. “And yet that villain, Benedetto, will escape!”

“No one, I tell you, will escape; Benedetto will be punished.”

“Then, you, too, will be punished, for you did not do your duty as a priest—you should have prevented Benedetto from killing me.”

“I?” said the count, with a smile which petrified the dying man, “when you had just broken your knife against the coat of mail which protected my breast! Yet perhaps if I had found you humble and penitent, I might have prevented Benedetto from killing you; but I found you proud and blood-thirsty, and I left you in the hands of God.”

“I do not believe there is a God,” howled Caderousse; “you do not believe it; you lie—you lie!”

“Silence,” said the abbé; “you will force the last drop of blood from your veins. What! you do not believe in God when he is striking you dead? you will not believe in him, who requires but a prayer, a word, a tear, and he will forgive? God, who might have directed the assassin’s dagger so as to end your career in a moment, has given you this quarter of an hour for repentance. Reflect, then, wretched man, and repent.”

“No,” said Caderousse, “no; I will not repent. There is no God; there is no Providence—all comes by chance.”

“There is a Providence; there is a God,” said Monte Cristo, “of whom you are a striking proof, as you lie in utter despair, denying him, while I stand before you, rich, happy, safe and entreating that God in whom you endeavor not to believe, while in your heart you still believe in him.”

“But who are you, then?” asked Caderousse, fixing his dying eyes on the count.

“Look well at me!” said Monte Cristo, putting the light near his face.

“Well, the abbé—the Abbé Busoni.” Monte Cristo took off the wig which disfigured him, and let fall his black hair, which added so much to the beauty of his pallid features.

“Oh?” said Caderousse, thunderstruck, “but for that black hair, I should say you were the Englishman, Lord Wilmore.”

“I am neither the Abbé Busoni nor Lord Wilmore,” said Monte Cristo; “think again,—do you not recollect me?”

There was a magic effect in the count’s words, which once more revived the exhausted powers of the miserable man.

“Yes, indeed,” said he; “I think I have seen you and known you formerly.”

“Yes, Caderousse, you have seen me; you knew me once.”

“Who, then, are you? and why, if you knew me, do you let me die?”

“Because nothing can save you; your wounds are mortal. Had it been possible to save you, I should have considered it another proof of God’s mercy, and I would again have endeavored to restore you, I swear by my father’s tomb.”

“By your father’s tomb!” said Caderousse, supported by a supernatural power, and half-raising himself to see more distinctly the man who had just taken the oath which all men hold sacred; “who, then, are you?”

The count had watched the approach of death. He knew this was the last struggle. He approached the dying man, and, leaning over him with a calm and melancholy look, he whispered, “I am—I am——”

And his almost closed lips uttered a name so low that the count himself appeared afraid to hear it. Caderousse, who had raised himself on his knees, and stretched out his arm, tried to draw back, then clasping his hands, and raising them with a desperate effort, “Oh, my God, my God!” said he, “pardon me for having denied thee; thou dost exist, thou art indeed man’s father in heaven, and his judge on earth. My God, my Lord, I have long despised thee! Pardon me, my God; receive me, Oh, my Lord!”

Caderousse sighed deeply, and fell back with a groan. The blood no longer flowed from his wounds. He was dead.

“*One!*” said the count mysteriously, his eyes fixed on the corpse, disfigured by so awful a death.

Ten minutes afterwards the surgeon and the procureur arrived, the one accompanied by the porter, the other by Ali, and were received by the Abbé Busoni, who was praying by the side of the corpse.

Chapter 84. Beauchamp

The daring attempt to rob the count was the topic of conversation throughout Paris for the next fortnight. The dying man had signed a deposition declaring Benedetto to be the assassin. The police had orders to make the strictest search for the murderer. Caderousse's knife, dark lantern, bunch of keys, and clothing, excepting the waistcoat, which could not be found, were deposited at the registry; the corpse was conveyed to the morgue. The count told everyone that this adventure had happened during his absence at Auteuil, and that he only knew what was related by the Abbé Busoni, who that evening, by mere chance, had requested to pass the night in his house, to examine some valuable books in his library.

Bertuccio alone turned pale whenever Benedetto's name was mentioned in his presence, but there was no reason why anyone should notice his doing so.

Villefort, being called on to prove the crime, was preparing his brief with the same ardor that he was accustomed to exercise when required to speak in criminal cases.

But three weeks had already passed, and the most diligent search had been unsuccessful; the attempted robbery and the murder of the robber by his comrade were almost forgotten in anticipation of the approaching marriage of Mademoiselle Danglars to the Count Andrea Cavalcanti. It was expected that this wedding would shortly take place, as the young man was received at the banker's as the betrothed.

Letters had been despatched to M. Cavalcanti, as the count's father, who highly approved of the union, regretted his inability to leave Parma at that time, and promised a wedding gift of a hundred and fifty thousand livres. It was agreed that the three millions should be intrusted to Danglars to invest; some persons had warned the young man of the circumstances of his future father-in-law, who had of late sustained repeated losses; but with sublime disinterestedness and confidence the young man refused to listen, or to express a single doubt to the baron.

The baron adored Count Andrea Cavalcanti; not so Mademoiselle Eugénie Danglars. With an instinctive hatred of matrimony, she suffered Andrea's

attentions in order to get rid of Morcerf; but when Andrea urged his suit, she betrayed an entire dislike to him. The baron might possibly have perceived it, but, attributing it to a caprice, feigned ignorance.

The delay demanded by Beauchamp had nearly expired. Morcerf appreciated the advice of Monte Cristo to let things die away of their own accord. No one had taken up the remark about the general, and no one had recognized in the officer who betrayed the castle of Yanina the noble count in the House of Peers.

Albert, however, felt no less insulted; the few lines which had irritated him were certainly intended as an insult. Besides, the manner in which Beauchamp had closed the conference left a bitter recollection in his heart. He cherished the thought of the duel, hoping to conceal its true cause even from his seconds. Beauchamp had not been seen since the day he visited Albert, and those of whom the latter inquired always told him he was out on a journey which would detain him some days. Where he was no one knew.

One morning Albert was awakened by his valet de chambre, who announced Beauchamp. Albert rubbed his eyes, ordered his servant to introduce him into the small smoking-room on the ground floor, dressed himself quickly, and went down.

He found Beauchamp pacing the room; on perceiving him Beauchamp stopped.

“Your arrival here, without waiting my visit at your house today, looks well, sir,” said Albert. “Tell me, may I shake hands with you, saying, ‘Beauchamp, acknowledge you have injured me, and retain my friendship,’ or must I simply propose to you a choice of arms?”

“Albert,” said Beauchamp, with a look of sorrow which stupefied the young man, “let us first sit down and talk.”

“Rather, sir, before we sit down, I must demand your answer.”

“Albert,” said the journalist, “these are questions which it is difficult to answer.”

“I will facilitate it by repeating the question, ‘Will you, or will you not, retract?’”

“Morcerf, it is not enough to answer ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to questions which concern the honor, the social interest, and the life of such a man as Lieutenant-général the Count of Morcerf, peer of France.”

“What must then be done?”

"What I have done, Albert. I reasoned thus—money, time, and fatigue are nothing compared with the reputation and interests of a whole family; probabilities will not suffice, only facts will justify a deadly combat with a friend. If I strike with the sword, or discharge the contents of a pistol at man with whom, for three years, I have been on terms of intimacy, I must, at least, know why I do so; I must meet him with a heart at ease, and that quiet conscience which a man needs when his own arm must save his life."

"Well," said Morcerf, impatiently, "what does all this mean?"

"It means that I have just returned from Yanina."

"From Yanina?"

"Yes."

"Impossible!"

"Here is my passport; examine the visa—Geneva, Milan, Venice, Trieste, Delvino, Yanina. Will you believe the government of a republic, a kingdom, and an empire?" Albert cast his eyes on the passport, then raised them in astonishment to Beauchamp.

"You have been to Yanina?" said he.

"Albert, had you been a stranger, a foreigner, a simple lord, like that Englishman who came to demand satisfaction three or four months since, and whom I killed to get rid of, I should not have taken this trouble; but I thought this mark of consideration due to you. I took a week to go, another to return, four days of quarantine, and forty-eight hours to stay there; that makes three weeks. I returned last night, and here I am."

"What circumlocution! How long you are before you tell me what I most wish to know?"

"Because, in truth, Albert——"

"You hesitate?"

"Yes,—I fear."

"You fear to acknowledge that your correspondent has deceived you? Oh, no self-love, Beauchamp. Acknowledge it, Beauchamp; your courage cannot be doubted."

"Not so," murmured the journalist; "on the contrary——"

Albert turned frightfully pale; he endeavored to speak, but the words died on his lips.

"My friend," said Beauchamp, in the most affectionate tone, "I should gladly

make an apology; but, alas!——”

“But what?”

“The paragraph was correct, my friend.”

“What? That French officer——”

“Yes.”

“Fernand?”

“Yes.”

“The traitor who surrendered the castle of the man in whose service he was
_____”

“Pardon me, my friend, that man was your father!”

Albert advanced furiously towards Beauchamp, but the latter restrained him more by a mild look than by his extended hand.

“My friend,” said he, “here is a proof of it.”

40176m

Albert opened the paper, it was an attestation of four notable inhabitants of Yanina, proving that Colonel Fernand Mondego, in the service of Ali Tepelini, had surrendered the castle for two million crowns. The signatures were perfectly legal. Albert tottered and fell overpowered in a chair. It could no longer be doubted; the family name was fully given. After a moment's mournful silence, his heart overflowed, and he gave way to a flood of tears. Beauchamp, who had watched with sincere pity the young man's paroxysm of grief, approached him.

“Now, Albert,” said he, “you understand me—do you not? I wished to see all, and to judge of everything for myself, hoping the explanation would be in your father's favor, and that I might do him justice. But, on the contrary, the particulars which are given prove that Fernand Mondego, raised by Ali Pasha to the rank of governor-general, is no other than Count Fernand of Morcerf; then, recollecting the honor you had done me, in admitting me to your friendship, I hastened to you.”

Albert, still extended on the chair, covered his face with both hands, as if to prevent the light from reaching him.

“I hastened to you,” continued Beauchamp, “to tell you, Albert, that in this changing age, the faults of a father cannot revert upon his children. Few have passed through this revolutionary period, in the midst of which we were born, without some stain of infamy or blood to soil the uniform of the soldier, or the gown of the magistrate. Now I have these proofs, Albert, and I am in your

confidence, no human power can force me to a duel which your own conscience would reproach you with as criminal, but I come to offer you what you can no longer demand of me. Do you wish these proofs, these attestations, which I alone possess, to be destroyed? Do you wish this frightful secret to remain with us? Confided to me, it shall never escape my lips; say, Albert, my friend, do you wish it?"

Albert threw himself on Beauchamp's neck.

"Ah, noble fellow!" cried he.

"Take these," said Beauchamp, presenting the papers to Albert.

Albert seized them with a convulsive hand, tore them in pieces, and trembling lest the least vestige should escape and one day appear to confront him, he approached the wax-light, always kept burning for cigars, and burned every fragment.

"Dear, excellent friend," murmured Albert, still burning the papers.

"Let all be forgotten as a sorrowful dream," said Beauchamp; "let it vanish as the last sparks from the blackened paper, and disappear as the smoke from those silent ashes."

"Yes, yes," said Albert, "and may there remain only the eternal friendship which I promised to my deliverer, which shall be transmitted to our children's children, and shall always remind me that I owe my life and the honor of my name to you,—for had this been known, oh, Beauchamp, I should have destroyed myself; or,—no, my poor mother! I could not have killed her by the same blow,—I should have fled from my country."

"Dear Albert," said Beauchamp. But this sudden and factitious joy soon forsook the young man, and was succeeded by a still greater grief.

"Well," said Beauchamp, "what still oppresses you, my friend?"

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"I am broken-hearted," said Albert. "Listen, Beauchamp! I cannot thus, in a moment relinquish the respect, the confidence, and pride with which a father's untarnished name inspires a son. Oh, Beauchamp, Beauchamp, how shall I now approach mine? Shall I draw back my forehead from his embrace, or withhold my hand from his? I am the most wretched of men. Ah, my mother, my poor mother!" said Albert, gazing through his tears at his mother's portrait; "if you know this, how much must you suffer!"

"Come," said Beauchamp, taking both his hands, "take courage, my friend."

"But how came that first note to be inserted in your journal? Some unknown

enemy—an invisible foe—has done this.”

“The more must you fortify yourself, Albert. Let no trace of emotion be visible on your countenance, bear your grief as the cloud bears within it ruin and death—a fatal secret, known only when the storm bursts. Go, my friend, reserve your strength for the moment when the crash shall come.”

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“You think, then, all is not over yet?” said Albert, horror-stricken.

“I think nothing, my friend; but all things are possible. By the way——”

“What?” said Albert, seeing that Beauchamp hesitated.

“Are you going to marry Mademoiselle Danglars?”

“Why do you ask me now?”

“Because the rupture or fulfilment of this engagement is connected with the person of whom we were speaking.”

“How?” said Albert, whose brow reddened; “you think M. Danglars——”

“I ask you only how your engagement stands? Pray put no construction on my words I do not mean they should convey, and give them no undue weight.”

“No.” said Albert, “the engagement is broken off.”

“Well,” said Beauchamp. Then, seeing the young man was about to relapse into melancholy, “Let us go out, Albert,” said he; “a ride in the wood in the phaeton, or on horseback, will refresh you; we will then return to breakfast, and you shall attend to your affairs, and I to mine.”

“Willingly,” said Albert; “but let us walk. I think a little exertion would do me good.”

The two friends walked out on the fortress. When they arrived at the Madeleine:

“Since we are out,” said Beauchamp, “let us call on M. de Monte Cristo; he is admirably adapted to revive one’s spirits, because he never interrogates, and in my opinion those who ask no questions are the best comforters.”

“Gladly,” said Albert; “let us call—I love him.”

Chapter 85. The Journey

Monte Cristo uttered a joyful exclamation on seeing the young men together. “Ah, ha!” said he, “I hope all is over, explained and settled.”

“Yes,” said Beauchamp; “the absurd reports have died away, and should they be renewed, I would be the first to oppose them; so let us speak no more of it.”

“Albert will tell you,” replied the count “that I gave him the same advice. Look,” added he. “I am finishing the most execrable morning’s work.”

“What is it?” said Albert; “arranging your papers, apparently.”

“My papers, thank God, no,—my papers are all in capital order, because I have none; but M. Cavalcanti’s.”

“M. Cavalcanti’s?” asked Beauchamp.

“Yes; do you not know that this is a young man whom the count is introducing?” said Morcerf.

“Let us not misunderstand each other,” replied Monte Cristo; “I introduce no one, and certainly not M. Cavalcanti.”

“And who,” said Albert with a forced smile, “is to marry Mademoiselle Danglars instead of me, which grieves me cruelly.”

“What? Cavalcanti is going to marry Mademoiselle Danglars?” asked Beauchamp.

“Certainly! do you come from the end of the world?” said Monte Cristo; “you, a journalist, the husband of renown? It is the talk of all Paris.”

“And you, count, have made this match?” asked Beauchamp.

“I? Silence, purveyor of gossip, do not spread that report. I make a match? No, you do not know me; I have done all in my power to oppose it.”

“Ah, I understand,” said Beauchamp, “on our friend Albert’s account.”

“On my account?” said the young man; “oh, no, indeed, the count will do me the justice to assert that I have, on the contrary, always entreated him to break off my engagement, and happily it is ended. The count pretends I have not him to thank;—so be it—I will erect an altar *Deo ignoto*.”

“Listen,” said Monte Cristo; “I have had little to do with it, for I am at

variance both with the father-in-law and the young man; there is only Mademoiselle Eugénie, who appears but little charmed with the thoughts of matrimony, and who, seeing how little I was disposed to persuade her to renounce her dear liberty, retains any affection for me.”

“And do you say this wedding is at hand?”

“Oh, yes, in spite of all I could say. I do not know the young man; he is said to be of good family and rich, but I never trust to vague assertions. I have warned M. Danglars of it till I am tired, but he is fascinated with his Luccanese. I have even informed him of a circumstance I consider very serious; the young man was either charmed by his nurse, stolen by gypsies, or lost by his tutor, I scarcely know which. But I do know his father lost sight of him for more than ten years; what he did during these ten years, God only knows. Well, all that was useless. They have commissioned me to write to the major to demand papers, and here they are. I send them, but like Pilate—washing my hands.”

“And what does Mademoiselle d’Armilly say to you for robbing her of her pupil?”

“Oh, well, I don’t know; but I understand that she is going to Italy. Madame Danglars asked me for letters of recommendation for the *impresari*; I gave her a few lines for the director of the Valle Theatre, who is under some obligation to me. But what is the matter, Albert? you look dull; are you, after all, unconsciously in love with Mademoiselle Eugénie?”

“I am not aware of it,” said Albert, smiling sorrowfully. Beauchamp turned to look at some paintings.

“But,” continued Monte Cristo, “you are not in your usual spirits?”

“I have a dreadful headache,” said Albert.

“Well, my dear viscount,” said Monte Cristo, “I have an infallible remedy to propose to you.”

“What is that?” asked the young man.

“A change.”

“Indeed?” said Albert.

“Yes; and as I am just now excessively annoyed, I shall go from home. Shall we go together?”

“You annoyed, count?” said Beauchamp; “and by what?”

“Ah, you think very lightly of it; I should like to see you with a brief preparing in your house.”

“What brief?”

“The one M. de Villefort is preparing against my amiable assassin—some brigand escaped from the gallows apparently.”

“True,” said Beauchamp; “I saw it in the paper. Who is this Caderousse?”

“Some Provençal, it appears. M. de Villefort heard of him at Marseilles, and M. Danglars recollects having seen him. Consequently, the procureur is very active in the affair, and the prefect of police very much interested; and, thanks to that interest, for which I am very grateful, they send me all the robbers of Paris and the neighborhood, under pretence of their being Caderousse’s murderers, so that in three months, if this continues, every robber and assassin in France will have the plan of my house at his fingers’ ends. I am resolved to desert them and go to some remote corner of the earth, and shall be happy if you will accompany me, viscount.”

“Willingly.”

“Then it is settled?”

“Yes, but where?”

“I have told you, where the air is pure, where every sound soothes, where one is sure to be humbled, however proud may be his nature. I love that humiliation, I, who am master of the universe, as was Augustus.”

“But where are you really going?”

“To sea, viscount; you know I am a sailor. I was rocked when an infant in the arms of old Ocean, and on the bosom of the beautiful Amphitrite; I have sported with the green mantle of the one and the azure robe of the other; I love the sea as a mistress, and pine if I do not often see her.”

“Let us go, count.”

“To sea?”

“Yes.”

“You accept my proposal?”

“I do.”

“Well, viscount, there will be in my courtyard this evening a good travelling britzka, with four post-horses, in which one may rest as in a bed. M. Beauchamp, it holds four very well, will you accompany us?”

“Thank you, I have just returned from sea.”

“What? you have been to sea?”

“Yes; I have just made a little excursion to the Borromean Islands¹⁸.”

"What of that? come with us," said Albert.

"No, dear Morcerf; you know I only refuse when the thing is impossible. Besides, it is important," added he in a low tone, "that I should remain in Paris just now to watch the paper."

"Ah, you are a good and an excellent friend," said Albert; "yes, you are right; watch, watch, Beauchamp, and try to discover the enemy who made this disclosure."

Albert and Beauchamp parted, the last pressure of their hands expressing what their tongues could not before a stranger.

"Beauchamp is a worthy fellow," said Monte Cristo, when the journalist was gone; "is he not, Albert?"

"Yes, and a sincere friend; I love him devotedly. But now we are alone,—although it is immaterial to me,—where are we going?"

"Into Normandy, if you like."

"Delightful; shall we be quite retired? have no society, no neighbors?"

"Our companions will be riding-horses, dogs to hunt with, and a fishing-boat."

"Exactly what I wish for; I will apprise my mother of my intention, and return to you."

"But shall you be allowed to go into Normandy?"

"I may go where I please."

"Yes, I am aware you may go alone, since I once met you in Italy—but to accompany the mysterious Monte Cristo?"

"You forget, count, that I have often told you of the deep interest my mother takes in you."

"'Woman is fickle.' said Francis I.; 'woman is like a wave of the sea,' said Shakespeare; both the great king and the great poet ought to have known woman's nature well."

"Woman's, yes; my mother is not woman, but *a woman*."

"As I am only a humble foreigner, you must pardon me if I do not understand all the subtle refinements of your language."

"What I mean to say is, that my mother is not quick to give her confidence, but when she does she never changes."

"Ah, yes, indeed," said Monte Cristo with a sigh; "and do you think she is in the least interested in me?"

"I repeat it, you must really be a very strange and superior man, for my

mother is so absorbed by the interest you have excited, that when I am with her she speaks of no one else."

"And does she try to make you dislike me?"

"On the contrary, she often says, 'Morcerf, I believe the count has a noble nature; try to gain his esteem.'"

"Indeed?" said Monte Cristo, sighing.

"You see, then," said Albert, "that instead of opposing, she will encourage me."

"Adieu, then, until five o'clock; be punctual, and we shall arrive at twelve or one."

"At Tréport?"

"Yes; or in the neighborhood."

"But can we travel forty-eight leagues in eight hours?"

"Easily," said Monte Cristo.

"You are certainly a prodigy; you will soon not only surpass the railway, which would not be very difficult in France, but even the telegraph."

"But, viscount, since we cannot perform the journey in less than seven or eight hours, do not keep me waiting."

"Do not fear, I have little to prepare."

Monte Cristo smiled as he nodded to Albert, then remained a moment absorbed in deep meditation. But passing his hand across his forehead as if to dispel his reverie, he rang the bell twice and Bertuccio entered.

"Bertuccio," said he, "I intend going this evening to Normandy, instead of tomorrow or the next day. You will have sufficient time before five o'clock; despatch a messenger to apprise the grooms at the first station. M. de Morcerf will accompany me."

Bertuccio obeyed and despatched a courier to Pontoise to say the travelling-carriage would arrive at six o'clock. From Pontoise another express was sent to the next stage, and in six hours all the horses stationed on the road were ready.

Before his departure, the count went to Haydée's apartments, told her his intention, and resigned everything to her care.

Albert was punctual. The journey soon became interesting from its rapidity, of which Morcerf had formed no previous idea.

"Truly," said Monte Cristo, "with your post-horses going at the rate of two leagues an hour, and that absurd law that one traveller shall not pass another

without permission, so that an invalid or ill-tempered traveller may detain those who are well and active, it is impossible to move; I escape this annoyance by travelling with my own postilion and horses; do I not, Ali?"

The count put his head out of the window and whistled, and the horses appeared to fly. The carriage rolled with a thundering noise over the pavement, and everyone turned to notice the dazzling meteor. Ali, smiling, repeated the sound, grasped the reins with a firm hand, and spurred his horses, whose beautiful manes floated in the breeze. This child of the desert was in his element, and with his black face and sparkling eyes appeared, in the cloud of dust he raised, like the genius of the simoom and the god of the hurricane.

"I never knew till now the delight of speed," said Morcerf, and the last cloud disappeared from his brow; "but where the devil do you get such horses? Are they made to order?"

"Precisely," said the count; "six years since I bought a horse in Hungary remarkable for its swiftness. The thirty-two that we shall use tonight are its progeny; they are all entirely black, with the exception of a star upon the forehead."

"That is perfectly admirable; but what do you do, count, with all these horses?"

"You see, I travel with them."

"But you are not always travelling."

"When I no longer require them, Bertuccio will sell them, and he expects to realize thirty or forty thousand francs by the sale."

"But no monarch in Europe will be wealthy enough to purchase them."

"Then he will sell them to some Eastern vizier, who will empty his coffers to purchase them, and refill them by applying the bastinado to his subjects."

"Count, may I suggest one idea to you?"

"Certainly."

"It is that, next to you, Bertuccio must be the richest gentleman in Europe."

"You are mistaken, viscount; I believe he has not a franc in his possession."

"Then he must be a wonder. My dear count, if you tell me many more marvellous things, I warn you I shall not believe them."

"I countenance nothing that is marvellous, M. Albert. Tell me, why does a steward rob his master?"

"Because, I suppose, it is his nature to do so, for the love of robbing."

"You are mistaken; it is because he has a wife and family, and ambitious desires for himself and them. Also because he is not sure of always retaining his situation, and wishes to provide for the future. Now, M. Bertuccio is alone in the world; he uses my property without accounting for the use he makes of it; he is sure never to leave my service."

"Why?"

"Because I should never get a better."

"Probabilities are deceptive."

"But I deal in certainties; he is the best servant over whom one has the power of life and death."

"Do you possess that right over Bertuccio?"

"Yes."

There are words which close a conversation with an iron door; such was the count's "yes."

The whole journey was performed with equal rapidity; the thirty-two horses, dispersed over seven stages, brought them to their destination in eight hours. At midnight they arrived at the gate of a beautiful park. The porter was in attendance; he had been apprised by the groom of the last stage of the count's approach. At half past two in the morning Morcerf was conducted to his apartments, where a bath and supper were prepared. The servant who had travelled at the back of the carriage waited on him; Baptistin, who rode in front, attended the count.

Albert bathed, took his supper, and went to bed. All night he was lulled by the melancholy noise of the surf. On rising, he went to his window, which opened on a terrace, having the sea in front, and at the back a pretty park bounded by a small forest.

In a creek lay a little sloop, with a narrow keel and high masts, bearing on its flag the Monte Cristo arms which were a mountain *or*, on a sea *azure*, with a cross *gules* in chief which might be an allusion to his name that recalled Calvary, the mount rendered by our Lord's passion more precious than gold, and to the degrading cross which his blood had rendered holy; or it might be some personal remembrance of suffering and regeneration buried in the night of this mysterious personage's past life.

Around the schooner lay a number of small fishing-boats belonging to the fishermen of the neighboring village, like humble subjects awaiting orders from their queen. There, as in every spot where Monte Cristo stopped, if but for two

days, luxury abounded and life went on with the utmost ease.

Albert found in his anteroom two guns, with all the accoutrements for hunting; a lofty room on the ground floor containing all the ingenious instruments the English—eminent in piscatory pursuits, since they are patient and sluggish—have invented for fishing. The day passed in pursuing those exercises in which Monte Cristo excelled. They killed a dozen pheasants in the park, as many trout in the stream, dined in a summer-house overlooking the ocean, and took tea in the library.

Towards the evening of the third day. Albert, completely exhausted with the exercise which invigorated Monte Cristo, was sleeping in an armchair near the window, while the count was designing with his architect the plan of a conservatory in his house, when the sound of a horse at full speed on the high road made Albert look up. He was disagreeably surprised to see his own valet de chambre, whom he had not brought, that he might not inconvenience Monte Cristo.

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“Florentin here!” cried he, starting up; “is my mother ill?” And he hastened to the door. Monte Cristo watched and saw him approach the valet, who drew a small sealed parcel from his pocket, containing a newspaper and a letter.

“From whom is this?” said he eagerly.

“From M. Beauchamp,” replied Florentin.

“Did he send you?”

“Yes, sir; he sent for me to his house, gave me money for my journey, procured a horse, and made me promise not to stop till I had reached you, I have come in fifteen hours.”

Albert opened the letter with fear, uttered a shriek on reading the first line, and seized the paper. His sight was dimmed, his legs sank under him, and he would have fallen had not Florentin supported him.

“Poor young man,” said Monte Cristo in a low voice; “it is then true that the sin of the father shall fall on the children to the third and fourth generation.”

Meanwhile Albert had revived, and, continuing to read, he threw back his head, saying:

“Florentin, is your horse fit to return immediately?”

“It is a poor, lame post-horse.”

“In what state was the house when you left?”

"All was quiet, but on returning from M. Beauchamp's, I found madame in tears; she had sent for me to know when you would return. I told her my orders from M. Beauchamp; she first extended her arms to prevent me, but after a moment's reflection, 'Yes, go, Florentin,' said she, 'and may he come quickly.'"

"Yes, my mother," said Albert, "I will return, and woe to the infamous wretch! But first of all I must get there."

He went back to the room where he had left Monte Cristo. Five minutes had sufficed to make a complete transformation in his appearance. His voice had become rough and hoarse; his face was furrowed with wrinkles; his eyes burned under the blue-veined lids, and he tottered like a drunken man.

"Count," said he, "I thank you for your hospitality, which I would gladly have enjoyed longer; but I must return to Paris."

"What has happened?"

"A great misfortune, more important to me than life. Don't question me, I beg of you, but lend me a horse."

"My stables are at your command, viscount; but you will kill yourself by riding on horseback. Take a post-chaise or a carriage."

"No, it would delay me, and I need the fatigue you warn me of; it will do me good."

Albert reeled as if he had been shot, and fell on a chair near the door. Monte Cristo did not see this second manifestation of physical exhaustion; he was at the window, calling:

"Ali, a horse for M. de Morcerf—quick! he is in a hurry!"

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These words restored Albert; he darted from the room, followed by the count.

"Thank you!" cried he, throwing himself on his horse.

"Return as soon as you can, Florentin. Must I use any password to procure a horse?"

"Only dismount; another will be immediately saddled."

Albert hesitated a moment. "You may think my departure strange and foolish," said the young man; "you do not know how a paragraph in a newspaper may exasperate one. Read that," said he, "when I am gone, that you may not be witness of my anger."

While the count picked up the paper he put spurs to his horse, which leaped in astonishment at such an unusual stimulus, and shot away with the rapidity of an

arrow. The count watched him with a feeling of compassion, and when he had completely disappeared, read as follows:

"The French officer in the service of Ali Pasha of Yanina alluded to three weeks since in *l'Impartial*, who not only surrendered the castle of Yanina, but sold his benefactor to the Turks, styled himself truly at that time Fernand, as our esteemed contemporary states; but he has since added to his Christian name a title of nobility and a family name. He now calls himself the Count of Morcerf, and ranks among the peers."

Thus the terrible secret, which Beauchamp had so generously destroyed, appeared again like an armed phantom; and another paper, deriving its information from some malicious source, had published two days after Albert's departure for Normandy the few lines which had rendered the unfortunate young man almost crazy.

Chapter 86. The Trial

At eight o'clock in the morning Albert had arrived at Beauchamp's door. The valet de chambre had received orders to usher him in at once. Beauchamp was in his bath.

"Here I am," Albert said.

"Well, my poor friend," replied Beauchamp, "I expected you."

"I need not say I think you are too faithful and too kind to have spoken of that painful circumstance. Your having sent for me is another proof of your affection. So, without losing time, tell me, have you the slightest idea whence this terrible blow proceeds?"

"I think I have some clew."

"But first tell me all the particulars of this shameful plot."

Beauchamp proceeded to relate to the young man, who was overwhelmed with shame and grief, the following facts. Two days previously, the article had appeared in another paper besides *l'Impartial*, and, what was more serious, one that was well known as a government paper. Beauchamp was breakfasting when he read the paragraph. He sent immediately for a cabriolet, and hastened to the publisher's office. Although professing diametrically opposite principles from those of the editor of the other paper, Beauchamp—as it sometimes, we may say often, happens—was his intimate friend. The editor was reading, with apparent delight, a leading article in the same paper on beet-sugar, probably a composition of his own.

"Ah, *pardieu!*" said Beauchamp, "with the paper in your hand, my friend, I need not tell you the cause of my visit."

"Are you interested in the sugar question?" asked the editor of the ministerial paper.

"No," replied Beauchamp, "I have not considered the question; a totally different subject interests me."

"What is it?"

"The article relative to Morcerf."

"Indeed? Is it not a curious affair?"

“So curious, that I think you are running a great risk of a prosecution for defamation of character.”

“Not at all; we have received with the information all the requisite proofs, and we are quite sure M. de Morcerf will not raise his voice against us; besides, it is rendering a service to one’s country to denounce these wretched criminals who are unworthy of the honor bestowed on them.”

Beauchamp was thunderstruck.

“Who, then, has so correctly informed you?” asked he; “for my paper, which gave the first information on the subject, has been obliged to stop for want of proof; and yet we are more interested than you in exposing M. de Morcerf, as he is a peer of France, and we are of the opposition.”

“Oh, that is very simple; we have not sought to scandalize. This news was brought to us. A man arrived yesterday from Yanina, bringing a formidable array of documents; and when we hesitated to publish the accusatory article, he told us it should be inserted in some other paper.”

Beauchamp understood that nothing remained but to submit, and left the office to despatch a courier to Morcerf. But he had been unable to send to Albert the following particulars, as the events had transpired after the messenger’s departure; namely, that the same day a great agitation was manifest in the House of Peers among the usually calm members of that dignified assembly. Everyone had arrived almost before the usual hour, and was conversing on the melancholy event which was to attract the attention of the public towards one of their most illustrious colleagues. Some were perusing the article, others making comments and recalling circumstances which substantiated the charges still more.

The Count of Morcerf was no favorite with his colleagues. Like all upstarts, he had had recourse to a great deal of haughtiness to maintain his position. The true nobility laughed at him, the talented repelled him, and the honorable instinctively despised him. He was, in fact, in the unhappy position of the victim marked for sacrifice; the finger of God once pointed at him, everyone was prepared to raise the hue and cry.

The Count of Morcerf alone was ignorant of the news. He did not take in the paper containing the defamatory article, and had passed the morning in writing letters and in trying a horse. He arrived at his usual hour, with a proud look and insolent demeanor; he alighted, passed through the corridors, and entered the house without observing the hesitation of the door-keepers or the coolness of his colleagues.

Business had already been going on for half an hour when he entered. Everyone held the accusing paper, but, as usual, no one liked to take upon himself the responsibility of the attack. At length an honorable peer, Morcerf's acknowledged enemy, ascended the tribune with that solemnity which announced that the expected moment had arrived. There was an impressive silence; Morcerf alone knew not why such profound attention was given to an orator who was not always listened to with so much complacency.

The count did not notice the introduction, in which the speaker announced that his communication would be of that vital importance that it demanded the undivided attention of the House; but at the mention of Yanina and Colonel Fernand, he turned so frightfully pale that every member shuddered and fixed his eyes upon him. Moral wounds have this peculiarity,—they may be hidden, but they never close; always painful, always ready to bleed when touched, they remain fresh and open in the heart.

The article having been read during the painful hush that followed, a universal shudder pervaded the assembly, and immediately the closest attention was given to the orator as he resumed his remarks. He stated his scruples and the difficulties of the case; it was the honor of M. de Morcerf, and that of the whole House, he proposed to defend, by provoking a debate on personal questions, which are always such painful themes of discussion. He concluded by calling for an investigation, which might dispose of the calumnious report before it had time to spread, and restore M. de Morcerf to the position he had long held in public opinion.

Morcerf was so completely overwhelmed by this great and unexpected calamity that he could scarcely stammer a few words as he looked around on the assembly. This timidity, which might proceed from the astonishment of innocence as well as the shame of guilt, conciliated some in his favor; for men who are truly generous are always ready to compassionate when the misfortune of their enemy surpasses the limits of their hatred.

The president put it to the vote, and it was decided that the investigation should take place. The count was asked what time he required to prepare his defence. Morcerf's courage had revived when he found himself alive after this horrible blow.

“My lords,” answered he, “it is not by time I could repel the attack made on me by enemies unknown to me, and, doubtless, hidden in obscurity; it is immediately, and by a thunderbolt, that I must repel the flash of lightning which, for a moment, startled me. Oh, that I could, instead of taking up this defence, shed my last drop of blood to prove to my noble colleagues that I am their equal

in worth."

These words made a favorable impression on behalf of the accused.

"I demand, then, that the examination shall take place as soon as possible, and I will furnish the house with all necessary information."

"What day do you fix?" asked the president.

"Today I am at your service," replied the count.

The president rang the bell. "Does the House approve that the examination should take place today?"

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"Yes," was the unanimous answer.

A committee of twelve members was chosen to examine the proofs brought forward by Morcerf. The investigation would begin at eight o'clock that evening in the committee-room, and if postponement were necessary, the proceedings would be resumed each evening at the same hour. Morcerf asked leave to retire; he had to collect the documents he had long been preparing against this storm, which his sagacity had foreseen.

Beauchamp related to the young man all the facts we have just narrated; his story, however, had over ours all the advantage of the animation of living things over the coldness of dead things.

Albert listened, trembling now with hope, then with anger, and then again with shame, for from Beauchamp's confidence he knew his father was guilty, and he asked himself how, since he was guilty, he could prove his innocence. Beauchamp hesitated to continue his narrative.

"What next?" asked Albert.

"What next? My friend, you impose a painful task on me. Must you know all?"

"Absolutely; and rather from your lips than another's."

"Muster up all your courage, then, for never have you required it more."

Albert passed his hand over his forehead, as if to try his strength, as a man who is preparing to defend his life proves his shield and bends his sword. He thought himself strong enough, for he mistook fever for energy. "Go on," said he.

"The evening arrived; all Paris was in expectation. Many said your father had only to show himself to crush the charge against him; many others said he would not appear; while some asserted that they had seen him start for Brussels; and

others went to the police-office to inquire if he had taken out a passport. I used all my influence with one of the committee, a young peer of my acquaintance, to get admission to one of the galleries. He called for me at seven o'clock, and, before anyone had arrived, asked one of the door-keepers to place me in a box. I was concealed by a column, and might witness the whole of the terrible scene which was about to take place. At eight o'clock all were in their places, and M. de Morcerf entered at the last stroke. He held some papers in his hand; his countenance was calm, and his step firm, and he was dressed with great care in his military uniform, which was buttoned completely up to the chin. His presence produced a good effect. The committee was made up of Liberals, several of whom came forward to shake hands with him."

Albert felt his heart bursting at these particulars, but gratitude mingled with his sorrow: he would gladly have embraced those who had given his father this proof of esteem at a moment when his honor was so powerfully attacked.

"At this moment one of the door-keepers brought in a letter for the president. 'You are at liberty to speak, M. de Morcerf,' said the president, as he unsealed the letter; and the count began his defence, I assure you, Albert, in a most eloquent and skilful manner. He produced documents proving that the Vizier of Yanina had up to the last moment honored him with his entire confidence, since he had interested him with a negotiation of life and death with the emperor. He produced the ring, his mark of authority, with which Ali Pasha generally sealed his letters, and which the latter had given him, that he might, on his return at any hour of the day or night, gain access to the presence, even in the harem. Unfortunately, the negotiation failed, and when he returned to defend his benefactor, he was dead. 'But,' said the count, 'so great was Ali Pasha's confidence, that on his death-bed he resigned his favorite mistress and her daughter to my care.'"

Albert started on hearing these words; the history of Haydée recurred to him, and he remembered what she had said of that message and the ring, and the manner in which she had been sold and made a slave.

"And what effect did this discourse produce?" anxiously inquired Albert.

"I acknowledge it affected me, and, indeed, all the committee also," said Beauchamp.

"Meanwhile, the president carelessly opened the letter which had been brought to him; but the first lines aroused his attention; he read them again and again, and fixing his eyes on M. de Morcerf, 'Count,' said he, 'you have said that the Vizier of Yanina confided his wife and daughter to your care?'—'Yes, sir,'

replied Morcerf; ‘but in that, like all the rest, misfortune pursued me. On my return, Vasiliki and her daughter Haydée had disappeared.’—‘Did you know them?’—‘My intimacy with the pasha and his unlimited confidence had gained me an introduction to them, and I had seen them above twenty times.’

“Have you any idea what became of them?”—‘Yes, sir; I heard they had fallen victims to their sorrow, and, perhaps, to their poverty. I was not rich; my life was in constant danger; I could not seek them, to my great regret.’ The president frowned imperceptibly. ‘Gentlemen,’ said he, ‘you have heard the Comte de Morcerf’s defence. Can you, sir, produce any witnesses to the truth of what you have asserted?’—‘Alas, no, monsieur,’ replied the count; ‘all those who surrounded the vizier, or who knew me at his court, are either dead or gone away, I know not where. I believe that I alone, of all my countrymen, survived that dreadful war. I have only the letters of Ali Tepelini, which I have placed before you; the ring, a token of his good-will, which is here; and, lastly, the most convincing proof I can offer, after an anonymous attack, and that is the absence of any witness against my veracity and the purity of my military life.’

“A murmur of approbation ran through the assembly; and at this moment, Albert, had nothing more transpired, your father’s cause had been gained. It only remained to put it to the vote, when the president resumed: ‘Gentlemen and you, monsieur,—you will not be displeased, I presume, to listen to one who calls himself a very important witness, and who has just presented himself. He is, doubtless, come to prove the perfect innocence of our colleague. Here is a letter I have just received on the subject; shall it be read, or shall it be passed over? and shall we take no notice of this incident?’ M. de Morcerf turned pale, and clenched his hands on the papers he held. The committee decided to hear the letter; the count was thoughtful and silent. The president read:

“Mr. President,—I can furnish the committee of inquiry into the conduct of the Lieutenant-General the Count of Morcerf in Epirus and in Macedonia with important particulars.”

“The president paused, and the count turned pale. The president looked at his auditors. ‘Proceed,’ was heard on all sides. The president resumed:

“I was on the spot at the death of Ali Pasha. I was present during his last moments. I know what is become of Vasiliki and Haydée. I am at the command of the committee, and even claim the honor of being heard. I shall be in the lobby when this note is delivered to you.”

“And who is this witness, or rather this enemy?” asked the count, in a tone in which there was a visible alteration. ‘We shall know, sir,’ replied the president.

‘Is the committee willing to hear this witness?’—‘Yes, yes,’ they all said at once. The door-keeper was called. ‘Is there anyone in the lobby?’ said the president.

“‘Yes, sir.’—‘Who is it?’—‘A woman, accompanied by a servant.’ Everyone looked at his neighbor. ‘Bring her in,’ said the president. Five minutes after the door-keeper again appeared; all eyes were fixed on the door, and I,” said Beauchamp, “shared the general expectation and anxiety. Behind the door-keeper walked a woman enveloped in a large veil, which completely concealed her. It was evident, from her figure and the perfumes she had about her, that she was young and fastidious in her tastes, but that was all. The president requested her to throw aside her veil, and it was then seen that she was dressed in the Grecian costume, and was remarkably beautiful.”

“Ah,” said Albert, “it was she.”

“Who?”

“Haydée.”

“Who told you that?”

“Alas, I guess it. But go on, Beauchamp. You see I am calm and strong. And yet we must be drawing near the disclosure.”

“M. de Morcerf,” continued Beauchamp, “looked at this woman with surprise and terror. Her lips were about to pass his sentence of life or death. To the committee the adventure was so extraordinary and curious, that the interest they had felt for the count’s safety became now quite a secondary matter. The president himself advanced to place a seat for the young lady; but she declined availing herself of it. As for the count, he had fallen on his chair; it was evident that his legs refused to support him.

“‘Madame,’ said the president, ‘you have engaged to furnish the committee with some important particulars respecting the affair at Yanina, and you have stated that you were an eyewitness of the event.’—‘I was, indeed,’ said the stranger, with a tone of sweet melancholy, and with the sonorous voice peculiar to the East.

“‘But allow me to say that you must have been very young then.’—‘I was four years old; but as those events deeply concerned me, not a single detail has escaped my memory.’—‘In what manner could these events concern you? and who are you, that they should have made so deep an impression on you?’—‘On them depended my father’s life,’ replied she. ‘I am Haydée, the daughter of Ali Tepelini, pasha of Yanina, and of Vasiliki, his beloved wife.’

“The blush of mingled pride and modesty which suddenly suffused the cheeks of the young woman, the brilliancy of her eye, and her highly important communication, produced an indescribable effect on the assembly. As for the count, he could not have been more overwhelmed if a thunderbolt had fallen at his feet and opened an immense gulf before him.

“‘Madame,’ replied the president, bowing with profound respect, ‘allow me to ask one question; it shall be the last: Can you prove the authenticity of what you have now stated?’

“‘I can, sir,’ said Haydée, drawing from under her veil a satin satchel highly perfumed; ‘for here is the register of my birth, signed by my father and his principal officers, and that of my baptism, my father having consented to my being brought up in my mother’s faith,—this latter has been sealed by the grand primate of Macedonia and Epirus; and lastly (and perhaps the most important), the record of the sale of my person and that of my mother to the Armenian merchant El-Kobbir, by the French officer, who, in his infamous bargain with the Porte, had reserved as his part of the booty the wife and daughter of his benefactor, whom he sold for the sum of four hundred thousand francs.’ A greenish pallor spread over the count’s cheeks, and his eyes became bloodshot at these terrible imputations, which were listened to by the assembly with ominous silence.

“Haydée, still calm, but with a calmness more dreadful than the anger of another would have been, handed to the president the record of her sale, written in Arabic. It had been supposed some of the papers might be in the Arabian, Romaic, or Turkish language, and the interpreter of the House was in attendance. One of the noble peers, who was familiar with the Arabic language, having studied it during the famous Egyptian campaign, followed with his eye as the translator read aloud:

“‘I, El-Kobbir, a slave-merchant, and purveyor of the harem of his highness, acknowledge having received for transmission to the sublime emperor, from the French lord, the Count of Monte Cristo, an emerald valued at eight hundred thousand francs; as the ransom of a young Christian slave of eleven years of age, named Haydée, the acknowledged daughter of the late lord Ali Tepelini, pasha of Yanina, and of Vasiliki, his favorite; she having been sold to me seven years previously, with her mother, who had died on arriving at Constantinople, by a French colonel in the service of the Vizier Ali Tepelini, named Fernand Mondego. The above-mentioned purchase was made on his highness’s account, whose mandate I had, for the sum of four hundred thousand francs.

“‘Given at Constantinople, by authority of his highness, in the year 1247 of

the Hegira.

“Signed, El-Kobbir.”

“That this record should have all due authority, it shall bear the imperial seal, which the vendor is bound to have affixed to it.”

“Near the merchant’s signature there was, indeed, the seal of the sublime emperor. A dreadful silence followed the reading of this document; the count could only stare, and his gaze, fixed as if unconsciously on Haydée, seemed one of fire and blood. ‘Madame,’ said the president, ‘may reference be made to the Count of Monte Cristo, who is now, I believe, in Paris?’

“Sir,’ replied Haydée, ‘the Count of Monte Cristo, my foster-father, has been in Normandy the last three days.’

“Who, then, has counselled you to take this step, one for which the court is deeply indebted to you, and which is perfectly natural, considering your birth and your misfortunes?”—‘Sir,’ replied Haydée, ‘I have been led to take this step from a feeling of respect and grief. Although a Christian, may God forgive me, I have always sought to revenge my illustrious father. Since I set my foot in France, and knew the traitor lived in Paris, I have watched carefully. I live retired in the house of my noble protector, but I do it from choice. I love retirement and silence, because I can live with my thoughts and recollections of past days. But the Count of Monte Cristo surrounds me with every paternal care, and I am ignorant of nothing which passes in the world. I learn all in the silence of my apartments,—for instance, I see all the newspapers, every periodical, as well as every new piece of music; and by thus watching the course of the life of others, I learned what had transpired this morning in the House of Peers, and what was to take place this evening; then I wrote.’

40204m

“Then,’ remarked the president, ‘the Count of Monte Cristo knows nothing of your present proceedings?’—‘He is quite unaware of them, and I have but one fear, which is that he should disapprove of what I have done. But it is a glorious day for me,’ continued the young girl, raising her ardent gaze to heaven, ‘that on which I find at last an opportunity of avenging my father!’

“The count had not uttered one word the whole of this time. His colleagues looked at him, and doubtless pitied his prospects, blighted under the perfumed breath of a woman. His misery was depicted in sinister lines on his countenance. ‘M. de Morcerf,’ said the president, ‘do you recognize this lady as the daughter of Ali Tepelini, pasha of Yanina?’—‘No,’ said Morcerf, attempting to rise, ‘it is a base plot, contrived by my enemies.’ Haydée, whose eyes had been fixed on the

door, as if expecting someone, turned hastily, and, seeing the count standing, shrieked, ‘You do not know me?’ said she. ‘Well, I fortunately recognize you! You are Fernand Mondego, the French officer who led the troops of my noble father! It is you who surrendered the castle of Yanina! It is you who, sent by him to Constantinople, to treat with the emperor for the life or death of your benefactor, brought back a false mandate granting full pardon! It is you who, with that mandate, obtained the pasha’s ring, which gave you authority over Selim, the fire-keeper! It is you who stabbed Selim. It is you who sold us, my mother and me, to the merchant, El-Kobbir! Assassin, assassin, assassin, you have still on your brow your master’s blood! Look, gentlemen, all!’

“These words had been pronounced with such enthusiasm and evident truth, that every eye was fixed on the count’s forehead, and he himself passed his hand across it, as if he felt Ali’s blood still lingering there. ‘You positively recognize M. de Morcerf as the officer, Fernand Mondego?’—‘Indeed I do!’ cried Haydée. ‘Oh, my mother, it was you who said, “You were free, you had a beloved father, you were destined to be almost a queen. Look well at that man; it is he who raised your father’s head on the point of a spear; it is he who sold us; it is he who forsook us! Look well at his right hand, on which he has a large wound; if you forgot his features, you would know him by that hand, into which fell, one by one, the gold pieces of the merchant El-Kobbir!” I know him! Ah, let him say now if he does not recognize me!’ Each word fell like a dagger on Morcerf, and deprived him of a portion of his energy; as she uttered the last, he hid his mutilated hand hastily in his bosom, and fell back on his seat, overwhelmed by wretchedness and despair. This scene completely changed the opinion of the assembly respecting the accused count.

“‘Count of Morcerf,’ said the president, ‘do not allow yourself to be cast down; answer. The justice of the court is supreme and impartial as that of God; it will not suffer you to be trampled on by your enemies without giving you an opportunity of defending yourself. Shall further inquiries be made? Shall two members of the House be sent to Yanina? Speak!’ Morcerf did not reply. Then all the members looked at each other with terror. They knew the count’s energetic and violent temper; it must be, indeed, a dreadful blow which would deprive him of courage to defend himself. They expected that his stupefied silence would be followed by a fiery outburst. ‘Well,’ asked the president, ‘what is your decision?’

40206m

“‘I have no reply to make,’ said the count in a low tone.

“‘Has the daughter of Ali Tepelini spoken the truth?’ said the president. ‘Is

she, then, the terrible witness to whose charge you dare not plead “Not guilty”? Have you really committed the crimes of which you are accused?’ The count looked around him with an expression which might have softened tigers, but which could not disarm his judges. Then he raised his eyes towards the ceiling, but withdrew then, immediately, as if he feared the roof would open and reveal to his distressed view that second tribunal called heaven, and that other judge named God. Then, with a hasty movement, he tore open his coat, which seemed to stifle him, and flew from the room like a madman; his footstep was heard one moment in the corridor, then the rattling of his carriage-wheels as he was driven rapidly away. ‘Gentlemen,’ said the president, when silence was restored, ‘is the Count of Morcerf convicted of felony, treason, and conduct unbecoming a member of this House?’—‘Yes,’ replied all the members of the committee of inquiry with a unanimous voice.

“Haydée had remained until the close of the meeting. She heard the count’s sentence pronounced without betraying an expression of joy or pity; then drawing her veil over her face she bowed majestically to the councillors, and left with that dignified step which Virgil attributes to his goddesses.”

Chapter 87. The Challenge

Then," continued Beauchamp, "I took advantage of the silence and the darkness to leave the house without being seen. The usher who had introduced me was waiting for me at the door, and he conducted me through the corridors to a private entrance opening into the Rue de Vaugirard. I left with mingled feelings of sorrow and delight. Excuse me, Albert,—sorrow on your account, and delight with that noble girl, thus pursuing paternal vengeance. Yes, Albert, from whatever source the blow may have proceeded—it may be from an enemy, but that enemy is only the agent of Providence."

Albert held his head between his hands; he raised his face, red with shame and bathed in tears, and seizing Beauchamp's arm:

"My friend," said he, "my life is ended. I cannot calmly say with you, 'Providence has struck the blow;' but I must discover who pursues me with this hatred, and when I have found him I shall kill him, or he will kill me. I rely on your friendship to assist me, Beauchamp, if contempt has not banished it from your heart."

"Contempt, my friend? How does this misfortune affect you? No, happily that unjust prejudice is forgotten which made the son responsible for the father's actions. Review your life, Albert; although it is only just beginning, did a lovely summer's day ever dawn with greater purity than has marked the commencement of your career? No, Albert, take my advice. You are young and rich—leave Paris—all is soon forgotten in this great Babylon of excitement and changing tastes. You will return after three or four years with a Russian princess for a bride, and no one will think more of what occurred yesterday than if it had happened sixteen years ago."

"Thank you, my dear Beauchamp, thank you for the excellent feeling which prompts your advice; but it cannot be. I have told you my wish, or rather my determination. You understand that, interested as I am in this affair, I cannot see it in the same light as you do. What appears to you to emanate from a celestial source, seems to me to proceed from one far less pure. Providence appears to me to have no share in this affair; and happily so, for instead of the invisible, impalpable agent of celestial rewards and punishments, I shall find one both

palpable and visible, on whom I shall revenge myself, I assure you, for all I have suffered during the last month. Now, I repeat, Beauchamp, I wish to return to human and material existence, and if you are still the friend you profess to be, help me to discover the hand that struck the blow."

"Be it so," said Beauchamp; "if you must have me descend to earth, I submit; and if you will seek your enemy, I will assist you, and I will engage to find him, my honor being almost as deeply interested as yours."

"Well, then, you understand, Beauchamp, that we begin our search immediately. Each moment's delay is an eternity for me. The calumniator is not yet punished, and he may hope that he will not be; but, on my honor, if he thinks so, he deceives himself."

"Well, listen, Morcerf."

"Ah, Beauchamp, I see you know something already; you will restore me to life."

"I do not say there is any truth in what I am going to tell you, but it is, at least, a ray of light in a dark night; by following it we may, perhaps, discover something more certain."

"Tell me; satisfy my impatience."

"Well, I will tell you what I did not like to mention on my return from Yanina."

"Say on."

"I went, of course, to the chief banker of the town to make inquiries. At the first word, before I had even mentioned your father's name"—

"Ah," said he. "I guess what brings you here."

"How, and why?"

"Because a fortnight since I was questioned on the same subject."

"By whom?"

"By a banker of Paris, my correspondent."

"Whose name is——"

"Danglars."

"He!" cried Albert; "yes, it is indeed he who has so long pursued my father with jealous hatred. He, the man who would be popular, cannot forgive the Count of Morcerf for being created a peer; and this marriage broken off without a reason being assigned—yes, it is all from the same cause."

"Make inquiries, Albert, but do not be angry without reason; make inquiries,

and if it be true——”

“Oh, yes, if it be true,” cried the young man, “he shall pay me all I have suffered.”

“Beware, Morcerf, he is already an old man.”

“I will respect his age as he has respected the honor of my family; if my father had offended him, why did he not attack him personally? Oh, no, he was afraid to encounter him face to face.”

“I do not condemn you, Albert; I only restrain you. Act prudently.”

“Oh, do not fear; besides, you will accompany me. Beauchamp, solemn transactions should be sanctioned by a witness. Before this day closes, if M. Danglars is guilty, he shall cease to live, or I shall die. *Pardieu*, Beauchamp, mine shall be a splendid funeral!”

“When such resolutions are made, Albert, they should be promptly executed. Do you wish to go to M. Danglars? Let us go immediately.”

They sent for a cabriolet. On entering the banker’s mansion, they perceived the phaeton and servant of M. Andrea Cavalcanti.

“Ah! *parbleu!* that’s good,” said Albert, with a gloomy tone. “If M. Danglars will not fight with me, I will kill his son-in-law; Cavalcanti will certainly fight.”

The servant announced the young man; but the banker, recollecting what had transpired the day before, did not wish him admitted. It was, however, too late; Albert had followed the footman, and, hearing the order given, forced the door open, and followed by Beauchamp found himself in the banker’s study.

“Sir,” cried the latter, “am I no longer at liberty to receive whom I choose in my house? You appear to forget yourself sadly.”

“No, sir,” said Albert, coldly; “there are circumstances in which one cannot, except through cowardice,—I offer you that refuge,—refuse to admit certain persons at least.”

“What is your errand, then, with me, sir?”

“I mean,” said Albert, drawing near, and without apparently noticing Cavalcanti, who stood with his back towards the fireplace—“I mean to propose a meeting in some retired corner where no one will interrupt us for ten minutes; that will be sufficient—where two men having met, one of them will remain on the ground.”

Danglars turned pale; Cavalcanti moved a step forward, and Albert turned towards him.

"And you, too," said he, "come, if you like, monsieur; you have a claim, being almost one of the family, and I will give as many rendezvous of that kind as I can find persons willing to accept them."

Cavalcanti looked at Danglars with a stupefied air, and the latter, making an effort, arose and stepped between the two young men. Albert's attack on Andrea had placed him on a different footing, and he hoped this visit had another cause than that he had at first supposed.

"Indeed, sir," said he to Albert, "if you are come to quarrel with this gentleman because I have preferred him to you, I shall resign the case to the king's attorney."

"You mistake, sir," said Morcerf with a gloomy smile; "I am not referring in the least to matrimony, and I only addressed myself to M. Cavalcanti because he appeared disposed to interfere between us. In one respect you are right, for I am ready to quarrel with everyone today; but you have the first claim, M. Danglars."

40212m

"Sir," replied Danglars, pale with anger and fear, "I warn you, when I have the misfortune to meet with a mad dog, I kill it; and far from thinking myself guilty of a crime, I believe I do society a kindness. Now, if you are mad and try to bite me, I will kill you without pity. Is it my fault that your father has dishonored himself?"

"Yes, miserable wretch!" cried Morcerf, "it is your fault."

Danglars retreated a few steps. "My fault?" said he; "you must be mad! What do I know of the Grecian affair? Have I travelled in that country? Did I advise your father to sell the castle of Yanina—to betray——"

"Silence!" said Albert, with a thundering voice. "No; it is not you who have directly made this exposure and brought this sorrow on us, but you hypocritically provoked it."

"I?"

"Yes; you! How came it known?"

"I suppose you read it in the paper in the account from Yanina?"

"Who wrote to Yanina?"

"To Yanina?"

"Yes. Who wrote for particulars concerning my father?"

"I imagine anyone may write to Yanina."

"But one person only wrote!"

“One only?”

“Yes; and that was you!”

“I, doubtless, wrote. It appears to me that when about to marry your daughter to a young man, it is right to make some inquiries respecting his family; it is not only a right, but a duty.”

“You wrote, sir, knowing what answer you would receive.”

“I, indeed? I assure you,” cried Danglars, with a confidence and security proceeding less from fear than from the interest he really felt for the young man, “I solemnly declare to you, that I should never have thought of writing to Yanina, did I know anything of Ali Pasha’s misfortunes.”

“Who, then, urged you to write? Tell me.”

“*Pardieu!* it was the most simple thing in the world. I was speaking of your father’s past history. I said the origin of his fortune remained obscure. The person to whom I addressed my scruples asked me where your father had acquired his property? I answered, ‘In Greece.’—‘Then,’ said he, ‘write to Yanina.’”

“And who thus advised you?”

“No other than your friend, Monte Cristo.”

“The Count of Monte Cristo told you to write to Yanina?”

“Yes; and I wrote, and will show you my correspondence, if you like.”

Albert and Beauchamp looked at each other.

“Sir,” said Beauchamp, who had not yet spoken, “you appear to accuse the count, who is absent from Paris at this moment, and cannot justify himself.”

“I accuse no one, sir,” said Danglars; “I relate, and I will repeat before the count what I have said to you.”

“Does the count know what answer you received?”

“Yes; I showed it to him.”

“Did he know my father’s Christian name was Fernand, and his family name Mondego?”

“Yes, I had told him that long since, and I did only what any other would have done in my circumstances, and perhaps less. When, the day after the arrival of this answer, your father came by the advice of Monte Cristo to ask my daughter’s hand for you, I decidedly refused him, but without any explanation or exposure. In short, why should I have any more to do with the affair? How did the honor or disgrace of M. de Morcerf affect me? It neither increased nor

decreased my income."

Albert felt the blood mounting to his brow; there was no doubt upon the subject. Danglars defended himself with the baseness, but at the same time with the assurance, of a man who speaks the truth, at least in part, if not wholly—not for conscience' sake, but through fear. Besides, what was Morcerf seeking? It was not whether Danglars or Monte Cristo was more or less guilty; it was a man who would answer for the offence, whether trifling or serious; it was a man who would fight, and it was evident Danglars would not fight.

In addition to this, everything forgotten or unperceived before presented itself now to his recollection. Monte Cristo knew everything, as he had bought the daughter of Ali Pasha; and, knowing everything, he had advised Danglars to write to Yanina. The answer known, he had yielded to Albert's wish to be introduced to Haydée, and allowed the conversation to turn on the death of Ali, and had not opposed Haydée's recital (but having, doubtless, warned the young girl, in the few Romaic words he spoke to her, not to implicate Morcerf's father). Besides, had he not begged of Morcerf not to mention his father's name before Haydée? Lastly, he had taken Albert to Normandy when he knew the final blow was near. There could be no doubt that all had been calculated and previously arranged; Monte Cristo then was in league with his father's enemies. Albert took Beauchamp aside, and communicated these ideas to him.

"You are right," said the latter; "M. Danglars has only been a secondary agent in this sad affair, and it is of M. de Monte Cristo that you must demand an explanation."

Albert turned.

"Sir," said he to Danglars, "understand that I do not take a final leave of you; I must ascertain if your insinuations are just, and am going now to inquire of the Count of Monte Cristo."

He bowed to the banker, and went out with Beauchamp, without appearing to notice Cavalcanti. Danglars accompanied him to the door, where he again assured Albert that no motive of personal hatred had influenced him against the Count of Morcerf.

Chapter 88. The Insult

At the banker's door Beauchamp stopped Morcerf.

"Listen," said he; "just now I told you it was of M. de Monte Cristo you must demand an explanation."

"Yes; and we are going to his house."

"Reflect, Morcerf, one moment before you go."

"On what shall I reflect?"

"On the importance of the step you are taking."

"Is it more serious than going to M. Danglars?"

"Yes; M. Danglars is a money-lover, and those who love money, you know, think too much of what they risk to be easily induced to fight a duel. The other is, on the contrary, to all appearance a true nobleman; but do you not fear to find him a bully?"

"I only fear one thing; namely, to find a man who will not fight."

"Do not be alarmed," said Beauchamp; "he will meet you. My only fear is that he will be too strong for you."

"My friend," said Morcerf, with a sweet smile, "that is what I wish. The happiest thing that could occur to me, would be to die in my father's stead; that would save us all."

"Your mother would die of grief."

"My poor mother!" said Albert, passing his hand across his eyes, "I know she would; but better so than die of shame."

"Are you quite decided, Albert?"

"Yes; let us go."

"But do you think we shall find the count at home?"

"He intended returning some hours after me, and doubtless he is now at home."

They ordered the driver to take them to No. 30 Champs-Élysées. Beauchamp wished to go in alone, but Albert observed that as this was an unusual circumstance he might be allowed to deviate from the usual etiquette of duels.

The cause which the young man espoused was one so sacred that Beauchamp had only to comply with all his wishes; he yielded and contented himself with following Morcerf. Albert sprang from the porter's lodge to the steps. He was received by Baptistin. The count had, indeed, just arrived, but he was in his bath, and had forbidden that anyone should be admitted.

"But after his bath?" asked Morcerf.

"My master will go to dinner."

"And after dinner?"

"He will sleep an hour."

"Then?"

"He is going to the Opera."

"Are you sure of it?" asked Albert.

"Quite, sir; my master has ordered his horses at eight o'clock precisely."

"Very good," replied Albert; "that is all I wished to know."

Then, turning towards Beauchamp, "If you have anything to attend to, Beauchamp, do it directly; if you have any appointment for this evening, defer it till tomorrow. I depend on you to accompany me to the Opera; and if you can, bring Château-Renaud with you."

Beauchamp availed himself of Albert's permission, and left him, promising to call for him at a quarter before eight. On his return home, Albert expressed his wish to Franz Debray, and Morrel, to see them at the Opera that evening. Then he went to see his mother, who since the events of the day before had refused to see anyone, and had kept her room. He found her in bed, overwhelmed with grief at this public humiliation.

The sight of Albert produced the effect which might naturally be expected on Mercédès; she pressed her son's hand and sobbed aloud, but her tears relieved her. Albert stood one moment speechless by the side of his mother's bed. It was evident from his pale face and knit brows that his resolution to revenge himself was growing weaker.

"My dear mother," said he, "do you know if M. de Morcerf has any enemy?"

Mercédès started; she noticed that the young man did not say "my father."

"My son," she said, "persons in the count's situation have many secret enemies. Those who are known are not the most dangerous."

"I know it, and appeal to your penetration. You are of so superior a mind, nothing escapes you."

“Why do you say so?”

“Because, for instance, you noticed on the evening of the ball we gave, that M. de Monte Cristo would eat nothing in our house.”

Mercédès raised herself on her feverish arm.

“M. de Monte Cristo!” she exclaimed; “and how is he connected with the question you asked me?”

40219m

“You know, mother, M. de Monte Cristo is almost an Oriental, and it is customary with the Orientals to secure full liberty for revenge by not eating or drinking in the houses of their enemies.”

“Do you say M. de Monte Cristo is our enemy?” replied Mercédès, becoming paler than the sheet which covered her. “Who told you so? Why, you are mad, Albert! M. de Monte Cristo has only shown us kindness. M. de Monte Cristo saved your life; you yourself presented him to us. Oh, I entreat you, my son, if you had entertained such an idea, dispel it; and my counsel to you—nay, my prayer—is to retain his friendship.”

“Mother,” replied the young man, “you have special reasons for telling me to conciliate that man.”

“I?” said Mercédès, blushing as rapidly as she had turned pale, and again becoming paler than ever.

“Yes, doubtless; and is it not that he may never do us any harm?”

Mercédès shuddered, and, fixing on her son a scrutinizing gaze, “You speak strangely,” said she to Albert, “and you appear to have some singular prejudices. What has the count done? Three days since you were with him in Normandy; only three days since we looked on him as our best friend.”

An ironical smile passed over Albert’s lips. Mercédès saw it and with the double instinct of woman and mother guessed all; but as she was prudent and strong-minded she concealed both her sorrows and her fears. Albert was silent; an instant after, the countess resumed:

“You came to inquire after my health; I will candidly acknowledge that I am not well. You should install yourself here, and cheer my solitude. I do not wish to be left alone.”

“Mother,” said the young man, “you know how gladly I would obey your wish, but an urgent and important affair obliges me to leave you for the whole evening.”

"Well," replied Mercédès, sighing, "go, Albert; I will not make you a slave to your filial piety."

Albert pretended he did not hear, bowed to his mother, and quitted her. Scarcely had he shut her door, when Mercédès called a confidential servant, and ordered him to follow Albert wherever he should go that evening, and to come and tell her immediately what he observed. Then she rang for her lady's maid, and, weak as she was, she dressed, in order to be ready for whatever might happen. The footman's mission was an easy one. Albert went to his room, and dressed with unusual care. At ten minutes to eight Beauchamp arrived; he had seen Château-Renaud, who had promised to be in the orchestra before the curtain was raised. Both got into Albert's *coupé*; and, as the young man had no reason to conceal where he was going, he called aloud, "To the Opera." In his impatience he arrived before the beginning of the performance.

40221m

Château-Renaud was at his post; apprised by Beauchamp of the circumstances, he required no explanation from Albert. The conduct of the son in seeking to avenge his father was so natural that Château-Renaud did not seek to dissuade him, and was content with renewing his assurances of devotion. Debray was not yet come, but Albert knew that he seldom lost a scene at the Opera.

Albert wandered about the theatre until the curtain was drawn up. He hoped to meet with M. de Monte Cristo either in the lobby or on the stairs. The bell summoned him to his seat, and he entered the orchestra with Château-Renaud and Beauchamp. But his eyes scarcely quitted the box between the columns, which remained obstinately closed during the whole of the first act. At last, as Albert was looking at his watch for about the hundredth time, at the beginning of the second act the door opened, and Monte Cristo entered, dressed in black, and, leaning over the front of the box, looked around the pit. Morrel followed him, and looked also for his sister and brother in-law; he soon discovered them in another box, and kissed his hand to them.

The count, in his survey of the pit, encountered a pale face and threatening eyes, which evidently sought to gain his attention. He recognized Albert, but thought it better not to notice him, as he looked so angry and discomposed. Without communicating his thoughts to his companion, he sat down, drew out his opera-glass, and looked another way. Although apparently not noticing Albert, he did not, however, lose sight of him, and when the curtain fell at the end of the second act, he saw him leave the orchestra with his two friends. Then

his head was seen passing at the back of the boxes, and the count knew that the approaching storm was intended to fall on him. He was at the moment conversing cheerfully with Morrel, but he was well prepared for what might happen.

The door opened, and Monte Cristo, turning round, saw Albert, pale and trembling, followed by Beauchamp and Château-Renaud.

“Well,” cried he, with that benevolent politeness which distinguished his salutation from the common civilities of the world, “my cavalier has attained his object. Good-evening, M. de Morcerf.”

The countenance of this man, who possessed such extraordinary control over his feelings, expressed the most perfect cordiality. Morrel only then recollects the letter he had received from the viscount, in which, without assigning any reason, he begged him to go to the Opera, but he understood that something terrible was brooding.

“We are not come here, sir, to exchange hypocritical expressions of politeness, or false professions of friendship,” said Albert, “but to demand an explanation.”

The young man’s trembling voice was scarcely audible.

“An explanation at the Opera?” said the count, with that calm tone and penetrating eye which characterize the man who knows his cause is good. “Little acquainted as I am with the habits of Parisians, I should not have thought this the place for such a demand.”

“Still, if people will shut themselves up,” said Albert, “and cannot be seen because they are bathing, dining, or asleep, we must avail ourselves of the opportunity whenever they are to be seen.”

“I am not difficult of access, sir; for yesterday, if my memory does not deceive me, you were at my house.”

“Yesterday I was at your house, sir,” said the young man; “because then I knew not who you were.”

In pronouncing these words Albert had raised his voice so as to be heard by those in the adjoining boxes and in the lobby. Thus the attention of many was attracted by this altercation.

“Where are you come from, sir? ” said Monte Cristo “You do not appear to be in the possession of your senses.”

“Provided I understand your perfidy, sir, and succeed in making you understand that I will be revenged, I shall be reasonable enough,” said Albert furiously.

"I do not understand you, sir," replied Monte Cristo; "and if I did, your tone is too high. I am at home here, and I alone have a right to raise my voice above another's. Leave the box, sir!"

Monte Cristo pointed towards the door with the most commanding dignity.

"Ah, I shall know how to make you leave your home!" replied Albert, clasping in his convulsed grasp the glove, which Monte Cristo did not lose sight of.

"Well, well," said Monte Cristo quietly, "I see you wish to quarrel with me; but I would give you one piece of advice, which you will do well to keep in mind. It is in poor taste to make a display of a challenge. Display is not becoming to everyone, M. de Morcerf."

At this name a murmur of astonishment passed around the group of spectators of this scene. They had talked of no one but Morcerf the whole day. Albert understood the allusion in a moment, and was about to throw his glove at the count, when Morrel seized his hand, while Beauchamp and Château-Renaud, fearing the scene would surpass the limits of a challenge, held him back. But Monte Cristo, without rising, and leaning forward in his chair, merely stretched out his arm and, taking the damp, crushed glove from the clenched hand of the young man:

"Sir," said he in a solemn tone, "I consider your glove thrown, and will return it to you wrapped around a bullet. Now leave me or I will summon my servants to throw you out at the door."

Wild, almost unconscious, and with eyes inflamed, Albert stepped back, and Morrel closed the door. Monte Cristo took up his glass again as if nothing had happened; his face was like marble, and his heart was like bronze. Morrel whispered, "What have you done to him?"

"I? Nothing—at least personally," said Monte Cristo.

"But there must be some cause for this strange scene."

"The Count of Morcerf's adventure exasperates the young man."

"Have you anything to do with it?"

"It was through Haydée that the Chamber was informed of his father's treason."

"Indeed?" said Morrel. "I had been told, but would not credit it, that the Grecian slave I have seen with you here in this very box was the daughter of Ali Pasha."

"It is true, nevertheless."

“Then,” said Morrel, “I understand it all, and this scene was premeditated.”

“How so?”

“Yes. Albert wrote to request me to come to the Opera, doubtless that I might be a witness to the insult he meant to offer you.”

“Probably,” said Monte Cristo with his imperturbable tranquillity.

“But what shall you do with him?”

“With whom?”

“With Albert.”

“What shall I do with Albert? As certainly, Maximilian, as I now press your hand, I shall kill him before ten o’clock tomorrow morning.” Morrel, in his turn, took Monte Cristo’s hand in both of his, and he shuddered to feel how cold and steady it was.

“Ah, count,” said he, “his father loves him so much!”

“Do not speak to me of that,” said Monte Cristo, with the first movement of anger he had betrayed; “I will make him suffer.”

Morrel, amazed, let fall Monte Cristo’s hand. “Count, count!” said he.

“Dear Maximilian,” interrupted the count, “listen how adorably Duprez is singing that line,—

‘O Mathilde! idole de mon âme!’

“I was the first to discover Duprez at Naples, and the first to applaud him. Bravo, bravo!”

Morrel saw it was useless to say more, and refrained. The curtain, which had risen at the close of the scene with Albert, again fell, and a rap was heard at the door.

“Come in,” said Monte Cristo with a voice that betrayed not the least emotion; and immediately Beauchamp appeared. “Good-evening, M. Beauchamp,” said Monte Cristo, as if this was the first time he had seen the journalist that evening; “be seated.”

Beauchamp bowed, and, sitting down, “Sir,” said he, “I just now accompanied M. de Morcerf, as you saw.”

“And that means,” replied Monte Cristo, laughing, “that you had, probably, just dined together. I am happy to see, M. Beauchamp, that you are more sober than he was.”

“Sir,” said M. Beauchamp, “Albert was wrong, I acknowledge, to betray so

much anger, and I come, on my own account, to apologize for him. And having done so, entirely on my own account, be it understood, I would add that I believe you too gentlemanly to refuse giving him some explanation concerning your connection with Yanina. Then I will add two words about the young Greek girl."

Monte Cristo motioned him to be silent. "Come," said he, laughing, "there are all my hopes about to be destroyed."

"How so?" asked Beauchamp.

"Doubtless you wish to make me appear a very eccentric character. I am, in your opinion, a Lara, a Manfred, a Lord Ruthven; then, just as I am arriving at the climax, you defeat your own end, and seek to make an ordinary man of me. You bring me down to your own level, and demand explanations! Indeed, M. Beauchamp, it is quite laughable."

"Yet," replied Beauchamp haughtily, "there are occasions when probity commands——"

"M. Beauchamp," interposed this strange man, "the Count of Monte Cristo bows to none but the Count of Monte Cristo himself. Say no more, I entreat you. I do what I please, M. Beauchamp, and it is always well done."

"Sir," replied the young man, "honest men are not to be paid with such coin. I require honorable guaranties."

"I am, sir, a living guaranty," replied Monte Cristo, motionless, but with a threatening look; "we have both blood in our veins which we wish to shed—that is our mutual guaranty. Tell the viscount so, and that tomorrow, before ten o'clock, I shall see what color his is."

"Then I have only to make arrangements for the duel," said Beauchamp.

"It is quite immaterial to me," said Monte Cristo, "and it was very unnecessary to disturb me at the Opera for such a trifle. In France people fight with the sword or pistol, in the colonies with the carbine, in Arabia with the dagger. Tell your client that, although I am the insulted party, in order to carry out my eccentricity, I leave him the choice of arms, and will accept without discussion, without dispute, anything, even combat by drawing lots, which is always stupid, but with me different from other people, as I am sure to gain."

"Sure to gain!" repeated Beauchamp, looking with amazement at the count.

"Certainly," said Monte Cristo, slightly shrugging his shoulders; "otherwise I would not fight with M. de Morcerf. I shall kill him—I cannot help it. Only by a single line this evening at my house let me know the arms and the hour; I do not like to be kept waiting."

"Pistols, then, at eight o'clock, in the Bois de Vincennes," said Beauchamp, quite disconcerted, not knowing if he was dealing with an arrogant braggadocio or a supernatural being.

"Very well, sir," said Monte Cristo. "Now all that is settled, do let me see the performance, and tell your friend Albert not to come any more this evening; he will hurt himself with all his ill-chosen barbarisms: let him go home and go to sleep."

Beauchamp left the box, perfectly amazed.

"Now," said Monte Cristo, turning towards Morrel, "I may depend upon you, may I not?"

"Certainly," said Morrel, "I am at your service, count; still——"

"What?"

"It is desirable I should know the real cause."

"That is to say, you would rather not?"

"No."

"The young man himself is acting blindfolded, and knows not the true cause, which is known only to God and to me; but I give you my word, Morrel, that God, who does know it, will be on our side."

"Enough," said Morrel; "who is your second witness?"

"I know no one in Paris, Morrel, on whom I could confer that honor besides you and your brother Emmanuel. Do you think Emmanuel would oblige me?"

"I will answer for him, count."

"Well? that is all I require. Tomorrow morning, at seven o'clock, you will be with me, will you not?"

"We will."

"Hush, the curtain is rising. Listen! I never lose a note of this opera if I can avoid it; the music of *William Tell* is so sweet."

Chapter 89. The Night

Monte Cristo waited, according to his usual custom, until Duprez had sung his famous “*Suivez-moi!*” then he rose and went out. Morrel took leave of him at the door, renewing his promise to be with him the next morning at seven o’clock, and to bring Emmanuel. Then he stepped into his *coupé*, calm and smiling, and was at home in five minutes. No one who knew the count could mistake his expression when, on entering, he said:

“Ali, bring me my pistols with the ivory cross.”

Ali brought the box to his master, who examined the weapons with a solicitude very natural to a man who is about to intrust his life to a little powder and shot. These were pistols of an especial pattern, which Monte Cristo had had made for target practice in his own room. A cap was sufficient to drive out the bullet, and from the adjoining room no one would have suspected that the count was, as sportsmen would say, keeping his hand in.

He was just taking one up and looking for the point to aim at on a little iron plate which served him as a target, when his study door opened, and Baptistin entered. Before he had spoken a word, the count saw in the next room a veiled woman, who had followed closely after Baptistin, and now, seeing the count with a pistol in his hand and swords on the table, rushed in. Baptistin looked at his master, who made a sign to him, and he went out, closing the door after him.

“Who are you, madame?” said the count to the veiled woman.

40227m

The stranger cast one look around her, to be certain that they were quite alone; then bending as if she would have knelt, and joining her hands, she said with an accent of despair:

“Edmond, you will not kill my son!”

The count retreated a step, uttered a slight exclamation, and let fall the pistol he held.

“What name did you pronounce then, Madame de Morcerf?” said he.

“Yours!” cried she, throwing back her veil,—“yours, which I alone, perhaps, have not forgotten. Edmond, it is not Madame de Morcerf who is come to you, it

is Mercédès."

"Mercédès is dead, madame," said Monte Cristo; "I know no one now of that name."

"Mercédès lives, sir, and she remembers, for she alone recognized you when she saw you, and even before she saw you, by your voice, Edmond,—by the simple sound of your voice; and from that moment she has followed your steps, watched you, feared you, and she needs not to inquire what hand has dealt the blow which now strikes M. de Morcerf."

"Fernand, do you mean?" replied Monte Cristo, with bitter irony; "since we are recalling names, let us remember them all." Monte Cristo had pronounced the name of Fernand with such an expression of hatred that Mercédès felt a thrill of horror run through every vein.

"You see, Edmond, I am not mistaken, and have cause to say, 'Spare my son!'"

"And who told you, madame, that I have any hostile intentions against your son?"

"No one, in truth; but a mother has twofold sight. I guessed all; I followed him this evening to the Opera, and, concealed in a parquet box, have seen all."

"If you have seen all, madame, you know that the son of Fernand has publicly insulted me," said Monte Cristo with awful calmness.

"Oh, for pity's sake!"

"You have seen that he would have thrown his glove in my face if Morrel, one of my friends, had not stopped him."

"Listen to me, my son has also guessed who you are,—he attributes his father's misfortunes to you."

"Madame, you are mistaken, they are not misfortunes,—it is a punishment. It is not I who strike M. de Morcerf; it is Providence which punishes him."

"And why do you represent Providence?" cried Mercédès. "Why do you remember when it forgets? What are Yanina and its vizier to you, Edmond? What injury has Fernand Mondego done you in betraying Ali Tepelini?"

"Ah, madame," replied Monte Cristo, "all this is an affair between the French captain and the daughter of Vasiliki. It does not concern me, you are right; and if I have sworn to revenge myself, it is not on the French captain, or the Count of Morcerf, but on the fisherman Fernand, the husband of Mercédès the Catalane."

"Ah, sir!" cried the countess, "how terrible a vengeance for a fault which fatality made me commit!—for I am the only culprit, Edmond, and if you owe

revenge to anyone, it is to me, who had not fortitude to bear your absence and my solitude."

"But," exclaimed Monte Cristo, "why was I absent? And why were you alone?"

40231m

"Because you had been arrested, Edmond, and were a prisoner."

"And why was I arrested? Why was I a prisoner?"

"I do not know," said Mercédès.

"You do not, madame; at least, I hope not. But I will tell you. I was arrested and became a prisoner because, under the arbor of La Réserve, the day before I was to marry you, a man named Danglars wrote this letter, which the fisherman Fernand himself posted."

Monte Cristo went to a secretaire, opened a drawer by a spring, from which he took a paper which had lost its original color, and the ink of which had become of a rusty hue—this he placed in the hands of Mercédès. It was Danglars' letter to the king's attorney, which the Count of Monte Cristo, disguised as a clerk from the house of Thomson & French, had taken from the file against Edmond Dantès, on the day he had paid the two hundred thousand francs to M. de Boville. Mercédès read with terror the following lines:

"The king's attorney is informed by a friend to the throne and religion that one Edmond Dantès, second in command on board the *Pharaon*, this day arrived from Smyrna, after having touched at Naples and Porto-Ferrajo, is the bearer of a letter from Murat to the usurper, and of another letter from the usurper to the Bonapartist club in Paris. Ample corroboration of this statement may be obtained by arresting the above-mentioned Edmond Dantès, who either carries the letter for Paris about with him, or has it at his father's abode. Should it not be found in possession of either father or son, then it will assuredly be discovered in the cabin belonging to the said Dantès on board the *Pharaon*."

"How dreadful!" said Mercédès, passing her hand across her brow, moist with perspiration; "and that letter——"

"I bought it for two hundred thousand francs, madame," said Monte Cristo; "but that is a trifle, since it enables me to justify myself to you."

"And the result of that letter——"

“You well know, madame, was my arrest; but you do not know how long that arrest lasted. You do not know that I remained for fourteen years within a quarter of a league of you, in a dungeon in the Château d’If. You do not know that every day of those fourteen years I renewed the vow of vengeance which I had made the first day; and yet I was not aware that you had married Fernand, my calumniator, and that my father had died of hunger!”

“Can it be?” cried Mercédès, shuddering.

“That is what I heard on leaving my prison fourteen years after I had entered it; and that is why, on account of the living Mercédès and my deceased father, I have sworn to revenge myself on Fernand, and—I have revenged myself.”

“And you are sure the unhappy Fernand did that?”

“I am satisfied, madame, that he did what I have told you; besides, that is not much more odious than that a Frenchman by adoption should pass over to the English; that a Spaniard by birth should have fought against the Spaniards; that a stipendiary of Ali should have betrayed and murdered Ali. Compared with such things, what is the letter you have just read?—a lover’s deception, which the woman who has married that man ought certainly to forgive; but not so the lover who was to have married her. Well, the French did not avenge themselves on the traitor, the Spaniards did not shoot the traitor, Ali in his tomb left the traitor unpunished; but I, betrayed, sacrificed, buried, have risen from my tomb, by the grace of God, to punish that man. He sends me for that purpose, and here I am.”

The poor woman’s head and arms fell; her legs bent under her, and she fell on her knees.

“Forgive, Edmond, forgive for my sake, who love you still!”

The dignity of the wife checked the fervor of the lover and the mother. Her forehead almost touched the carpet, when the count sprang forward and raised her. Then seated on a chair, she looked at the manly countenance of Monte Cristo, on which grief and hatred still impressed a threatening expression.

“Not crush that accursed race?” murmured he; “abandon my purpose at the moment of its accomplishment? Impossible, madame, impossible!”

“Edmond,” said the poor mother, who tried every means, “when I call you Edmond, why do you not call me Mercédès?”

“Mercédès!” repeated Monte Cristo; “Mercédès! Well yes, you are right; that name has still its charms, and this is the first time for a long period that I have pronounced it so distinctly. Oh, Mercédès, I have uttered your name with the sigh of melancholy, with the groan of sorrow, with the last effort of despair; I

have uttered it when frozen with cold, crouched on the straw in my dungeon; I have uttered it, consumed with heat, rolling on the stone floor of my prison. Mercédès, I must revenge myself, for I suffered fourteen years,—fourteen years I wept, I cursed; now I tell you, Mercédès, I must revenge myself."

The count, fearing to yield to the entreaties of her he had so ardently loved, called his sufferings to the assistance of his hatred.

"Revenge yourself, then, Edmond," cried the poor mother; "but let your vengeance fall on the culprits,—on him, on me, but not on my son!"

"It is written in the good book," said Monte Cristo, "that the sins of the fathers shall fall upon their children to the third and fourth generation. Since God himself dictated those words to his prophet, why should I seek to make myself better than God?"

"Edmond," continued Mercédès, with her arms extended towards the count, "since I first knew you, I have adored your name, have respected your memory. Edmond, my friend, do not compel me to tarnish that noble and pure image reflected incessantly on the mirror of my heart. Edmond, if you knew all the prayers I have addressed to God for you while I thought you were living and since I have thought you must be dead! Yes, dead, alas! I imagined your dead body buried at the foot of some gloomy tower, or cast to the bottom of a pit by hateful jailers, and I wept! What could I do for you, Edmond, besides pray and weep? Listen; for ten years I dreamed each night the same dream. I had been told that you had endeavored to escape; that you had taken the place of another prisoner; that you had slipped into the winding sheet of a dead body; that you had been thrown alive from the top of the Château d'If, and that the cry you uttered as you dashed upon the rocks first revealed to your jailers that they were your murderers. Well, Edmond, I swear to you, by the head of that son for whom I entreat your pity,—Edmond, for ten years I saw every night every detail of that frightful tragedy, and for ten years I heard every night the cry which awoke me, shuddering and cold. And I, too, Edmond—oh! believe me—guilty as I was—oh, yes, I, too, have suffered much!"

"Have you known what it is to have your father starve to death in your absence?" cried Monte Cristo, thrusting his hands into his hair; "have you seen the woman you loved giving her hand to your rival, while you were perishing at the bottom of a dungeon?"

"No," interrupted Mercédès, "but I have seen him whom I loved on the point of murdering my son."

Mercédès uttered these words with such deep anguish, with an accent of such

intense despair, that Monte Cristo could not restrain a sob. The lion was daunted; the avenger was conquered.

“What do you ask of me?” said he,—“your son’s life? Well, he shall live!”

Mercédès uttered a cry which made the tears start from Monte Cristo’s eyes; but these tears disappeared almost instantaneously, for, doubtless, God had sent some angel to collect them—far more precious were they in his eyes than the richest pearls of Guzerat and Ophir.

“Oh,” said she, seizing the count’s hand and raising it to her lips; “oh, thank you, thank you, Edmond! Now you are exactly what I dreamt you were,—the man I always loved. Oh, now I may say so!”

“So much the better,” replied Monte Cristo; “as that poor Edmond will not have long to be loved by you. Death is about to return to the tomb, the phantom to retire in darkness.”

“What do you say, Edmond?”

“I say, since you command me, Mercédès, I must die.”

“Die? and why so? Who talks of dying? Whence have you these ideas of death?”

“You do not suppose that, publicly outraged in the face of a whole theatre, in the presence of your friends and those of your son—challenged by a boy who will glory in my forgiveness as if it were a victory—you do not suppose that I can for one moment wish to live. What I most loved after you, Mercédès, was myself, my dignity, and that strength which rendered me superior to other men; that strength was my life. With one word you have crushed it, and I die.”

“But the duel will not take place, Edmond, since you forgive?”

“It will take place,” said Monte Cristo, in a most solemn tone; “but instead of your son’s blood to stain the ground, mine will flow.”

Mercédès shrieked, and sprang towards Monte Cristo, but, suddenly stopping, “Edmond,” said she, “there is a God above us, since you live and since I have seen you again; I trust to him from my heart. While waiting his assistance I trust to your word; you have said that my son should live, have you not?”

“Yes, madame, he shall live,” said Monte Cristo, surprised that without more emotion Mercédès had accepted the heroic sacrifice he made for her. Mercédès extended her hand to the count.

“Edmond,” said she, and her eyes were wet with tears while looking at him to whom she spoke, “how noble it is of you, how great the action you have just performed, how sublime to have taken pity on a poor woman who appealed to

you with every chance against her, Alas, I am grown old with grief more than with years, and cannot now remind my Edmond by a smile, or by a look, of that Mercédès whom he once spent so many hours in contemplating. Ah, believe me, Edmond, as I told you, I too have suffered much; I repeat, it is melancholy to pass one's life without having one joy to recall, without preserving a single hope; but that proves that all is not yet over. No, it is not finished; I feel it by what remains in my heart. Oh, I repeat it, Edmond; what you have just done is beautiful—it is grand; it is sublime."

"Do you say so now, Mercédès?—then what would you say if you knew the extent of the sacrifice I make to you? Suppose that the Supreme Being, after having created the world and fertilized chaos, had paused in the work to spare an angel the tears that might one day flow for mortal sins from her immortal eyes; suppose that when everything was in readiness and the moment had come for God to look upon his work and see that it was good—suppose he had snuffed out the sun and tossed the world back into eternal night—then—even then, Mercédès, you could not imagine what I lose in sacrificing my life at this moment."

Mercédès looked at the count in a way which expressed at the same time her astonishment, her admiration, and her gratitude. Monte Cristo pressed his forehead on his burning hands, as if his brain could no longer bear alone the weight of its thoughts.

"Edmond," said Mercédès, "I have but one word more to say to you."

The count smiled bitterly.

"Edmond," continued she, "you will see that if my face is pale, if my eyes are dull, if my beauty is gone; if Mercédès, in short, no longer resembles her former self in her features, you will see that her heart is still the same. Adieu, then, Edmond; I have nothing more to ask of heaven—I have seen you again, and have found you as noble and as great as formerly you were. Adieu, Edmond, adieu, and thank you."

But the count did not answer. Mercédès opened the door of the study and had disappeared before he had recovered from the painful and profound reverie into which his thwarted vengeance had plunged him.

The clock of the Invalides struck one when the carriage which conveyed Madame de Morcerf rolled away on the pavement of the Champs-Élysées, and made Monte Cristo raise his head.

"What a fool I was," said he, "not to tear my heart out on the day when I resolved to avenge myself!"

Chapter 90. The Meeting

After Mercédès had left Monte Cristo, he fell into profound gloom. Around him and within him the flight of thought seemed to have stopped; his energetic mind slumbered, as the body does after extreme fatigue.

“What?” said he to himself, while the lamp and the wax lights were nearly burnt out, and the servants were waiting impatiently in the anteroom; “what? this edifice which I have been so long preparing, which I have reared with so much care and toil, is to be crushed by a single touch, a word, a breath! Yes, this self, of whom I thought so much, of whom I was so proud, who had appeared so worthless in the dungeons of the Château d’If, and whom I had succeeded in making so great, will be but a lump of clay tomorrow. Alas, it is not the death of the body I regret; for is not the destruction of the vital principle, the repose to which everything is tending, to which every unhappy being aspires,—is not this the repose of matter after which I so long sighed, and which I was seeking to attain by the painful process of starvation when Faria appeared in my dungeon? What is death for me? One step farther into rest,—two, perhaps, into silence. No, it is not existence, then, that I regret, but the ruin of projects so slowly carried out, so laboriously framed. Providence is now opposed to them, when I most thought it would be propitious. It is not God’s will that they should be accomplished. This burden, almost as heavy as a world, which I had raised, and I had thought to bear to the end, was too great for my strength, and I was compelled to lay it down in the middle of my career. Oh, shall I then, again become a fatalist, whom fourteen years of despair and ten of hope had rendered a believer in Providence?

“And all this—all this, because my heart, which I thought dead, was only sleeping; because it has awakened and has begun to beat again, because I have yielded to the pain of the emotion excited in my breast by a woman’s voice.

“Yet,” continued the count, becoming each moment more absorbed in the anticipation of the dreadful sacrifice for the morrow, which Mercédès had accepted, “yet, it is impossible that so noble-minded a woman should thus through selfishness consent to my death when I am in the prime of life and strength; it is impossible that she can carry to such a point maternal love, or rather delirium. There are virtues which become crimes by exaggeration. No, she

must have conceived some pathetic scene; she will come and throw herself between us; and what would be sublime here will there appear ridiculous."

The blush of pride mounted to the count's forehead as this thought passed through his mind.

"Ridiculous?" repeated he; "and the ridicule will fall on me. I ridiculous? No, I would rather die."

By thus exaggerating to his own mind the anticipated ill-fortune of the next day, to which he had condemned himself by promising Mercédès to spare her son, the count at last exclaimed:

"Folly, folly, folly!—to carry generosity so far as to put myself up as a mark for that young man to aim at. He will never believe that my death was suicide; and yet it is important for the honor of my memory,—and this surely is not vanity, but a justifiable pride,—it is important the world should know that I have consented, by my free will, to stop my arm, already raised to strike, and that with the arm which has been so powerful against others I have struck myself. It must be; it shall be."

Seizing a pen, he drew a paper from a secret drawer in his desk, and wrote at the bottom of the document (which was no other than his will, made since his arrival in Paris) a sort of codicil, clearly explaining the nature of his death.

"I do this, Oh, my God," said he, with his eyes raised to heaven, "as much for thy honor as for mine. I have during ten years considered myself the agent of thy vengeance, and other wretches, like Morcerf, Danglars, Villefort, even Morcerf himself, must not imagine that chance has freed them from their enemy. Let them know, on the contrary, that their punishment, which had been decreed by Providence, is only delayed by my present determination, and although they escape it in this world, it awaits them in another, and that they are only exchanging time for eternity."

While he was thus agitated by gloomy uncertainties,—wretched waking dreams of grief,—the first rays of morning pierced his windows, and shone upon the pale blue paper on which he had just inscribed his justification of Providence.

It was just five o'clock in the morning when a slight noise like a stifled sigh reached his ear. He turned his head, looked around him, and saw no one; but the sound was repeated distinctly enough to convince him of its reality.

He arose, and quietly opening the door of the drawing-room, saw Haydée, who had fallen on a chair, with her arms hanging down and her beautiful head thrown back. She had been standing at the door, to prevent his going out without

seeing her, until sleep, which the young cannot resist, had overpowered her frame, wearied as she was with watching. The noise of the door did not awaken her, and Monte Cristo gazed at her with affectionate regret.

“She remembered that she had a son,” said he; “and I forgot I had a daughter.” Then, shaking his head sorrowfully, “Poor Haydée,” said he; “she wished to see me, to speak to me; she has feared or guessed something. Oh, I cannot go without taking leave of her; I cannot die without confiding her to someone.”

He quietly regained his seat, and wrote under the other lines:

“I bequeath to Maximilian Morrel, captain of Spahis,—and son of my former patron, Pierre Morrel, shipowner at Marseilles,—the sum of twenty millions, a part of which may be offered to his sister Julie and brother-in-law Emmanuel, if he does not fear this increase of fortune may mar their happiness. These twenty millions are concealed in my grotto at Monte Cristo, of which Bertuccio knows the secret. If his heart is free, and he will marry Haydée, the daughter of Ali Pasha of Yanina, whom I have brought up with the love of a father, and who has shown the love and tenderness of a daughter for me, he will thus accomplish my last wish. This will has already constituted Haydée heiress of the rest of my fortune, consisting of lands, funds in England, Austria, and Holland, furniture in my different palaces and houses, and which without the twenty millions and the legacies to my servants, may still amount to sixty millions.”

40241m

He was finishing the last line when a cry behind him made him start, and the pen fell from his hand.

“Haydée,” said he, “did you read it?”

“Oh, my lord,” said she, “why are you writing thus at such an hour? Why are you bequeathing all your fortune to me? Are you going to leave me?”

“I am going on a journey, dear child,” said Monte Cristo, with an expression of infinite tenderness and melancholy; “and if any misfortune should happen to me——”

The count stopped.

“Well?” asked the young girl, with an authoritative tone the count had never observed before, and which startled him.

"Well, if any misfortune happen to me," replied Monte Cristo, "I wish my daughter to be happy." Haydée smiled sorrowfully, and shook her head.

"Do you think of dying, my lord?" said she.

"The wise man, my child, has said, 'It is good to think of death.'"

"Well, if you die," said she, "bequeath your fortune to others, for if you die I shall require nothing;" and, taking the paper, she tore it in four pieces, and threw it into the middle of the room. Then, the effort having exhausted her strength, she fell, not asleep this time, but fainting on the floor.

The count leaned over her and raised her in his arms; and seeing that sweet pale face, those lovely eyes closed, that beautiful form motionless and to all appearance lifeless, the idea occurred to him for the first time, that perhaps she loved him otherwise than as a daughter loves a father.

"Alas," murmured he, with intense suffering, "I might, then, have been happy yet."

Then he carried Haydée to her room, resigned her to the care of her attendants, and returning to his study, which he shut quickly this time, he again copied the destroyed will. As he was finishing, the sound of a cabriolet entering the yard was heard. Monte Cristo approached the window, and saw Maximilian and Emmanuel alight. "Good," said he; "it was time,"—and he sealed his will with three seals.

A moment afterwards he heard a noise in the drawing-room, and went to open the door himself. Morrel was there; he had come twenty minutes before the time appointed.

"I am perhaps come too soon, count," said he, "but I frankly acknowledge that I have not closed my eyes all night, nor has anyone in my house. I need to see you strong in your courageous assurance, to recover myself."

Monte Cristo could not resist this proof of affection; he not only extended his hand to the young man, but flew to him with open arms.

"Morrel," said he, "it is a happy day for me, to feel that I am beloved by such a man as you. Good-morning, Emmanuel; you will come with me then, Maximilian?"

"Did you doubt it?" said the young captain.

"But if I were wrong——"

"I watched you during the whole scene of that challenge yesterday; I have been thinking of your firmness all night, and I said to myself that justice must be on your side, or man's countenance is no longer to be relied on."

“But, Morrel, Albert is your friend?”

“Simply an acquaintance, sir.”

“You met on the same day you first saw me?”

“Yes, that is true; but I should not have recollected it if you had not reminded me.”

“Thank you, Morrel.” Then ringing the bell once, “Look.” said he to Ali, who came immediately, “take that to my solicitor. It is my will, Morrel. When I am dead, you will go and examine it.”

“What?” said Morrel, “you dead?”

“Yes; must I not be prepared for everything, dear friend? But what did you do yesterday after you left me?”

“I went to Tortoni’s, where, as I expected, I found Beauchamp and Château-Renaud. I own I was seeking them.”

“Why, when all was arranged?”

“Listen, count; the affair is serious and unavoidable.”

“Did you doubt it!”

“No; the offence was public, and everyone is already talking of it.”

“Well?”

“Well, I hoped to get an exchange of arms,—to substitute the sword for the pistol; the pistol is blind.”

“Have you succeeded?” asked Monte Cristo quickly, with an imperceptible gleam of hope.

“No; for your skill with the sword is so well known.”

“Ah?—who has betrayed me?”

“The skilful swordsman whom you have conquered.”

“And you failed?”

“They positively refused.”

“Morrel,” said the count, “have you ever seen me fire a pistol?”

“Never.”

“Well, we have time; look.” Monte Cristo took the pistols he held in his hand when Mercédès entered, and fixing an ace of clubs against the iron plate, with four shots he successively shot off the four sides of the club. At each shot Morrel turned pale. He examined the bullets with which Monte Cristo performed this dexterous feat, and saw that they were no larger than buckshot.

"It is astonishing," said he. "Look, Emmanuel." Then turning towards Monte Cristo, "Count," said he, "in the name of all that is dear to you, I entreat you not to kill Albert!—the unhappy youth has a mother."

"You are right," said Monte Cristo; "and I have none." These words were uttered in a tone which made Morrel shudder.

"You are the offended party, count."

"Doubtless; what does that imply?"

"That you will fire first."

"I fire first?"

"Oh, I obtained, or rather claimed that; we had conceded enough for them to yield us that."

"And at what distance?"

"Twenty paces." A smile of terrible import passed over the count's lips.

"Morrel," said he, "do not forget what you have just seen."

"The only chance for Albert's safety, then, will arise from your emotion."

"I suffer from emotion?" said Monte Cristo.

"Or from your generosity, my friend; to so good a marksman as you are, I may say what would appear absurd to another."

"What is that?"

"Break his arm—wound him—but do not kill him."

"I will tell you, Morrel," said the count, "that I do not need entreating to spare the life of M. de Morcerf; he shall be so well spared, that he will return quietly with his two friends, while I——"

"And you?"

"That will be another thing; I shall be brought home."

"No, no," cried Maximilian, quite unable to restrain his feelings.

"As I told you, my dear Morrel, M. de Morcerf will kill me."

Morrel looked at him in utter amazement. "But what has happened, then, since last evening, count?"

"The same thing that happened to Brutus the night before the battle of Philippi; I have seen a ghost."

"And that ghost——"

"Told me, Morrel, that I had lived long enough."

Maximilian and Emmanuel looked at each other. Monte Cristo drew out his watch. "Let us go," said he; "it is five minutes past seven, and the appointment was for eight o'clock."

A carriage was in readiness at the door. Monte Cristo stepped into it with his two friends. He had stopped a moment in the passage to listen at a door, and Maximilian and Emmanuel, who had considerably passed forward a few steps, thought they heard him answer by a sigh to a sob from within. As the clock struck eight they drove up to the place of meeting.

"We are first," said Morrel, looking out of the window.

"Excuse me, sir," said Baptistin, who had followed his master with indescribable terror, "but I think I see a carriage down there under the trees."

Monte Cristo sprang lightly from the carriage, and offered his hand to assist Emmanuel and Maximilian. The latter retained the count's hand between his.

"I like," said he, "to feel a hand like this, when its owner relies on the goodness of his cause."

"It seems to me," said Emmanuel, "that I see two young men down there, who are evidently, waiting."

Monte Cristo drew Morrel a step or two behind his brother-in-law.

"Maximilian," said he, "are your affections disengaged?" Morrel looked at Monte Cristo with astonishment. "I do not seek your confidence, my dear friend. I only ask you a simple question; answer it;—that is all I require."

"I love a young girl, count."

"Do you love her much?"

"More than my life."

"Another hope defeated!" said the count. Then, with a sigh, "Poor Haydée!" murmured he.

"To tell the truth, count, if I knew less of you, I should think that you were less brave than you are."

"Because I sigh when thinking of someone I am leaving? Come, Morrel, it is not like a soldier to be so bad a judge of courage. Do I regret life? What is it to me, who have passed twenty years between life and death? Moreover, do not alarm yourself, Morrel; this weakness, if it is such, is betrayed to you alone. I know the world is a drawing-room, from which we must retire politely and honestly; that is, with a bow, and our debts of honor paid."

"That is to the purpose. Have you brought your arms?"

“I?—what for? I hope these gentlemen have theirs.”

“I will inquire,” said Morrel.

“Do; but make no treaty—you understand me?”

“You need not fear.” Morrel advanced towards Beauchamp and Château-Renaud, who, seeing his intention, came to meet him. The three young men bowed to each other courteously, if not affably.

“Excuse me, gentlemen,” said Morrel, “but I do not see M. de Morcerf.”

“He sent us word this morning,” replied Château-Renaud, “that he would meet us on the ground.”

“Ah,” said Morrel. Beauchamp pulled out his watch.

“It is only five minutes past eight,” said he to Morrel; “there is not much time lost yet.”

“Oh, I made no allusion of that kind,” replied Morrel.

“There is a carriage coming,” said Château-Renaud. It advanced rapidly along one of the avenues leading towards the open space where they were assembled.

“You are doubtless provided with pistols, gentlemen? M. de Monte Cristo yields his right of using his.”

“We had anticipated this kindness on the part of the count,” said Beauchamp, “and I have brought some weapons which I bought eight or ten days since, thinking to want them on a similar occasion. They are quite new, and have not yet been used. Will you examine them.”

“Oh, M. Beauchamp, if you assure me that M. de Morcerf does not know these pistols, you may readily believe that your word will be quite sufficient.”

“Gentlemen,” said Château-Renaud, “it is not Morcerf coming in that carriage;—faith, it is Franz and Debray!”

The two young men he announced were indeed approaching. “What chance brings you here, gentlemen?” said Château-Renaud, shaking hands with each of them.

“Because,” said Debray, “Albert sent this morning to request us to come.” Beauchamp and Château-Renaud exchanged looks of astonishment. “I think I understand his reason,” said Morrel.

“What is it?”

“Yesterday afternoon I received a letter from M. de Morcerf, begging me to attend the Opera.”

“And I,” said Debray.

“And I also,” said Franz.

“And we, too,” added Beauchamp and Château-Renaud.

“Having wished you all to witness the challenge, he now wishes you to be present at the combat.”

“Exactly so,” said the young men; “you have probably guessed right.”

“But, after all these arrangements, he does not come himself,” said Château-Renaud. “Albert is ten minutes after time.”

“There he comes,” said Beauchamp, “on horseback, at full gallop, followed by a servant.”

“How imprudent,” said Château-Renaud, “to come on horseback to fight a duel with pistols, after all the instructions I had given him.”

“And besides,” said Beauchamp, “with a collar above his cravat, an open coat and white waistcoat! Why has he not painted a spot upon his heart?—it would have been more simple.”

Meanwhile Albert had arrived within ten paces of the group formed by the five young men. He jumped from his horse, threw the bridle on his servant’s arms, and joined them. He was pale, and his eyes were red and swollen; it was evident that he had not slept. A shade of melancholy gravity overspread his countenance, which was not natural to him.

“I thank you, gentlemen,” said he, “for having complied with my request; I feel extremely grateful for this mark of friendship.” Morrel had stepped back as Morcerf approached, and remained at a short distance. “And to you also, M. Morrel, my thanks are due. Come, there cannot be too many.”

40248m

“Sir,” said Maximilian, “you are not perhaps aware that I am M. de Monte Cristo’s friend?”

“I was not sure, but I thought it might be so. So much the better; the more honorable men there are here the better I shall be satisfied.”

“M. Morrel,” said Château-Renaud, “will you apprise the Count of Monte Cristo that M. de Morcerf is arrived, and we are at his disposal?”

Morrel was preparing to fulfil his commission. Beauchamp had meanwhile drawn the box of pistols from the carriage.

“Stop, gentlemen,” said Albert; “I have two words to say to the Count of Monte Cristo.”

“In private?” asked Morrel.

“No, sir; before all who are here.”

Albert’s witnesses looked at each other. Franz and Debray exchanged some words in a whisper, and Morrel, rejoiced at this unexpected incident, went to fetch the count, who was walking in a retired path with Emmanuel.

“What does he want with me?” said Monte Cristo.

“I do not know, but he wishes to speak to you.”

“Ah?” said Monte Cristo, “I trust he is not going to tempt me by some fresh insult!”

“I do not think that such is his intention,” said Morrel.

The count advanced, accompanied by Maximilian and Emmanuel. His calm and serene look formed a singular contrast to Albert’s grief-stricken face, who approached also, followed by the other four young men.

When at three paces distant from each other, Albert and the count stopped.

“Approach, gentlemen,” said Albert; “I wish you not to lose one word of what I am about to have the honor of saying to the Count of Monte Cristo, for it must be repeated by you to all who will listen to it, strange as it may appear to you.”

“Proceed, sir,” said the count.

“Sir,” said Albert, at first with a tremulous voice, but which gradually became firmer, “I reproached you with exposing the conduct of M. de Morcerf in Epirus, for guilty as I knew he was, I thought you had no right to punish him; but I have since learned that you had that right. It is not Fernand Mondego’s treachery towards Ali Pasha which induces me so readily to excuse you, but the treachery of the fisherman Fernand towards you, and the almost unheard-of miseries which were its consequences; and I say, and proclaim it publicly, that you were justified in revenging yourself on my father, and I, his son, thank you for not using greater severity.”

Had a thunderbolt fallen in the midst of the spectators of this unexpected scene, it would not have surprised them more than did Albert’s declaration. As for Monte Cristo, his eyes slowly rose towards heaven with an expression of infinite gratitude. He could not understand how Albert’s fiery nature, of which he had seen so much among the Roman bandits, had suddenly stooped to this humiliation. He recognized the influence of Mercédès, and saw why her noble heart had not opposed the sacrifice she knew beforehand would be useless.

“Now, sir,” said Albert, “if you think my apology sufficient, pray give me your hand. Next to the merit of infallibility which you appear to possess, I rank that of candidly acknowledging a fault. But this confession concerns me only. I

acted well as a man, but you have acted better than man. An angel alone could have saved one of us from death—that angel came from heaven, if not to make us friends (which, alas, fatality renders impossible), at least to make us esteem each other.”

Monte Cristo, with moistened eye, heaving breast, and lips half open, extended to Albert a hand which the latter pressed with a sentiment resembling respectful fear.

“Gentlemen,” said he, “M. de Monte Cristo receives my apology. I had acted hastily towards him. Hasty actions are generally bad ones. Now my fault is repaired. I hope the world will not call me cowardly for acting as my conscience dictated. But if anyone should entertain a false opinion of me,” added he, drawing himself up as if he would challenge both friends and enemies, “I shall endeavor to correct his mistake.”

“What happened during the night?” asked Beauchamp of Château-Renaud; “we appear to make a very sorry figure here.”

“In truth, what Albert has just done is either very despicable or very noble,” replied the baron.

“What can it mean?” said Debray to Franz.

“The Count of Monte Cristo acts dishonorably to M. de Morcerf, and is justified by his son! Had I ten Yaninas in my family, I should only consider myself the more bound to fight ten times.”

As for Monte Cristo, his head was bent down, his arms were powerless. Bowing under the weight of twenty-four years’ reminiscences, he thought not of Albert, of Beauchamp, of Château-Renaud, or of any of that group; but he thought of that courageous woman who had come to plead for her son’s life, to whom he had offered his, and who had now saved it by the revelation of a dreadful family secret, capable of destroying forever in that young man’s heart every feeling of filial piety.

“Providence still,” murmured he; “now only am I fully convinced of being the emissary of God!”

Chapter 91. Mother and Son

The Count of Monte Cristo bowed to the five young men with a melancholy and dignified smile, and got into his carriage with Maximilian and Emmanuel. Albert, Beauchamp, and Château-Renaud remained alone. Albert looked at his two friends, not timidly, but in a way that appeared to ask their opinion of what he had just done.

"Indeed, my dear friend," said Beauchamp first, who had either the most feeling or the least dissimulation, "allow me to congratulate you; this is a very un hoped-for conclusion of a very disagreeable affair."

Albert remained silent and wrapped in thought. Château-Renaud contented himself with tapping his boot with his flexible cane.

"Are we not going?" said he, after this embarrassing silence.

"When you please," replied Beauchamp; "allow me only to compliment M. de Morcerf, who has given proof today of rare chivalric generosity."

"Oh, yes," said Château-Renaud.

"It is magnificent," continued Beauchamp, "to be able to exercise so much self-control!"

"Assuredly; as for me, I should have been incapable of it," said Château-Renaud, with most significant coolness.

"Gentlemen," interrupted Albert, "I think you did not understand that something very serious had passed between M. de Monte Cristo and myself."

"Possibly, possibly," said Beauchamp immediately; "but every simpleton would not be able to understand your heroism, and sooner or later you will find yourself compelled to explain it to them more energetically than would be convenient to your bodily health and the duration of your life. May I give you a friendly counsel? Set out for Naples, the Hague, or St. Petersburg—calm countries, where the point of honor is better understood than among our hot-headed Parisians. Seek quietude and oblivion, so that you may return peaceably to France after a few years. Am I not right, M. de Château-Renaud?"

40252m

"That is quite my opinion," said the gentleman; "nothing induces serious duels

so much as a duel forsworn."

"Thank you, gentlemen," replied Albert, with a smile of indifference; "I shall follow your advice—not because you give it, but because I had before intended to quit France. I thank you equally for the service you have rendered me in being my seconds. It is deeply engraved on my heart, and, after what you have just said, I remember that only."

Château-Renaud and Beauchamp looked at each other; the impression was the same on both of them, and the tone in which Morcerf had just expressed his thanks was so determined that the position would have become embarrassing for all if the conversation had continued.

"Good-bye, Albert," said Beauchamp suddenly, carelessly extending his hand to the young man. The latter did not appear to arouse from his lethargy; in fact, he did not notice the offered hand.

"Good-bye," said Château-Renaud in his turn, keeping his little cane in his left hand, and saluting with his right.

Albert's lips scarcely whispered "Good-bye," but his look was more explicit; it expressed a whole poem of restrained anger, proud disdain, and generous indignation. He preserved his melancholy and motionless position for some time after his two friends had regained their carriage; then suddenly unfastening his horse from the little tree to which his servant had tied it, he mounted and galloped off in the direction of Paris.

In a quarter of an hour he was entering the house in the Rue du Helder. As he alighted, he thought he saw his father's pale face behind the curtain of the count's bedroom. Albert turned away his head with a sigh, and went to his own apartments. He cast one lingering look on all the luxuries which had rendered life so easy and so happy since his infancy; he looked at the pictures, whose faces seemed to smile, and the landscapes, which appeared painted in brighter colors. Then he took away his mother's portrait, with its oaken frame, leaving the gilt frame from which he took it black and empty. Then he arranged all his beautiful Turkish arms, his fine English guns, his Japanese china, his cups mounted in silver, his artistic bronzes by Feuchères or Barye; examined the cupboards, and placed the key in each; threw into a drawer of his secretaire, which he left open, all the pocket-money he had about him, and with it the thousand fancy jewels from his vases and his jewel-boxes; then he made an exact inventory of everything, and placed it in the most conspicuous part of the table, after putting aside the books and papers which had collected there.

At the beginning of this work, his servant, notwithstanding orders to the

contrary, came to his room.

“What do you want?” asked he, with a more sorrowful than angry tone.

“Pardon me, sir,” replied the valet; “you had forbidden me to disturb you, but the Count of Morcerf has called me.”

“Well!” said Albert.

“I did not like to go to him without first seeing you.”

“Why?”

“Because the count is doubtless aware that I accompanied you to the meeting this morning.”

40254m

“It is probable,” said Albert.

“And since he has sent for me, it is doubtless to question me on what happened there. What must I answer?”

“The truth.”

“Then I shall say the duel did not take place?”

“You will say I apologized to the Count of Monte Cristo. Go.”

The valet bowed and retired, and Albert returned to his inventory. As he was finishing this work, the sound of horses prancing in the yard, and the wheels of a carriage shaking his window, attracted his attention. He approached the window, and saw his father get into it, and drive away. The door was scarcely closed when Albert bent his steps to his mother’s room; and, no one being there to announce him, he advanced to her bedchamber, and distressed by what he saw and guessed, stopped for one moment at the door.

As if the same idea had animated these two beings, Mercédès was doing the same in her apartments that he had just done in his. Everything was in order,—laces, dresses, jewels, linen, money, all were arranged in the drawers, and the countess was carefully collecting the keys. Albert saw all these preparations and understood them, and exclaiming, “My mother!” he threw his arms around her neck.

The artist who could have depicted the expression of these two countenances would certainly have made of them a beautiful picture. All these proofs of an energetic resolution, which Albert did not fear on his own account, alarmed him for his mother. “What are you doing?” asked he.

“What were you doing?” replied she.

“Oh, my mother!” exclaimed Albert, so overcome he could scarcely speak; “it

is not the same with you and me—you cannot have made the same resolution I have, for I have come to warn you that I bid adieu to your house, and—and to you."

"I also," replied Mercédès, "am going, and I acknowledge I had depended on your accompanying me; have I deceived myself?"

"Mother," said Albert with firmness. "I cannot make you share the fate I have planned for myself. I must live henceforth without rank and fortune, and to begin this hard apprenticeship I must borrow from a friend the loaf I shall eat until I have earned one. So, my dear mother, I am going at once to ask Franz to lend me the small sum I shall require to supply my present wants."

"You, my poor child, suffer poverty and hunger? Oh, do not say so; it will break my resolutions."

"But not mine, mother," replied Albert. "I am young and strong; I believe I am courageous, and since yesterday I have learned the power of will. Alas, my dear mother, some have suffered so much, and yet live, and have raised a new fortune on the ruin of all the promises of happiness which heaven had made them—on the fragments of all the hope which God had given them! I have seen that, mother; I know that from the gulf in which their enemies have plunged them they have risen with so much vigor and glory that in their turn they have ruled their former conquerors, and have punished them. No, mother; from this moment I have done with the past, and accept nothing from it—not even a name, because you can understand that your son cannot bear the name of a man who ought to blush for it before another."

"Albert, my child," said Mercédès, "if I had a stronger heart, that is the counsel I would have given you; your conscience has spoken when my voice became too weak; listen to its dictates. You had friends, Albert; break off their acquaintance. But do not despair; you have life before you, my dear Albert, for you are yet scarcely twenty-two years old; and as a pure heart like yours wants a spotless name, take my father's—it was Herrera. I am sure, my dear Albert, whatever may be your career, you will soon render that name illustrious. Then, my son, return to the world still more brilliant because of your former sorrows; and if I am wrong, still let me cherish these hopes, for I have no future to look forward to. For me the grave opens when I pass the threshold of this house."

"I will fulfil all your wishes, my dear mother," said the young man. "Yes, I share your hopes; the anger of Heaven will not pursue us, since you are pure and I am innocent. But, since our resolution is formed, let us act promptly. M. de Morcerf went out about half an hour ago; the opportunity is favorable to avoid

an explanation."

"I am ready, my son," said Mercédès.

Albert ran to fetch a carriage. He recollects that there was a small furnished house to let in the Rue des Saints-Pères, where his mother would find a humble but decent lodging, and thither he intended conducting the countess. As the carriage stopped at the door, and Albert was alighting, a man approached and gave him a letter.

Albert recognized the bearer. "From the count," said Bertuccio. Albert took the letter, opened, and read it, then looked round for Bertuccio, but he was gone.

He returned to Mercédès with tears in his eyes and heaving breast, and without uttering a word he gave her the letter. Mercédès read:

"Albert,—While showing you that I have discovered your plans, I hope also to convince you of my delicacy. You are free, you leave the count's house, and you take your mother to your home; but reflect, Albert, you owe her more than your poor noble heart can pay her. Keep the struggle for yourself, bear all the suffering, but spare her the trial of poverty which must accompany your first efforts; for she deserves not even the shadow of the misfortune which has this day fallen on her, and Providence is not willing that the innocent should suffer for the guilty. I know you are going to leave the Rue du Helder without taking anything with you. Do not seek to know how I discovered it; I know it—that is sufficient.

"Now, listen, Albert. Twenty-four years ago I returned, proud and joyful, to my country. I had a betrothed, Albert, a lovely girl whom I adored, and I was bringing to my betrothed a hundred and fifty louis, painfully amassed by ceaseless toil. This money was for her; I destined it for her, and, knowing the treachery of the sea I buried our treasure in the little garden of the house my father lived in at Marseilles, on the Allées de Meilhan. Your mother, Albert, knows that poor house well. A short time since I passed through Marseilles, and went to see the old place, which revived so many painful recollections; and in the evening I took a spade and dug in the corner of the garden where I had concealed my treasure. The iron box was there—no one had touched it—under a beautiful fig-tree my father had planted the day I was born, which overshadowed the spot. Well, Albert, this money, which was formerly designed to promote the comfort and tranquillity of the woman I adored, may now, through strange and painful circumstances, be devoted to the same purpose.

"Oh, feel for me, who could offer millions to that poor woman, but who return her only the piece of black bread forgotten under my poor roof since the day I

was torn from her I loved. You are a generous man, Albert, but perhaps you may be blinded by pride or resentment; if you refuse me, if you ask another for what I have a right to offer you, I will say it is ungenerous of you to refuse the life of your mother at the hands of a man whose father was allowed by your father to die in all the horrors of poverty and despair."

Albert stood pale and motionless to hear what his mother would decide after she had finished reading this letter. Mercédès turned her eyes with an ineffable look towards heaven.

"I accept it," said she; "he has a right to pay the dowry, which I shall take with me to some convent!"

Putting the letter in her bosom, she took her son's arm, and with a firmer step than she even herself expected she went downstairs.

Chapter 92. The Suicide

Meanwhile Monte Cristo had also returned to town with Emmanuel and Maximilian. Their return was cheerful. Emmanuel did not conceal his joy at the peaceful termination of the affair, and was loud in his expressions of delight. Morrel, in a corner of the carriage, allowed his brother-in-law's gayety to expend itself in words, while he felt equal inward joy, which, however, betrayed itself only in his countenance.

At the Barrière du Trône they met Bertuccio, who was waiting there, motionless as a sentinel at his post. Monte Cristo put his head out of the window, exchanged a few words with him in a low tone, and the steward disappeared.

"Count," said Emmanuel, when they were at the end of the Place Royale, "put me down at my door, that my wife may not have a single moment of needless anxiety on my account or yours."

"If it were not ridiculous to make a display of our triumph, said Morrel, I would invite the count to our house; besides that, he doubtless has some trembling heart to comfort. So we will take leave of our friend, and let him hasten home."

"Stop a moment," said Monte Cristo; "do not let me lose both my companions. Return, Emmanuel, to your charming wife, and present my best compliments to her; and do you, Morrel, accompany me to the Champs-Élysées."

"Willingly," said Maximilian; "particularly as I have business in that quarter."

"Shall we wait breakfast for you?" asked Emmanuel.

"No," replied the young man. The door was closed, and the carriage proceeded. "See what good fortune I brought you!" said Morrel, when he was alone with the count. "Have you not thought so?"

"Yes," said Monte Cristo; "for that reason I wished to keep you near me."

"It is miraculous!" continued Morrel, answering his own thoughts.

"What?" said Monte Cristo.

"What has just happened."

"Yes," said the Count, "you are right—it is miraculous."

“For Albert is brave,” resumed Morrel.

“Very brave,” said Monte Cristo; “I have seen him sleep with a sword suspended over his head.”

“And I know he has fought two duels,” said Morrel. “How can you reconcile that with his conduct this morning?”

“All owing to your influence,” replied Monte Cristo, smiling.

“It is well for Albert he is not in the army,” said Morrel.

“Why?”

“An apology on the ground!” said the young captain, shaking his head.

“Come,” said the count mildly, “do not entertain the prejudices of ordinary men, Morrel! Acknowledge, that if Albert is brave, he cannot be a coward; he must then have had some reason for acting as he did this morning, and confess that his conduct is more heroic than otherwise.”

“Doubtless, doubtless,” said Morrel; “but I shall say, like the Spaniard, ‘He has not been so brave today as he was yesterday.’”

“You will breakfast with me, will you not, Morrel?” said the count, to turn the conversation.

“No; I must leave you at ten o’clock.”

“Your engagement was for breakfast, then?” said the count.

Morrel smiled, and shook his head.

“Still you must breakfast somewhere.”

“But if I am not hungry?” said the young man.

“Oh,” said the count, “I only know two things which destroy the appetite,—grief—and as I am happy to see you very cheerful, it is not that—and love. Now after what you told me this morning of your heart, I may believe——”

“Well, count,” replied Morrel gayly, “I will not dispute it.”

“But you will not make me your confidant, Maximilian?” said the count, in a tone which showed how gladly he would have been admitted to the secret.

“I showed you this morning that I had a heart, did I not, count?” Monte Cristo only answered by extending his hand to the young man. “Well,” continued the latter, “since that heart is no longer with you in the Bois de Vincennes, it is elsewhere, and I must go and find it.”

“Go,” said the count deliberately; “go, dear friend, but promise me if you meet with any obstacle to remember that I have some power in this world, that I am happy to use that power in the behalf of those I love, and that I love you,

Morrel."

40260m

"I will remember it," said the young man, "as selfish children recollect their parents when they want their aid. When I need your assistance, and the moment arrives, I will come to you, count."

"Well, I rely upon your promise. Good-bye, then."

"Good-bye, till we meet again."

They had arrived in the Champs-Élysées. Monte Cristo opened the carriage-door, Morrel sprang out on the pavement, Bertuccio was waiting on the steps. Morrel disappeared down the Avenue de Marigny, and Monte Cristo hastened to join Bertuccio.

"Well?" asked he.

"She is going to leave her house," said the steward.

"And her son?"

"Florentin, his valet, thinks he is going to do the same."

"Come this way." Monte Cristo took Bertuccio into his study, wrote the letter we have seen, and gave it to the steward. "Go," said he quickly. "But first, let Haydée be informed that I have returned."

"Here I am," said the young girl, who at the sound of the carriage had run downstairs and whose face was radiant with joy at seeing the count return safely. Bertuccio left. Every transport of a daughter finding a father, all the delight of a mistress seeing an adored lover, were felt by Haydée during the first moments of this meeting, which she had so eagerly expected. Doubtless, although less evident, Monte Cristo's joy was not less intense. Joy to hearts which have suffered long is like the dew on the ground after a long drought; both the heart and the ground absorb that beneficent moisture falling on them, and nothing is outwardly apparent.

Monte Cristo was beginning to think, what he had not for a long time dared to believe, that there were two Mercédès in the world, and he might yet be happy. His eye, elate with happiness, was reading eagerly the tearful gaze of Haydée, when suddenly the door opened. The count knit his brow.

"M. de Morcerf!" said Baptistin, as if that name sufficed for his excuse. In fact, the count's face brightened.

"Which," asked he, "the viscount or the count?"

"The count."

"Oh," exclaimed Haydée, "is it not yet over?"

"I know not if it is finished, my beloved child," said Monte Cristo, taking the young girl's hands; "but I do know you have nothing more to fear."

"But it is the wretched——"

"That man cannot injure me, Haydée," said Monte Cristo; "it was his son alone that there was cause to fear."

"And what I have suffered," said the young girl, "you shall never know, my lord."

Monte Cristo smiled. "By my father's tomb," said he, extending his hand over the head of the young girl, "I swear to you, Haydée, that if any misfortune happens, it will not be to me."

"I believe you, my lord, as implicitly as if God had spoken to me," said the young girl, presenting her forehead to him. Monte Cristo pressed on that pure beautiful forehead a kiss which made two hearts throb at once, the one violently, the other secretly.

"Oh," murmured the count, "shall I then be permitted to love again? Ask M. de Morcerf into the drawing-room," said he to Baptistin, while he led the beautiful Greek girl to a private staircase.

We must explain this visit, which although expected by Monte Cristo, is unexpected to our readers. While Mercédès, as we have said, was making a similar inventory of her property to Albert's, while she was arranging her jewels, shutting her drawers, collecting her keys, to leave everything in perfect order, she did not perceive a pale and sinister face at a glass door which threw light into the passage, from which everything could be both seen and heard. He who was thus looking, without being heard or seen, probably heard and saw all that passed in Madame de Morcerf's apartments. From that glass door the pale-faced man went to the count's bedroom and raised with a constricted hand the curtain of a window overlooking the courtyard. He remained there ten minutes, motionless and dumb, listening to the beating of his own heart. For him those ten minutes were very long. It was then Albert, returning from his meeting with the count, perceived his father watching for his arrival behind a curtain, and turned aside. The count's eye expanded; he knew Albert had insulted the count dreadfully, and that in every country in the world such an insult would lead to a deadly duel. Albert returned safely—then the count was revenged.

An indescribable ray of joy illuminated that wretched countenance like the last ray of the sun before it disappears behind the clouds which bear the aspect, not of a downy couch, but of a tomb. But as we have said, he waited in vain for his

son to come to his apartment with the account of his triumph. He easily understood why his son did not come to see him before he went to avenge his father's honor; but when that was done, why did not his son come and throw himself into his arms?

It was then, when the count could not see Albert, that he sent for his servant, who he knew was authorized not to conceal anything from him. Ten minutes afterwards, General Morcerf was seen on the steps in a black coat with a military collar, black pantaloons, and black gloves. He had apparently given previous orders, for as he reached the bottom step his carriage came from the coach-house ready for him. The valet threw into the carriage his military cloak, in which two swords were wrapped, and, shutting the door, he took his seat by the side of the coachman. The coachman stooped down for his orders.

"To the Champs-Élysées," said the general; "the Count of Monte Cristo's. Hurry!"

The horses bounded beneath the whip; and in five minutes they stopped before the count's door. M. de Morcerf opened the door himself, and as the carriage rolled away he passed up the walk, rang, and entered the open door with his servant.

A moment afterwards, Baptistin announced the Count of Morcerf to Monte Cristo, and the latter, leading Haydée aside, ordered that Morcerf be asked into the drawing-room. The general was pacing the room the third time when, in turning, he perceived Monte Cristo at the door.

"Ah, it is M. de Morcerf," said Monte Cristo quietly; "I thought I had not heard aright."

"Yes, it is I," said the count, whom a frightful contraction of the lips prevented from articulating freely.

"May I know the cause which procures me the pleasure of seeing M. de Morcerf so early?"

"Had you not a meeting with my son this morning?" asked the general.

"I had," replied the count.

"And I know my son had good reasons to wish to fight with you, and to endeavor to kill you."

"Yes, sir, he had very good ones; but you see that in spite of them he has not killed me, and did not even fight."

"Yet he considered you the cause of his father's dishonor, the cause of the fearful ruin which has fallen on my house."

"It is true, sir," said Monte Cristo with his dreadful calmness; "a secondary cause, but not the principal."

"Doubtless you made, then, some apology or explanation?"

"I explained nothing, and it is he who apologized to me."

"But to what do you attribute this conduct?"

"To the conviction, probably, that there was one more guilty than I."

"And who was that?"

"His father."

"That may be," said the count, turning pale; "but you know the guilty do not like to find themselves convicted."

"I know it, and I expected this result."

"You expected my son would be a coward?" cried the count.

"M. Albert de Morcerf is no coward!" said Monte Cristo.

"A man who holds a sword in his hand, and sees a mortal enemy within reach of that sword, and does not fight, is a coward! Why is he not here that I may tell him so?"

"Sir," replied Monte Cristo coldly, "I did not expect that you had come here to relate to me your little family affairs. Go and tell M. Albert that, and he may know what to answer you."

"Oh, no, no," said the general, smiling faintly, "I did not come for that purpose; you are right. I came to tell you that I also look upon you as my enemy. I came to tell you that I hate you instinctively; that it seems as if I had always known you, and always hated you; and, in short, since the young people of the present day will not fight, it remains for us to do so. Do you think so, sir?"

"Certainly. And when I told you I had foreseen the result, it is the honor of your visit I alluded to."

"So much the better. Are you prepared?"

"Yes, sir."

"You know that we shall fight till one of us is dead," said the general, whose teeth were clenched with rage.

40262m

"Until one of us dies," repeated Monte Cristo, moving his head slightly up and down.

"Let us start, then; we need no witnesses."

"Very true," said Monte Cristo; "it is unnecessary, we know each other so well!"

"On the contrary," said the count, "we know so little of each other."

"Indeed?" said Monte Cristo, with the same indomitable coolness; "let us see. Are you not the soldier Fernand who deserted on the eve of the battle of Waterloo? Are you not the Lieutenant Fernand who served as guide and spy to the French army in Spain? Are you not the Captain Fernand who betrayed, sold, and murdered his benefactor, Ali? And have not all these Fernands, united, made Lieutenant-General, the Count of Morcerf, peer of France?"

"Oh," cried the general, as if branded with a hot iron, "wretch,—to reproach me with my shame when about, perhaps, to kill me! No, I did not say I was a stranger to you. I know well, demon, that you have penetrated into the darkness of the past, and that you have read, by the light of what torch I know not, every page of my life; but perhaps I may be more honorable in my shame than you under your pompous coverings. No—no, I am aware you know me; but I know you only as an adventurer sewn up in gold and jewellery. You call yourself, in Paris, the Count of Monte Cristo; in Italy, Sinbad the Sailor; in Malta, I forget what. But it is your real name I want to know, in the midst of your hundred names, that I may pronounce it when we meet to fight, at the moment when I plunge my sword through your heart."

The Count of Monte Cristo turned dreadfully pale; his eye seemed to burn with a devouring fire. He leaped towards a dressing-room near his bedroom, and in less than a moment, tearing off his cravat, his coat and waistcoat, he put on a sailor's jacket and hat, from beneath which rolled his long black hair. He returned thus, formidable and implacable, advancing with his arms crossed on his breast, towards the general, who could not understand why he had disappeared, but who on seeing him again, and feeling his teeth chatter and his legs sink under him, drew back, and only stopped when he found a table to support his clenched hand.

"Fernand," cried he, "of my hundred names I need only tell you one, to overwhelm you! But you guess it now, do you not?—or, rather, you remember it? For, notwithstanding all my sorrows and my tortures, I show you today a face which the happiness of revenge makes young again—a face you must often have seen in your dreams since your marriage with Mercédès, my betrothed!"

40268m

The general, with his head thrown back, hands extended, gaze fixed, looked silently at this dreadful apparition; then seeking the wall to support him, he

glided along close to it until he reached the door, through which he went out backwards, uttering this single mournful, lamentable, distressing cry:

“Edmond Dantès!”

Then, with sighs which were unlike any human sound, he dragged himself to the door, reeled across the courtyard, and falling into the arms of his valet, he said in a voice scarcely intelligible,—“Home, home.”

The fresh air and the shame he felt at having exposed himself before his servants, partly recalled his senses, but the ride was short, and as he drew near his house all his wretchedness revived. He stopped at a short distance from the house and alighted. The door was wide open, a hackney-coach was standing in the middle of the yard—a strange sight before so noble a mansion; the count looked at it with terror, but without daring to inquire its meaning, he rushed towards his apartment.

Two persons were coming down the stairs; he had only time to creep into an alcove to avoid them. It was Mercédès leaning on her son’s arm and leaving the house. They passed close by the unhappy being, who, concealed behind the damask curtain, almost felt Mercédès dress brush past him, and his son’s warm breath, pronouncing these words:

“Courage, mother! Come, this is no longer our home!”

The words died away, the steps were lost in the distance. The general drew himself up, clinging to the curtain; he uttered the most dreadful sob which ever escaped from the bosom of a father abandoned at the same time by his wife and son. He soon heard the clatter of the iron step of the hackney-coach, then the coachman’s voice, and then the rolling of the heavy vehicle shook the windows. He darted to his bedroom to see once more all he had loved in the world; but the hackney-coach drove on and the head of neither Mercédès nor her son appeared at the window to take a last look at the house or the deserted father and husband.

And at the very moment when the wheels of that coach crossed the gateway a report was heard, and a thick smoke escaped through one of the panes of the window, which was broken by the explosion.

Chapter 93. Valentine

We may easily conceive where Morrel's appointment was. On leaving Monte Cristo he walked slowly towards Villefort's; we say slowly, for Morrel had more than half an hour to spare to go five hundred steps, but he had hastened to take leave of Monte Cristo because he wished to be alone with his thoughts. He knew his time well—the hour when Valentine was giving Noirtier his breakfast, and was sure not to be disturbed in the performance of this pious duty. Noirtier and Valentine had given him leave to go twice a week, and he was now availing himself of that permission.

He arrived; Valentine was expecting him. Uneasy and almost crazed, she seized his hand and led him to her grandfather. This uneasiness, amounting almost to frenzy, arose from the report Morcerf's adventure had made in the world, for the affair at the Opera was generally known. No one at Villefort's doubted that a duel would ensue from it. Valentine, with her woman's instinct, guessed that Morrel would be Monte Cristo's second, and from the young man's well-known courage and his great affection for the count, she feared that he would not content himself with the passive part assigned to him. We may easily understand how eagerly the particulars were asked for, given, and received; and Morrel could read an indescribable joy in the eyes of his beloved, when she knew that the termination of this affair was as happy as it was unexpected.

"Now," said Valentine, motioning to Morrel to sit down near her grandfather, while she took her seat on his footstool,—"now let us talk about our own affairs. You know, Maximilian, grandpapa once thought of leaving this house, and taking an apartment away from M. de Villefort's."

"Yes," said Maximilian, "I recollect the project, of which I highly approved."

"Well," said Valentine, "you may approve again, for grandpapa is again thinking of it."

"Bravo," said Maximilian.

40272m

"And do you know," said Valentine, "what reason grandpapa gives for leaving this house." Noirtier looked at Valentine to impose silence, but she did not notice

him; her looks, her eyes, her smile, were all for Morrel.

"Oh, whatever may be M. Noirtier's reason," answered Morrel, "I can readily believe it to be a good one."

"An excellent one," said Valentine. "He pretends the air of the Faubourg Saint-Honoré is not good for me."

"Indeed?" said Morrel; "in that M. Noirtier may be right; you have not seemed to be well for the last fortnight."

"Not very," said Valentine. "And grandpapa has become my physician, and I have the greatest confidence in him, because he knows everything."

"Do you then really suffer?" asked Morrel quickly.

"Oh, it must not be called suffering; I feel a general uneasiness, that is all. I have lost my appetite, and my stomach feels as if it were struggling to get accustomed to something." Noirtier did not lose a word of what Valentine said.

"And what treatment do you adopt for this singular complaint?"

"A very simple one," said Valentine. "I swallow every morning a spoonful of the mixture prepared for my grandfather. When I say one spoonful, I began by one—now I take four. Grandpapa says it is a panacea." Valentine smiled, but it was evident that she suffered.

Maximilian, in his devotedness, gazed silently at her. She was very beautiful, but her usual pallor had increased; her eyes were more brilliant than ever, and her hands, which were generally white like mother-of-pearl, now more resembled wax, to which time was adding a yellowish hue.

From Valentine the young man looked towards Noirtier. The latter watched with strange and deep interest the young girl, absorbed by her affection, and he also, like Morrel, followed those traces of inward suffering which was so little perceptible to a common observer that they escaped the notice of everyone but the grandfather and the lover.

"But," said Morrel, "I thought this mixture, of which you now take four spoonfuls, was prepared for M. Noirtier?"

"I know it is very bitter," said Valentine; "so bitter, that all I drink afterwards appears to have the same taste." Noirtier looked inquiringly at his granddaughter. "Yes, grandpapa," said Valentine; "it is so. Just now, before I came down to you, I drank a glass of sugared water; I left half, because it seemed so bitter." Noirtier turned pale, and made a sign that he wished to speak.

Valentine rose to fetch the dictionary. Noirtier watched her with evident anguish. In fact, the blood was rushing to the young girl's head already, her

cheeks were becoming red.

"Oh," cried she, without losing any of her cheerfulness, "this is singular! I can't see! Did the sun shine in my eyes?" And she leaned against the window.

"The sun is not shining," said Morrel, more alarmed by Noirtier's expression than by Valentine's indisposition. He ran towards her. The young girl smiled.

"Cheer up," said she to Noirtier. "Do not be alarmed, Maximilian; it is nothing, and has already passed away. But listen! Do I not hear a carriage in the courtyard?" She opened Noirtier's door, ran to a window in the passage, and returned hastily. "Yes," said she, "it is Madame Danglars and her daughter, who have come to call on us. Good-bye;—I must run away, for they would send here for me, or, rather, farewell till I see you again. Stay with grandpapa, Maximilian; I promise you not to persuade them to stay."

40274m

Morrel watched her as she left the room; he heard her ascend the little staircase which led both to Madame de Villefort's apartments and to hers. As soon as she was gone, Noirtier made a sign to Morrel to take the dictionary. Morrel obeyed; guided by Valentine, he had learned how to understand the old man quickly. Accustomed, however, as he was to the work, he had to repeat most of the letters of the alphabet and to find every word in the dictionary, so that it was ten minutes before the thought of the old man was translated by these words,

"Fetch the glass of water and the decanter from Valentine's room."

Morrel rang immediately for the servant who had taken Barrois's situation, and in Noirtier's name gave that order. The servant soon returned. The decanter and the glass were completely empty. Noirtier made a sign that he wished to speak.

"Why are the glass and decanter empty?" asked he; "Valentine said she only drank half the glassful."

The translation of this new question occupied another five minutes.

"I do not know," said the servant, "but the housemaid is in Mademoiselle Valentine's room: perhaps she has emptied them."

"Ask her," said Morrel, translating Noirtier's thought this time by his look. The servant went out, but returned almost immediately. "Mademoiselle Valentine passed through the room to go to Madame de Villefort's," said he; "and in passing, as she was thirsty, she drank what remained in the glass; as for the decanter, Master Edward had emptied that to make a pond for his ducks."

Noirtier raised his eyes to heaven, as a gambler does who stakes his all on one stroke. From that moment the old man's eyes were fixed on the door, and did not quit it.

It was indeed Madame Danglars and her daughter whom Valentine had seen; they had been ushered into Madame de Villefort's room, who had said she would receive them there. That is why Valentine passed through her room, which was on a level with Valentine's, and only separated from it by Edward's. The two ladies entered the drawing-room with that sort of official stiffness which preludes a formal communication. Among worldly people manner is contagious. Madame de Villefort received them with equal solemnity. Valentine entered at this moment, and the formalities were resumed.

"My dear friend," said the baroness, while the two young people were shaking hands, "I and Eugénie are come to be the first to announce to you the approaching marriage of my daughter with Prince Cavalcanti." Danglars kept up the title of prince. The popular banker found that it answered better than count.

"Allow me to present you my sincere congratulations," replied Madame de Villefort. "Prince Cavalcanti appears to be a young man of rare qualities."

40276m

"Listen," said the baroness, smiling; "speaking to you as a friend I can say that the prince does not yet appear all he will be. He has about him a little of that foreign manner by which French persons recognize, at first sight, the Italian or German nobleman. Besides, he gives evidence of great kindness of disposition, much keenness of wit, and as to suitability, M. Danglars assures me that his fortune is majestic—that is his word."

"And then," said Eugénie, while turning over the leaves of Madame de Villefort's album, "add that you have taken a great fancy to the young man."

"And," said Madame de Villefort, "I need not ask you if you share that fancy."

"I?" replied Eugénie with her usual candor. "Oh, not the least in the world, madame! My wish was not to confine myself to domestic cares, or the caprices of any man, but to be an artist, and consequently free in heart, in person, and in thought."

Eugénie pronounced these words with so firm a tone that the color mounted to Valentine's cheeks. The timid girl could not understand that vigorous nature which appeared to have none of the timidities of woman.

"At any rate," said she, "since I am to be married whether I will or not, I ought to be thankful to Providence for having released me from my engagement with

M. Albert de Morcerf, or I should this day have been the wife of a dishonored man."

"It is true," said the baroness, with that strange simplicity sometimes met with among fashionable ladies, and of which plebeian intercourse can never entirely deprive them,—"it is very true that had not the Morcerfs hesitated, my daughter would have married Monsieur Albert. The general depended much on it; he even came to force M. Danglars. We have had a narrow escape."

"But," said Valentine, timidly, "does all the father's shame revert upon the son? Monsieur Albert appears to me quite innocent of the treason charged against the general."

"Excuse me," said the implacable young girl, "Monsieur Albert claims and well deserves his share. It appears that after having challenged M. de Monte Cristo at the Opera yesterday, he apologized on the ground today."

"Impossible," said Madame de Villefort.

"Ah, my dear friend," said Madame Danglars, with the same simplicity we before noticed, "it is a fact. I heard it from M. Debray, who was present at the explanation."

Valentine also knew the truth, but she did not answer. A single word had reminded her that Morrel was expecting her in M. Noirtier's room. Deeply engaged with a sort of inward contemplation, Valentine had ceased for a moment to join in the conversation. She would, indeed, have found it impossible to repeat what had been said the last few minutes, when suddenly Madame Danglars' hand, pressed on her arm, aroused her from her lethargy.

"What is it?" said she, starting at Madame Danglars' touch as she would have done from an electric shock.

"It is, my dear Valentine," said the baroness, "that you are, doubtless, suffering."

40280m

"I?" said the young girl, passing her hand across her burning forehead.

"Yes, look at yourself in that glass; you have turned pale and then red successively, three or four times in one minute."

"Indeed," cried Eugénie, "you are very pale!"

"Oh, do not be alarmed; I have been so for many days." Artless as she was, the young girl knew that this was an opportunity to leave, and besides, Madame de Villefort came to her assistance.

"Retire, Valentine," said she; "you are really suffering, and these ladies will excuse you; drink a glass of pure water, it will restore you."

Valentine kissed Eugénie, bowed to Madame Danglars, who had already risen to take her leave, and went out.

"That poor child," said Madame de Villefort when Valentine was gone, "she makes me very uneasy, and I should not be astonished if she had some serious illness."

Meanwhile, Valentine, in a sort of excitement which she could not quite understand, had crossed Edward's room without noticing some trick of the child, and through her own had reached the little staircase.

She was within three steps of the bottom; she already heard Morrel's voice, when suddenly a cloud passed over her eyes, her stiffened foot missed the step, her hands had no power to hold the baluster, and falling against the wall she lost her balance wholly and toppled to the floor. Morrel bounded to the door, opened it, and found Valentine stretched out at the bottom of the stairs. Quick as a flash, he raised her in his arms and placed her in a chair. Valentine opened her eyes.

"Oh, what a clumsy thing I am," said she with feverish volubility; "I don't know my way. I forgot there were three more steps before the landing."

"You have hurt yourself, perhaps," said Morrel. "What can I do for you, Valentine?"

Valentine looked around her; she saw the deepest terror depicted in Noirtier's eyes.

"Don't worry, dear grandpapa," said she, endeavoring to smile; "it is nothing—it is nothing; I was giddy, that is all."

"Another attack of giddiness," said Morrel, clasping his hands. "Oh, attend to it, Valentine, I entreat you."

"But no," said Valentine,—"no, I tell you it is all past, and it was nothing. Now, let me tell you some news; Eugénie is to be married in a week, and in three days there is to be a grand feast, a betrothal festival. We are all invited, my father, Madame de Villefort, and I—at least, I understood it so."

"When will it be our turn to think of these things? Oh, Valentine, you who have so much influence over your grandpapa, try to make him answer—Soon."

"And do you," said Valentine, "depend on me to stimulate the tardiness and arouse the memory of grandpapa?"

"Yes," cried Morrel, "make haste. So long as you are not mine, Valentine, I shall always think I may lose you."

"Oh," replied Valentine with a convulsive movement, "oh, indeed, Maximilian, you are too timid for an officer, for a soldier who, they say, never knows fear. Ha, ha, ha!"

She burst into a forced and melancholy laugh, her arms stiffened and twisted, her head fell back on her chair, and she remained motionless. The cry of terror which was stopped on Noirtier's lips, seemed to start from his eyes. Morrel understood it; he knew he must call assistance. The young man rang the bell violently; the housemaid who had been in Mademoiselle Valentine's room, and the servant who had replaced Barrois, ran in at the same moment. Valentine was so pale, so cold, so inanimate that without listening to what was said to them they were seized with the fear which pervaded that house, and they flew into the passage crying for help. Madame Danglars and Eugénie were going out at that moment; they heard the cause of the disturbance.

"I told you so!" exclaimed Madame de Villefort. "Poor child!"

40278m

Chapter 94. Maximilian's Avowal

At the same moment M. de Villefort's voice was heard calling from his study, "What is the matter?"

Morrel looked at Noirtier who had recovered his self-command, and with a glance indicated the closet where once before under somewhat similar circumstances, he had taken refuge. He had only time to get his hat and throw himself breathless into the closet when the procureur's footstep was heard in the passage.

Villefort sprang into the room, ran to Valentine, and took her in his arms.

"A physician, a physician,—M. d'Avrigny!" cried Villefort; "or rather I will go for him myself."

He flew from the apartment, and Morrel at the same moment darted out at the other door. He had been struck to the heart by a frightful recollection—the conversation he had heard between the doctor and Villefort the night of Madame de Saint-Méran's death, recurred to him; these symptoms, to a less alarming extent, were the same which had preceded the death of Barrois. At the same time Monte Cristo's voice seemed to resound in his ear with the words he had heard only two hours before, "Whatever you want, Morrel, come to me; I have great power."

More rapidly than thought, he darted down the Rue Matignon, and thence to the Avenue des Champs-Élysées.

Meanwhile M. de Villefort arrived in a hired cabriolet at M. d'Avrigny's door. He rang so violently that the porter was alarmed. Villefort ran upstairs without saying a word. The porter knew him, and let him pass, only calling to him:

"In his study, Monsieur Procureur—in his study!" Villefort pushed, or rather forced, the door open.

"Ah," said the doctor, "is it you?"

"Yes," said Villefort, closing the door after him, "it is I, who am come in my turn to ask you if we are quite alone. Doctor, my house is accursed!"

"What?" said the latter with apparent coolness, but with deep emotion, "have you another invalid?"

“Yes, doctor,” cried Villefort, clutching his hair, “yes!”

D’Avrigny’s look implied, “I told you it would be so.” Then he slowly uttered these words, “Who is now dying in your house? What new victim is going to accuse you of weakness before God?”

A mournful sob burst from Villefort’s heart; he approached the doctor, and seizing his arm,—“Valentine,” said he, “it is Valentine’s turn!”

40284m

“Your daughter!” cried d’Avrigny with grief and surprise.

“You see you were deceived,” murmured the magistrate; “come and see her, and on her bed of agony entreat her pardon for having suspected her.”

“Each time you have applied to me,” said the doctor, “it has been too late; still I will go. But let us make haste, sir; with the enemies you have to do with there is no time to be lost.”

“Oh, this time, doctor, you shall not have to reproach me with weakness. This time I will know the assassin, and will pursue him.”

“Let us try first to save the victim before we think of revenging her,” said d’Avrigny. “Come.”

The same cabriolet which had brought Villefort took them back at full speed, and at this moment Morrel rapped at Monte Cristo’s door.

The count was in his study and was reading with an angry look something which Bertuccio had brought in haste. Hearing the name of Morrel, who had left him only two hours before, the count raised his head, arose, and sprang to meet him.

“What is the matter, Maximilian?” asked he; “you are pale, and the perspiration rolls from your forehead.” Morrel fell into a chair.

“Yes,” said he, “I came quickly; I wanted to speak to you.”

“Are all your family well?” asked the count, with an affectionate benevolence, whose sincerity no one could for a moment doubt.

“Thank you, count—thank you,” said the young man, evidently embarrassed how to begin the conversation; “yes, everyone in my family is well.”

“So much the better; yet you have something to tell me?” replied the count with increased anxiety.

“Yes,” said Morrel, “it is true; I have but now left a house where death has just entered, to run to you.”

“Are you then come from M. de Morcerf’s?” asked Monte Cristo.

“No,” said Morrel; “is someone dead in his house?”

“The general has just blown his brains out,” replied Monte Cristo with great coolness.

“Oh, what a dreadful event!” cried Maximilian.

“Not for the countess, or for Albert,” said Monte Cristo; “a dead father or husband is better than a dishonored one,—blood washes out shame.”

“Poor countess,” said Maximilian, “I pity her very much; she is so noble a woman!”

“Pity Albert also, Maximilian; for believe me he is the worthy son of the countess. But let us return to yourself. You have hastened to me—can I have the happiness of being useful to you?”

40286m

“Yes, I need your help: that is I thought like a madman that you could lend me your assistance in a case where God alone can succor me.”

“Tell me what it is,” replied Monte Cristo.

“Oh,” said Morrel, “I know not, indeed, if I may reveal this secret to mortal ears, but fatality impels me, necessity constrains me, count——” Morrel hesitated.

“Do you think I love you?” said Monte Cristo, taking the young man’s hand affectionately in his.

“Oh, you encourage me, and something tells me there,” placing his hand on his heart, “that I ought to have no secret from you.”

“You are right, Morrel; God is speaking to your heart, and your heart speaks to you. Tell me what it says.”

“Count, will you allow me to send Baptistin to inquire after someone you know?”

“I am at your service, and still more my servants.”

“Oh, I cannot live if she is not better.”

“Shall I ring for Baptistin?”

“No, I will go and speak to him myself.” Morrel went out, called Baptistin, and whispered a few words to him. The valet ran directly.

“Well, have you sent?” asked Monte Cristo, seeing Morrel return.

“Yes, and now I shall be more calm.”

“You know I am waiting,” said Monte Cristo, smiling.

“Yes, and I will tell you. One evening I was in a garden; a clump of trees concealed me; no one suspected I was there. Two persons passed near me—allow me to conceal their names for the present; they were speaking in an undertone, and yet I was so interested in what they said that I did not lose a single word.”

“This is a gloomy introduction, if I may judge from your pallor and shuddering, Morrel.”

“Oh, yes, very gloomy, my friend. Someone had just died in the house to which that garden belonged. One of the persons whose conversation I overheard was the master of the house; the other, the physician. The former was confiding to the latter his grief and fear, for it was the second time within a month that death had suddenly and unexpectedly entered that house which was apparently destined to destruction by some exterminating angel, as an object of God’s anger.”

“Ah, indeed?” said Monte Cristo, looking earnestly at the young man, and by an imperceptible movement turning his chair, so that he remained in the shade while the light fell full on Maximilian’s face.

“Yes,” continued Morrel, “death had entered that house twice within one month.”

“And what did the doctor answer?” asked Monte Cristo.

“He replied—he replied, that the death was not a natural one, and must be attributed”—

“To what?”

“To poison.”

“Indeed!” said Monte Cristo with a slight cough which in moments of extreme emotion helped him to disguise a blush, or his pallor, or the intense interest with which he listened; “indeed, Maximilian, did you hear that?”

“Yes, my dear count, I heard it; and the doctor added that if another death occurred in a similar way he must appeal to justice.”

Monte Cristo listened, or appeared to do so, with the greatest calmness.

“Well,” said Maximilian, “death came a third time, and neither the master of the house nor the doctor said a word. Death is now, perhaps, striking a fourth blow. Count, what am I bound to do, being in possession of this secret?”

“My dear friend,” said Monte Cristo, “you appear to be relating an adventure which we all know by heart. I know the house where you heard it, or one very similar to it; a house with a garden, a master, a physician, and where there have

been three unexpected and sudden deaths. Well, I have not intercepted your confidence, and yet I know all that as well as you, and I have no conscientious scruples. No, it does not concern me. You say an exterminating angel appears to have devoted that house to God's anger—well, who says your supposition is not reality? Do not notice things which those whose interest it is to see them pass over. If it is God's justice, instead of his anger, which is walking through that house, Maximilian, turn away your face and let his justice accomplish its purpose."

Morrel shuddered. There was something mournful, solemn, and terrible in the count's manner.

"Besides," continued he, in so changed a tone that no one would have supposed it was the same person speaking—"besides, who says that it will begin again?"

"It has returned, count," exclaimed Morrel; "that is why I hastened to you."

"Well, what do you wish me to do? Do you wish me, for instance, to give information to the procureur?" Monte Cristo uttered the last words with so much meaning that Morrel, starting up, cried out:

"You know of whom I speak, count, do you not?"

"Perfectly well, my good friend; and I will prove it to you by putting the dots to the *i*, or rather by naming the persons. You were walking one evening in M. de Villefort's garden; from what you relate, I suppose it to have been the evening of Madame de Saint-Méran's death. You heard M. de Villefort talking to M. d'Avrigny about the death of M. de Saint-Méran, and that no less surprising, of the countess. M. d'Avrigny said he believed they both proceeded from poison; and you, honest man, have ever since been asking your heart and sounding your conscience to know if you ought to expose or conceal this secret. We are no longer in the Middle Ages; there is no longer a Vehmgericht, or Free Tribunals; what do you want to ask these people? 'Conscience, what hast thou to do with me?' as Sterne said. My dear fellow, let them sleep on, if they are asleep; let them grow pale in their drowsiness, if they are disposed to do so, and pray do you remain in peace, who have no remorse to disturb you."

Deep grief was depicted on Morrel's features; he seized Monte Cristo's hand. "But it is beginning again, I say!"

"Well," said the Count, astonished at his perseverance, which he could not understand, and looking still more earnestly at Maximilian, "let it begin again,—it is like the house of the Atreidae;¹⁹ God has condemned them, and they must submit to their punishment. They will all disappear, like the fabrics children

build with cards, and which fall, one by one, under the breath of their builder, even if there are two hundred of them. Three months since it was M. de Saint-Méran; Madame de Saint-Méran two months since; the other day it was Barrois; today, the old Noirtier, or young Valentine."

"You knew it?" cried Morrel, in such a paroxysm of terror that Monte Cristo started,—he whom the falling heavens would have found unmoved; "you knew it, and said nothing?"

"And what is it to me?" replied Monte Cristo, shrugging his shoulders; "do I know those people? and must I lose the one to save the other? Faith, no, for between the culprit and the victim I have no choice."

"But I," cried Morrel, groaning with sorrow, "I love her!"

"You love?—whom?" cried Monte Cristo, starting to his feet, and seizing the two hands which Morrel was raising towards heaven.

"I love most fondly—I love madly—I love as a man who would give his life-blood to spare her a tear—I love Valentine de Villefort, who is being murdered at this moment! Do you understand me? I love her; and I ask God and you how I can save her?"

Monte Cristo uttered a cry which those only can conceive who have heard the roar of a wounded lion. "Unhappy man," cried he, wringing his hands in his turn; "you love Valentine,—that daughter of an accursed race!"

Never had Morrel witnessed such an expression—never had so terrible an eye flashed before his face—never had the genius of terror he had so often seen, either on the battle-field or in the murderous nights of Algeria, shaken around him more dreadful fire. He drew back terrified.

As for Monte Cristo, after this ebullition he closed his eyes as if dazzled by internal light. In a moment he restrained himself so powerfully that the tempestuous heaving of his breast subsided, as turbulent and foaming waves yield to the sun's genial influence when the cloud has passed. This silence, self-control, and struggle lasted about twenty seconds, then the count raised his pallid face.

"See," said he, "my dear friend, how God punishes the most thoughtless and unfeeling men for their indifference, by presenting dreadful scenes to their view. I, who was looking on, an eager and curious spectator,—I, who was watching the working of this mournful tragedy,—I, who like a wicked angel was laughing at the evil men committed protected by secrecy (a secret is easily kept by the rich and powerful), I am in my turn bitten by the serpent whose tortuous course I was watching, and bitten to the heart!"

Morrel groaned.

"Come, come," continued the count, "complaints are unavailing, be a man, be strong, be full of hope, for I am here and will watch over you."

Morrel shook his head sorrowfully.

"I tell you to hope. Do you understand me?" cried Monte Cristo. "Remember that I never uttered a falsehood and am never deceived. It is twelve o'clock, Maximilian; thank heaven that you came at noon rather than in the evening, or tomorrow morning. Listen, Morrel—it is noon; if Valentine is not now dead, she will not die."

"How so?" cried Morrel, "when I left her dying?"

Monte Cristo pressed his hands to his forehead. What was passing in that brain, so loaded with dreadful secrets? What does the angel of light or the angel of darkness say to that mind, at once implacable and generous? God only knows.

Monte Cristo raised his head once more, and this time he was calm as a child awaking from its sleep.

"Maximilian," said he, "return home. I command you not to stir—attempt nothing, not to let your countenance betray a thought, and I will send you tidings. Go."

"Oh, count, you overwhelm me with that coolness. Have you, then, power against death? Are you superhuman? Are you an angel?" And the young man, who had never shrunk from danger, shrank before Monte Cristo with indescribable terror. But Monte Cristo looked at him with so melancholy and sweet a smile, that Maximilian felt the tears filling his eyes.

"I can do much for you, my friend," replied the count. "Go; I must be alone."

Morrel, subdued by the extraordinary ascendancy Monte Cristo exercised over everything around him, did not endeavor to resist it. He pressed the count's hand and left. He stopped one moment at the door for Baptistin, whom he saw in the Rue Matignon, and who was running.

Meanwhile, Villefort and d'Avrigny had made all possible haste, Valentine had not revived from her fainting fit on their arrival, and the doctor examined the invalid with all the care the circumstances demanded, and with an interest which the knowledge of the secret intensified twofold. Villefort, closely watching his countenance and his lips, awaited the result of the examination. Noirtier, paler than even the young girl, more eager than Villefort for the decision, was watching also intently and affectionately.

At last d'Avrigny slowly uttered these words: "She is still alive!"

"Still?" cried Villefort; "oh, doctor, what a dreadful word is that."

"Yes," said the physician, "I repeat it; she is still alive, and I am astonished at it."

"But is she safe?" asked the father.

"Yes, since she lives."

At that moment d'Avrigny's glance met Noirtier's eye. It glistened with such extraordinary joy, so rich and full of thought, that the physician was struck. He placed the young girl again on the chair,—her lips were scarcely discernible, they were so pale and white, as well as her whole face,—and remained motionless, looking at Noirtier, who appeared to anticipate and commend all he did.

"Sir," said d'Avrigny to Villefort, "call Mademoiselle Valentine's maid, if you please."

Villefort went himself to find her; and d'Avrigny approached Noirtier.

"Have you something to tell me?" asked he. The old man winked his eyes expressively, which we may remember was his only way of expressing his approval.

"Privately?"

"Yes."

"Well, I will remain with you." At this moment Villefort returned, followed by the lady's maid; and after her came Madame de Villefort.

"What is the matter, then, with this dear child? she has just left me, and she complained of being indisposed, but I did not think seriously of it."

The young woman with tears in her eyes and every mark of affection of a true mother, approached Valentine and took her hand. D'Avrigny continued to look at Noirtier; he saw the eyes of the old man dilate and become round, his cheeks turn pale and tremble; the perspiration stood in drops upon his forehead.

"Ah," said he, involuntarily following Noirtier's eyes, which were fixed on Madame de Villefort, who repeated:

"This poor child would be better in bed. Come, Fanny, we will put her to bed."

M. d'Avrigny, who saw that would be a means of his remaining alone with Noirtier, expressed his opinion that it was the best thing that could be done; but he forbade that anything should be given to her except what he ordered.

They carried Valentine away; she had revived, but could scarcely move or

speak, so shaken was her frame by the attack. She had, however, just power to give one parting look to her grandfather, who in losing her seemed to be resigning his very soul. D'Avrigny followed the invalid, wrote a prescription, ordered Villefort to take a cabriolet, go in person to a chemist's to get the prescribed medicine, bring it himself, and wait for him in his daughter's room. Then, having renewed his injunction not to give Valentine anything, he went down again to Noirtier, shut the doors carefully, and after convincing himself that no one was listening:

"Do you," said he, "know anything of this young lady's illness?"

"Yes," said the old man.

"We have no time to lose; I will question, and do you answer me." Noirtier made a sign that he was ready to answer. "Did you anticipate the accident which has happened to your granddaughter?"

"Yes." D'Avrigny reflected a moment; then approaching Noirtier:

"Pardon what I am going to say," added he, "but no indication should be neglected in this terrible situation. Did you see poor Barrois die?" Noirtier raised his eyes to heaven.

"Do you know of what he died!" asked d'Avrigny, placing his hand on Noirtier's shoulder.

"Yes," replied the old man.

"Do you think he died a natural death?" A sort of smile was discernible on the motionless lips of Noirtier.

"Then you have thought that Barrois was poisoned?"

"Yes."

"Do you think the poison he fell a victim to was intended for him?"

"No."

"Do you think the same hand which unintentionally struck Barrois has now attacked Valentine?"

"Yes."

"Then will she die too?" asked d'Avrigny, fixing his penetrating gaze on Noirtier. He watched the effect of this question on the old man.

"No," replied he with an air of triumph which would have puzzled the most clever diviner.

"Then you hope?" said d'Avrigny, with surprise.

"Yes."

"What do you hope?" The old man made him understand with his eyes that he could not answer.

"Ah, yes, it is true," murmured d'Avrigny. Then, turning to Noirtier,—"Do you hope the assassin will be tried?"

"No."

"Then you hope the poison will take no effect on Valentine?"

"Yes."

"It is no news to you," added d'Avrigny, "to tell you that an attempt has been made to poison her?" The old man made a sign that he entertained no doubt upon the subject. "Then how do you hope Valentine will escape?"

Noirtier kept his eyes steadfastly fixed on the same spot. D'Avrigny followed the direction and saw that they were fixed on a bottle containing the mixture which he took every morning. "Ah, indeed?" said d'Avrigny, struck with a sudden thought, "has it occurred to you"—Noirtier did not let him finish.

"Yes," said he.

"To prepare her system to resist poison?"

"Yes."

"By accustoming her by degrees——"

"Yes, yes, yes," said Noirtier, delighted to be understood.

"Of course. I had told you that there was brucine in the mixture I give you."

"Yes."

"And by accustoming her to that poison, you have endeavored to neutralize the effect of a similar poison?" Noirtier's joy continued. "And you have succeeded," exclaimed d'Avrigny. "Without that precaution Valentine would have died before assistance could have been procured. The dose has been excessive, but she has only been shaken by it; and this time, at any rate, Valentine will not die."

A superhuman joy expanded the old man's eyes, which were raised towards heaven with an expression of infinite gratitude. At this moment Villefort returned.

"Here, doctor," said he, "is what you sent me for."

"Was this prepared in your presence?"

"Yes," replied the procureur.

"Have you not let it go out of your hands?"

“No.”

D’Avrigny took the bottle, poured some drops of the mixture it contained in the hollow of his hand, and swallowed them.

“Well,” said he, “let us go to Valentine; I will give instructions to everyone, and you, M. de Villefort, will yourself see that no one deviates from them.”

40294m

At the moment when d’Avrigny was returning to Valentine’s room, accompanied by Villefort, an Italian priest, of serious demeanor and calm and firm tone, hired for his use the house adjoining the hotel of M. de Villefort. No one knew how the three former tenants of that house left it. About two hours afterwards its foundation was reported to be unsafe; but the report did not prevent the new occupant establishing himself there with his modest furniture the same day at five o’clock. The lease was drawn up for three, six, or nine years by the new tenant, who, according to the rule of the proprietor, paid six months in advance.

This new tenant, who, as we have said, was an Italian, was called Il Signor Giacomo Busoni. Workmen were immediately called in, and that same night the passengers at the end of the faubourg saw with surprise that carpenters and masons were occupied in repairing the lower part of the tottering house.

Chapter 95. Father and Daughter

We saw in a preceding chapter how Madame Danglars went formally to announce to Madame de Villefort the approaching marriage of Eugénie Danglars and M. Andrea Cavalcanti. This formal announcement, which implied or appeared to imply, the approval of all the persons concerned in this momentous affair, had been preceded by a scene to which our readers must be admitted. We beg them to take one step backward, and to transport themselves, the morning of that day of great catastrophes, into the showy, gilded salon we have before shown them, and which was the pride of its owner, Baron Danglars.

In this room, at about ten o'clock in the morning, the banker himself had been walking to and fro for some minutes thoughtfully and in evident uneasiness, watching both doors, and listening to every sound. When his patience was exhausted, he called his valet.

"Étienne," said he, "see why Mademoiselle Eugénie has asked me to meet her in the drawing-room, and why she makes me wait so long."

Having given this vent to his ill-humor, the baron became more calm; Mademoiselle Danglars had that morning requested an interview with her father, and had fixed on the gilded drawing-room as the spot. The singularity of this step, and above all its formality, had not a little surprised the banker, who had immediately obeyed his daughter by repairing first to the drawing-room. Étienne soon returned from his errand.

"Mademoiselle's lady's maid says, sir, that mademoiselle is finishing her toilette, and will be here shortly."

Danglars nodded, to signify that he was satisfied. To the world and to his servants Danglars assumed the character of the good-natured man and the indulgent father. This was one of his parts in the popular comedy he was performing,—a make-up he had adopted and which suited him about as well as the masks worn on the classic stage by paternal actors, who seen from one side, were the image of geniality, and from the other showed lips drawn down in chronic ill-temper. Let us hasten to say that in private the genial side descended to the level of the other, so that generally the indulgent man disappeared to give place to the brutal husband and domineering father.

"Why the devil does that foolish girl, who pretends to wish to speak to me, not come into my study? and why on earth does she want to speak to me at all?"

He was turning this thought over in his brain for the twentieth time, when the door opened and Eugénie appeared, attired in a figured black satin dress, her hair dressed and gloves on, as if she were going to the Italian Opera.

"Well, Eugénie, what is it you want with me? and why in this solemn drawing-room when the study is so comfortable?"

"I quite understand why you ask, sir," said Eugénie, making a sign that her father might be seated, "and in fact your two questions suggest fully the theme of our conversation. I will answer them both, and contrary to the usual method, the last first, because it is the least difficult. I have chosen the drawing-room, sir, as our place of meeting, in order to avoid the disagreeable impressions and influences of a banker's study. Those gilded cashbooks, drawers locked like gates of fortresses, heaps of bank-bills, come from I know not where, and the quantities of letters from England, Holland, Spain, India, China, and Peru, have generally a strange influence on a father's mind, and make him forget that there is in the world an interest greater and more sacred than the good opinion of his correspondents. I have, therefore, chosen this drawing-room, where you see, smiling and happy in their magnificent frames, your portrait, mine, my mother's, and all sorts of rural landscapes and touching pastorals. I rely much on external impressions; perhaps, with regard to you, they are immaterial, but I should be no artist if I had not some fancies."

"Very well," replied M. Danglars, who had listened to all this preamble with imperturbable coolness, but without understanding a word, since like every man burdened with thoughts of the past, he was occupied with seeking the thread of his own ideas in those of the speaker.

"There is, then, the second point cleared up, or nearly so," said Eugénie, without the least confusion, and with that masculine pointedness which distinguished her gesture and her language; "and you appear satisfied with the explanation. Now, let us return to the first. You ask me why I have requested this interview; I will tell you in two words, sir; I will not marry count Andrea Cavalcanti."

Danglars leaped from his chair and raised his eyes and arms towards heaven.

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"Yes, indeed, sir," continued Eugénie, still quite calm; "you are astonished, I see; for since this little affair began, I have not manifested the slightest opposition, and yet I am always sure, when the opportunity arrives, to oppose a

determined and absolute will to people who have not consulted me, and things which displease me. However, this time, my tranquillity, or passiveness as philosophers say, proceeded from another source; it proceeded from a wish, like a submissive and devoted daughter" (a slight smile was observable on the purple lips of the young girl), "to practice obedience."

"Well?" asked Danglars.

"Well, sir," replied Eugénie, "I have tried to the very last and now that the moment has come, I feel in spite of all my efforts that it is impossible."

"But," said Danglars, whose weak mind was at first quite overwhelmed with the weight of this pitiless logic, marking evident premeditation and force of will, "what is your reason for this refusal, Eugénie? what reason do you assign?"

"My reason?" replied the young girl. "Well, it is not that the man is more ugly, more foolish, or more disagreeable than any other; no, M. Andrea Cavalcanti may appear to those who look at men's faces and figures as a very good specimen of his kind. It is not, either, that my heart is less touched by him than any other; that would be a schoolgirl's reason, which I consider quite beneath me. I actually love no one, sir; you know it, do you not? I do not then see why, without real necessity, I should encumber my life with a perpetual companion. Has not some sage said, 'Nothing too much'? and another, 'I carry all my effects with me'? I have been taught these two aphorisms in Latin and in Greek; one is, I believe, from Phædrus, and the other from Bias. Well, my dear father, in the shipwreck of life—for life is an eternal shipwreck of our hopes—I cast into the sea my useless encumbrance, that is all, and I remain with my own will, disposed to live perfectly alone, and consequently perfectly free."

"Unhappy girl, unhappy girl!" murmured Danglars, turning pale, for he knew from long experience the solidity of the obstacle he had so suddenly encountered.

"Unhappy girl," replied Eugénie, "unhappy girl, do you say, sir? No, indeed; the exclamation appears quite theatrical and affected. Happy, on the contrary, for what am I in want of? The world calls me beautiful. It is something to be well received. I like a favorable reception; it expands the countenance, and those around me do not then appear so ugly. I possess a share of wit, and a certain relative sensibility, which enables me to draw from life in general, for the support of mine, all I meet with that is good, like the monkey who cracks the nut to get at its contents. I am rich, for you have one of the first fortunes in France. I am your only daughter, and you are not so exacting as the fathers of the Porte Saint-Martin and Gaîté, who disinherited their daughters for not giving them

grandchildren. Besides, the provident law has deprived you of the power to disinherit me, at least entirely, as it has also of the power to compel me to marry Monsieur This or Monsieur That. And so—being, beautiful, witty, somewhat talented, as the comic operas say, and rich—and that is happiness, sir—why do you call me unhappy?”

Danglars, seeing his daughter smiling, and proud even to insolence, could not entirely repress his brutal feelings, but they betrayed themselves only by an exclamation. Under the fixed and inquiring gaze levelled at him from under those beautiful black eyebrows, he prudently turned away, and calmed himself immediately, daunted by the power of a resolute mind.

“Truly, my daughter,” replied he with a smile, “you are all you boast of being, excepting one thing; I will not too hastily tell you which, but would rather leave you to guess it.”

Eugénie looked at Danglars, much surprised that one flower of her crown of pride, with which she had so superbly decked herself, should be disputed.

“My daughter,” continued the banker, “you have perfectly explained to me the sentiments which influence a girl like you, who is determined she will not marry; now it remains for me to tell you the motives of a father like me, who has decided that his daughter shall marry.”

Eugénie bowed, not as a submissive daughter, but as an adversary prepared for a discussion.

“My daughter,” continued Danglars, “when a father asks his daughter to choose a husband, he has always some reason for wishing her to marry. Some are affected with the mania of which you spoke just now, that of living again in their grandchildren. This is not my weakness, I tell you at once; family joys have no charm for me. I may acknowledge this to a daughter whom I know to be philosophical enough to understand my indifference, and not to impute it to me as a crime.”

“This is not to the purpose,” said Eugénie; “let us speak candidly, sir; I admire candor.”

“Oh,” said Danglars, “I can, when circumstances render it desirable, adopt your system, although it may not be my general practice. I will therefore proceed. I have proposed to you to marry, not for your sake, for indeed I did not think of you in the least at the moment (you admire candor, and will now be satisfied, I hope); but because it suited me to marry you as soon as possible, on account of certain commercial speculations I am desirous of entering into.” Eugénie became uneasy.

"It is just as I tell you, I assure you, and you must not be angry with me, for you have sought this disclosure. I do not willingly enter into arithmetical explanations with an artist like you, who fears to enter my study lest she should imbibe disagreeable or anti-poetic impressions and sensations. But in that same banker's study, where you very willingly presented yourself yesterday to ask for the thousand francs I give you monthly for pocket-money, you must know, my dear young lady, that many things may be learned, useful even to a girl who will not marry. There one may learn, for instance, what, out of regard to your nervous susceptibility, I will inform you of in the drawing-room, namely, that the credit of a banker is his physical and moral life; that credit sustains him as breath animates the body; and M. de Monte Cristo once gave me a lecture on that subject, which I have never forgotten. There we may learn that as credit sinks, the body becomes a corpse, and this is what must happen very soon to the banker who is proud to own so good a logician as you for his daughter."

But Eugénie, instead of stooping, drew herself up under the blow. "Ruined?" said she.

"Exactly, my daughter; that is precisely what I mean," said Danglars, almost digging his nails into his breast, while he preserved on his harsh features the smile of the heartless though clever man; "ruined—yes, that is it."

"Ah!" said Eugénie.

"Yes, ruined! Now it is revealed, this secret so full of horror, as the tragic poet says. Now, my daughter, learn from my lips how you may alleviate this misfortune, so far as it will affect you."

"Oh," cried Eugénie, "you are a bad physiognomist, if you imagine I deplore on my own account the catastrophe of which you warn me. I ruined? and what will that signify to me? Have I not my talent left? Can I not, like Pasta, Malibran, Grisi, acquire for myself what you would never have given me, whatever might have been your fortune, a hundred or a hundred and fifty thousand livres per annum, for which I shall be indebted to no one but myself; and which, instead of being given as you gave me those poor twelve thousand francs, with sour looks and reproaches for my prodigality, will be accompanied with acclamations, with bravos, and with flowers? And if I do not possess that talent, which your smiles prove to me you doubt, should I not still have that ardent love of independence, which will be a substitute for wealth, and which in my mind supersedes even the instinct of self-preservation? No, I grieve not on my own account, I shall always find a resource; my books, my pencils, my

piano, all the things which cost but little, and which I shall be able to procure, will remain my own.

“Do you think that I sorrow for Madame Danglars? Undeceive yourself again; either I am greatly mistaken, or she has provided against the catastrophe which threatens you, and, which will pass over without affecting her. She has taken care for herself,—at least I hope so,—for her attention has not been diverted from her projects by watching over me. She has fostered my independence by professedly indulging my love for liberty. Oh, no, sir; from my childhood I have seen too much, and understood too much, of what has passed around me, for misfortune to have an undue power over me. From my earliest recollections, I have been beloved by no one—so much the worse; that has naturally led me to love no one—so much the better—now you have my profession of faith.”

“Then,” said Danglars, pale with anger, which was not at all due to offended paternal love,—“then, mademoiselle, you persist in your determination to accelerate my ruin?”

“Your ruin? I accelerate your ruin? What do you mean? I do not understand you.”

“So much the better, I have a ray of hope left; listen.”

“I am all attention,” said Eugénie, looking so earnestly at her father that it was an effort for the latter to endure her unrelenting gaze.

“M. Cavalcanti,” continued Danglars, “is about to marry you, and will place in my hands his fortune, amounting to three million livres.”

“That is admirable!” said Eugénie with sovereign contempt, smoothing her gloves out one upon the other.

“You think I shall deprive you of those three millions,” said Danglars; “but do not fear it. They are destined to produce at least ten. I and a brother banker have obtained a grant of a railway, the only industrial enterprise which in these days promises to make good the fabulous prospects that Law once held out to the eternally deluded Parisians, in the fantastic Mississippi scheme. As I look at it, a millionth part of a railway is worth fully as much as an acre of waste land on the banks of the Ohio. We make in our case a deposit, on a mortgage, which is an advance, as you see, since we gain at least ten, fifteen, twenty, or a hundred livres’ worth of iron in exchange for our money. Well, within a week I am to deposit four millions for my share; the four millions, I promise you, will produce ten or twelve.”

“But during my visit to you the day before yesterday, sir, which you appear to recollect so well,” replied Eugénie, “I saw you arranging a deposit—is not that

the term?—of five millions and a half; you even pointed it out to me in two drafts on the treasury, and you were astonished that so valuable a paper did not dazzle my eyes like lightning.”

“Yes, but those five millions and a half are not mine, and are only a proof of the great confidence placed in me; my title of popular banker has gained me the confidence of charitable institutions, and the five millions and a half belong to them; at any other time I should not have hesitated to make use of them, but the great losses I have recently sustained are well known, and, as I told you, my credit is rather shaken. That deposit may be at any moment withdrawn, and if I had employed it for another purpose, I should bring on me a disgraceful bankruptcy. I do not despise bankruptcies, believe me, but they must be those which enrich, not those which ruin. Now, if you marry M. Cavalcanti, and I get the three millions, or even if it is thought I am going to get them, my credit will be restored, and my fortune, which for the last month or two has been swallowed up in gulfs which have been opened in my path by an inconceivable fatality, will revive. Do you understand me?”

“Perfectly; you pledge me for three millions, do you not?”

“The greater the amount, the more flattering it is to you; it gives you an idea of your value.”

“Thank you. One word more, sir; do you promise me to make what use you can of the report of the fortune M. Cavalcanti will bring without touching the money? This is no act of selfishness, but of delicacy. I am willing to help rebuild your fortune, but I will not be an accomplice in the ruin of others.”

“But since I tell you,” cried Danglars, “that with these three million——”

“Do you expect to recover your position, sir, without touching those three million?”

“I hope so, if the marriage should take place and confirm my credit.”

“Shall you be able to pay M. Cavalcanti the five hundred thousand francs you promise for my dowry?”

“He shall receive them on returning from the mayor’s²⁰.”

“Very well!”

“What next? what more do you want?”

“I wish to know if, in demanding my signature, you leave me entirely free in my person?”

“Absolutely.”

“Then, as I said before, sir,—very well; I am ready to marry M. Cavalcanti.”

“But what are you up to?”

“Ah, that is my affair. What advantage should I have over you, if knowing your secret I were to tell you mine?”

Danglars bit his lips. “Then,” said he, “you are ready to pay the official visits, which are absolutely indispensable?”

“Yes,” replied Eugénie.

“And to sign the contract in three days?”

“Yes.”

“Then, in my turn, I also say, very well!”

Danglars pressed his daughter’s hand in his. But, extraordinary to relate, the father did not say, “Thank you, my child,” nor did the daughter smile at her father.

“Is the conference ended?” asked Eugénie, rising.

Danglars motioned that he had nothing more to say. Five minutes afterwards the piano resounded to the touch of Mademoiselle d’Armilly’s fingers, and Mademoiselle Danglars was singing Brabantio’s malediction on Desdemona. At the end of the piece Étienne entered, and announced to Eugénie that the horses were to the carriage, and that the baroness was waiting for her to pay her visits. We have seen them at Villefort’s; they proceeded then on their course.

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Chapter 96. The Contract

Three days after the scene we have just described, namely towards five o'clock in the afternoon of the day fixed for the signature of the contract between Mademoiselle Eugénie Danglars and Andrea Cavalcanti, whom the banker persisted in calling prince, a fresh breeze was stirring the leaves in the little garden in front of the Count of Monte Cristo's house, and the count was preparing to go out. While his horses were impatiently pawing the ground, held in by the coachman, who had been seated a quarter of an hour on his box, the elegant phaeton with which we are familiar rapidly turned the angle of the entrance-gate, and cast out on the doorsteps M. Andrea Cavalcanti, as decked up and gay as if he were going to marry a princess.

He inquired after the count with his usual familiarity, and ascending lightly to the first story met him at the top of the stairs.

The count stopped on seeing the young man. As for Andrea, he was launched, and when he was once launched nothing stopped him.

"Ah, good morning, my dear count," said he.

"Ah, M. Andrea," said the latter, with his half-jesting tone; "how do you do?"

"Charmingly, as you see. I am come to talk to you about a thousand things; but, first tell me, were you going out or just returned?"

"I was going out, sir."

"Then, in order not to hinder you, I will get up with you if you please in your carriage, and Tom shall follow with my phaeton in tow."

"No," said the count, with an imperceptible smile of contempt, for he had no wish to be seen in the young man's society,—"no; I prefer listening to you here, my dear M. Andrea; we can chat better in-doors, and there is no coachman to overhear our conversation."

The count returned to a small drawing-room on the first floor, sat down, and crossing his legs motioned to the young man to take a seat also. Andrea assumed his gayest manner.

"You know, my dear count," said he, "the ceremony is to take place this evening. At nine o'clock the contract is to be signed at my father-in-law's."

“Ah, indeed?” said Monte Cristo.

“What; is it news to you? Has not M. Danglars informed you of the ceremony?”

“Oh, yes,” said the count; “I received a letter from him yesterday, but I do not think the hour was mentioned.”

“Possibly my father-in-law trusted to its general notoriety.”

“Well,” said Monte Cristo, “you are fortunate, M. Cavalcanti; it is a most suitable alliance you are contracting, and Mademoiselle Danglars is a handsome girl.”

“Yes, indeed she is,” replied Cavalcanti, in a very modest tone.

“Above all, she is very rich,—at least, I believe so,” said Monte Cristo.

“Very rich, do you think?” replied the young man.

“Doubtless; it is said M. Danglars conceals at least half of his fortune.”

“And he acknowledges fifteen or twenty millions,” said Andrea with a look sparkling with joy.

“Without reckoning,” added Monte Cristo, “that he is on the eve of entering into a sort of speculation already in vogue in the United States and in England, but quite novel in France.”

“Yes, yes, I know what you mean,—the railway, of which he has obtained the grant, is it not?”

“Precisely; it is generally believed he will gain ten millions by that affair.”

“Ten millions! Do you think so? It is magnificent!” said Cavalcanti, who was quite confounded at the metallic sound of these golden words.

“Without reckoning,” replied Monte Cristo, “that all his fortune will come to you, and justly too, since Mademoiselle Danglars is an only daughter. Besides, your own fortune, as your father assured me, is almost equal to that of your betrothed. But enough of money matters. Do you know, M. Andrea, I think you have managed this affair rather skilfully?”

“Not badly, by any means,” said the young man; “I was born for a diplomatist.”

“Well, you must become a diplomatist; diplomacy, you know, is something that is not to be acquired; it is instinctive. Have you lost your heart?”

“Indeed, I fear it,” replied Andrea, in the tone in which he had heard Dorante or Valère reply to Alceste²¹ at the Théâtre Français.

“Is your love returned?”

“I suppose so,” said Andrea with a triumphant smile, “since I am accepted. But I must not forget one grand point.”

“Which?”

“That I have been singularly assisted.”

“Nonsense.”

“I have, indeed.”

“By circumstances?”

“No; by you.”

“By me? Not at all, prince,” said Monte Cristo laying a marked stress on the title, “what have I done for you? Are not your name, your social position, and your merit sufficient?”

“No,” said Andrea,—“no; it is useless for you to say so, count. I maintain that the position of a man like you has done more than my name, my social position, and my merit.”

“You are completely mistaken, sir,” said Monte Cristo coldly, who felt the perfidious manœuvre of the young man, and understood the bearing of his words; “you only acquired my protection after the influence and fortune of your father had been ascertained; for, after all, who procured for me, who had never seen either you or your illustrious father, the pleasure of your acquaintance?—two of my good friends, Lord Wilmore and the Abbé Busoni. What encouraged me not to become your surety, but to patronize you?—your father’s name, so well known in Italy and so highly honored. Personally, I do not know you.”

This calm tone and perfect ease made Andrea feel that he was, for the moment, restrained by a more muscular hand than his own, and that the restraint could not be easily broken through.

“Oh, then my father has really a very large fortune, count?”

“It appears so, sir,” replied Monte Cristo.

“Do you know if the marriage settlement he promised me has come?”

“I have been advised of it.”

“But the three millions?”

“The three millions are probably on the road.”

“Then I shall really have them?”

“Oh, well,” said the count, “I do not think you have yet known the want of money.”

Andrea was so surprised that he pondered the matter for a moment. Then,

arousing from his reverie:

"Now, sir, I have one request to make to you, which you will understand, even if it should be disagreeable to you."

"Proceed," said Monte Cristo.

"I have formed an acquaintance, thanks to my good fortune, with many noted persons, and have, at least for the moment, a crowd of friends. But marrying, as I am about to do, before all Paris, I ought to be supported by an illustrious name, and in the absence of the paternal hand some powerful one ought to lead me to the altar; now, my father is not coming to Paris, is he?"

"He is old, covered with wounds, and suffers dreadfully, he says, in travelling."

"I understand; well, I am come to ask a favor of you."

"Of me?"

"Yes, of you."

"And pray what may it be?"

"Well, to take his part."

"Ah, my dear sir! What?—after the varied relations I have had the happiness to sustain towards you, can it be that you know me so little as to ask such a thing? Ask me to lend you half a million and, although such a loan is somewhat rare, on my honor, you would annoy me less! Know, then, what I thought I had already told you, that in participation in this world's affairs, more especially in their moral aspects, the Count of Monte Cristo has never ceased to entertain the scruples and even the superstitions of the East. I, who have a seraglio at Cairo, one at Smyrna, and one at Constantinople, preside at a wedding?—never!"

"Then you refuse me?"

"Decidedly; and were you my son or my brother I would refuse you in the same way."

"But what must be done?" said Andrea, disappointed.

"You said just now that you had a hundred friends."

"Very true, but you introduced me at M. Danglars'."

"Not at all! Let us recall the exact facts. You met him at a dinner party at my house, and you introduced yourself at his house; that is a totally different affair."

"Yes, but, by my marriage, you have forwarded that."

"I?—not in the least, I beg you to believe. Recollect what I told you when you asked me to propose you. 'Oh, I never make matches, my dear prince, it is my

settled principle.”” Andrea bit his lips.

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“But, at least, you will be there?”

“Will all Paris be there?”

“Oh, certainly.”

“Well, like all Paris, I shall be there too,” said the count.

“And will you sign the contract?”

“I see no objection to that; my scruples do not go thus far.”

“Well, since you will grant me no more, I must be content with what you give me. But one word more, count.”

“What is it?”

“Advice.”

“Be careful; advice is worse than a service.”

“Oh, you can give me this without compromising yourself.”

“Tell me what it is.”

“Is my wife’s fortune five hundred thousand livres?”

“That is the sum M. Danglars himself announced.”

“Must I receive it, or leave it in the hands of the notary?”

“This is the way such affairs are generally arranged when it is wished to do them stylishly: Your two solicitors appoint a meeting, when the contract is signed, for the next or the following day; then they exchange the two portions, for which they each give a receipt; then, when the marriage is celebrated, they place the amount at your disposal as the chief member of the alliance.”

“Because,” said Andrea, with a certain ill-concealed uneasiness, “I thought I heard my father-in-law say that he intended embarking our property in that famous railway affair of which you spoke just now.”

“Well,” replied Monte Cristo, “it will be the way, everybody says, of trebling your fortune in twelve months. Baron Danglars is a good father, and knows how to calculate.”

“In that case,” said Andrea, “everything is all right, excepting your refusal, which quite grieves me.”

“You must attribute it only to natural scruples under similar circumstances.”

“Well,” said Andrea, “let it be as you wish. This evening, then, at nine o’clock.”

“Adieu till then.”

Notwithstanding a slight resistance on the part of Monte Cristo, whose lips turned pale, but who preserved his ceremonious smile, Andrea seized the count's hand, pressed it, jumped into his phaeton, and disappeared.

The four or five remaining hours before nine o'clock arrived, Andrea employed in riding, paying visits,—designed to induce those of whom he had spoken to appear at the banker's in their gayest equipages,—dazzling them by promises of shares in schemes which have since turned every brain, and in which Danglars was just taking the initiative.

In fact, at half-past eight in the evening the grand salon, the gallery adjoining, and the three other drawing-rooms on the same floor, were filled with a perfumed crowd, who sympathized but little in the event, but who all participated in that love of being present wherever there is anything fresh to be seen. An Academician would say that the entertainments of the fashionable world are collections of flowers which attract inconstant butterflies, famished bees, and buzzing drones.

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No one could deny that the rooms were splendidly illuminated; the light streamed forth on the gilt mouldings and the silk hangings; and all the bad taste of decorations, which had only their richness to boast of, shone in its splendor. Mademoiselle Eugénie was dressed with elegant simplicity in a figured white silk dress, and a white rose half concealed in her jet black hair was her only ornament, unaccompanied by a single jewel. Her eyes, however, betrayed that perfect confidence which contradicted the girlish simplicity of this modest attire.

Madame Danglars was chatting at a short distance with Debray, Beauchamp, and Château-Renaud. Debray was admitted to the house for this grand ceremony, but on the same plane with everyone else, and without any particular privilege. M. Danglars, surrounded by deputies and men connected with the revenue, was explaining a new theory of taxation which he intended to adopt when the course of events had compelled the government to call him into the ministry. Andrea, on whose arm hung one of the most consummate dandies of the Opera, was explaining to him rather cleverly, since he was obliged to be bold to appear at ease, his future projects, and the new luxuries he meant to introduce to Parisian fashions with his hundred and seventy-five thousand livres per annum.

The crowd moved to and fro in the rooms like an ebb and flow of turquoises, rubies, emeralds, opals, and diamonds. As usual, the oldest women were the most decorated, and the ugliest the most conspicuous. If there was a beautiful

lily, or a sweet rose, you had to search for it, concealed in some corner behind a mother with a turban, or an aunt with a bird-of-paradise.

At each moment, in the midst of the crowd, the buzzing, and the laughter, the door-keeper's voice was heard announcing some name well known in the financial department, respected in the army, or illustrious in the literary world, and which was acknowledged by a slight movement in the different groups. But for one whose privilege it was to agitate that ocean of human waves, how many were received with a look of indifference or a sneer of disdain!

At the moment when the hand of the massive time-piece, representing Endymion asleep, pointed to nine on its golden face, and the hammer, the faithful type of mechanical thought, struck nine times, the name of the Count of Monte Cristo resounded in its turn, and as if by an electric shock all the assembly turned towards the door. The count was dressed in black and with his habitual simplicity; his white waistcoat displayed his expansive noble chest and his black stock was singularly noticeable because of its contrast with the deadly paleness of his face. His only jewellery was a chain, so fine that the slender gold thread was scarcely perceptible on his white waistcoat.

A circle was immediately formed around the door. The count perceived at one glance Madame Danglars at one end of the drawing-room, M. Danglars at the other, and Eugénie in front of him. He first advanced towards the baroness, who was chatting with Madame de Villefort, who had come alone, Valentine being still an invalid; and without turning aside, so clear was the road left for him, he passed from the baroness to Eugénie, whom he complimented in such rapid and measured terms, that the proud artist was quite struck. Near her was Mademoiselle Louise d'Armilly, who thanked the count for the letters of introduction he had so kindly given her for Italy, which she intended immediately to make use of. On leaving these ladies he found himself with Danglars, who had advanced to meet him.

Having accomplished these three social duties, Monte Cristo stopped, looking around him with that expression peculiar to a certain class, which seems to say, "I have done my duty, now let others do theirs."

Andrea, who was in an adjoining room, had shared in the sensation caused by the arrival of Monte Cristo, and now came forward to pay his respects to the count. He found him completely surrounded; all were eager to speak to him, as is always the case with those whose words are few and weighty. The solicitors arrived at this moment and arranged their scrawled papers on the velvet cloth embroidered with gold which covered the table prepared for the signature; it was a gilt table supported on lions' claws. One of the notaries sat down, the other

remained standing. They were about to proceed to the reading of the contract, which half Paris assembled was to sign. All took their places, or rather the ladies formed a circle, while the gentlemen (more indifferent to the restraints of what Boileau calls the *style énergique*) commented on the feverish agitation of Andrea, on M. Danglars' riveted attention, Eugénie's composure, and the light and sprightly manner in which the baroness treated this important affair.

The contract was read during a profound silence. But as soon as it was finished, the buzz was redoubled through all the drawing-rooms; the brilliant sums, the rolling millions which were to be at the command of the two young people, and which crowned the display of the wedding presents and the young lady's diamonds, which had been made in a room entirely appropriated for that purpose, had exercised to the full their delusions over the envious assembly.

Mademoiselle Danglars' charms were heightened in the opinion of the young men, and for the moment seemed to outvie the sun in splendor. As for the ladies, it is needless to say that while they coveted the millions, they thought they did not need them for themselves, as they were beautiful enough without them. Andrea, surrounded by his friends, complimented, flattered, beginning to believe in the reality of his dream, was almost bewildered. The notary solemnly took the pen, flourished it above his head, and said:

“Gentlemen, we are about to sign the contract.”

The baron was to sign first, then the representative of M. Cavalcanti, senior, then the baroness, afterwards the “future couple,” as they are styled in the abominable phraseology of legal documents.

The baron took the pen and signed, then the representative. The baroness approached, leaning on Madame de Villefort’s arm.

“My dear,” said she, as she took the pen, “is it not vexatious? An unexpected incident, in the affair of murder and theft at the Count of Monte Cristo’s, in which he nearly fell a victim, deprives us of the pleasure of seeing M. de Villefort.”

“Indeed?” said M. Danglars, in the same tone in which he would have said, “Oh, well, what do I care?”

“As a matter of fact,” said Monte Cristo, approaching, “I am much afraid that I am the involuntary cause of his absence.”

“What, you, count?” said Madame Danglars, signing; “if you are, take care, for I shall never forgive you.”

Andrea pricked up his ears.

“But it is not my fault, as I shall endeavor to prove.”

Everyone listened eagerly; Monte Cristo who so rarely opened his lips, was about to speak.

“You remember,” said the count, during the most profound silence, “that the unhappy wretch who came to rob me died at my house; the supposition is that he was stabbed by his accomplice, on attempting to leave it.”

“Yes,” said Danglars.

“In order that his wounds might be examined he was undressed, and his clothes were thrown into a corner, where the police picked them up, with the exception of the waistcoat, which they overlooked.”

Andrea turned pale, and drew towards the door; he saw a cloud rising in the horizon, which appeared to forebode a coming storm.

“Well, this waistcoat was discovered today, covered with blood, and with a hole over the heart.” The ladies screamed, and two or three prepared to faint. “It was brought to me. No one could guess what the dirty rag could be; I alone suspected that it was the waistcoat of the murdered man. My valet, in examining this mournful relic, felt a paper in the pocket and drew it out; it was a letter addressed to you, baron.”

“To me?” cried Danglars.

“Yes, indeed, to you; I succeeded in deciphering your name under the blood with which the letter was stained,” replied Monte Cristo, amid the general outburst of amazement.

“But,” asked Madame Danglars, looking at her husband with uneasiness, “how could that prevent M. de Villefort——”

“In this simple way, madame,” replied Monte Cristo; “the waistcoat and the letter were both what is termed circumstantial evidence; I therefore sent them to the king’s attorney. You understand, my dear baron, that legal methods are the safest in criminal cases; it was, perhaps, some plot against you.” Andrea looked steadily at Monte Cristo and disappeared in the second drawing-room.

“Possibly,” said Danglars; “was not this murdered man an old galley-slave?”

50025m

“Yes,” replied the count; “a felon named Caderousse.” Danglars turned slightly pale; Andrea reached the anteroom beyond the little drawing-room.

“But go on signing,” said Monte Cristo; “I perceive that my story has caused a general emotion, and I beg to apologize to you, baroness, and to Mademoiselle

Danglars."

The baroness, who had signed, returned the pen to the notary.

"Prince Cavalcanti," said the latter; "Prince Cavalcanti, where are you?"

"Andrea, Andrea," repeated several young people, who were already on sufficiently intimate terms with him to call him by his Christian name.

"Call the prince; inform him that it is his turn to sign," cried Danglars to one of the floorkeepers.

But at the same instant the crowd of guests rushed in alarm into the principal salon as if some frightful monster had entered the apartments, *quærens quem devoret*. There was, indeed, reason to retreat, to be alarmed, and to scream. An officer was placing two soldiers at the door of each drawing-room, and was advancing towards Danglars, preceded by a commissary of police, girded with his scarf. Madame Danglars uttered a scream and fainted. Danglars, who thought himself threatened (certain consciences are never calm),—Danglars even before his guests showed a countenance of abject terror.

"What is the matter, sir?" asked Monte Cristo, advancing to meet the commissioner.

"Which of you gentlemen," asked the magistrate, without replying to the count, "answers to the name of Andrea Cavalcanti?"

A cry of astonishment was heard from all parts of the room. They searched; they questioned.

"But who then is Andrea Cavalcanti?" asked Danglars in amazement.

"A galley-slave, escaped from confinement at Toulon."

"And what crime has he committed?"

"He is accused," said the commissary with his inflexible voice, "of having assassinated the man named Caderousse, his former companion in prison, at the moment he was making his escape from the house of the Count of Monte Cristo."

Monte Cristo cast a rapid glance around him. Andrea was gone.

Chapter 97. The Departure for Belgium

A few minutes after the scene of confusion produced in the salons of M. Danglars by the unexpected appearance of the brigade of soldiers, and by the disclosure which had followed, the mansion was deserted with as much rapidity as if a case of plague or of cholera morbus had broken out among the guests.

In a few minutes, through all the doors, down all the staircases, by every exit, everyone hastened to retire, or rather to fly; for it was a situation where the ordinary condolences,—which even the best friends are so eager to offer in great catastrophes,—were seen to be utterly futile. There remained in the banker's house only Danglars, closeted in his study, and making his statement to the officer of gendarmes; Madame Danglars, terrified, in the boudoir with which we are acquainted; and Eugénie, who with haughty air and disdainful lip had retired to her room with her inseparable companion, Mademoiselle Louise d'Armilly.

As for the numerous servants (more numerous than evening than usual, for their number was augmented by cooks and butlers from the Café de Paris), venting on their employers their anger at what they termed the insult to which they had been subjected, they collected in groups in the hall, in the kitchens, or in their rooms, thinking very little of their duty, which was thus naturally interrupted. Of all this household, only two persons deserve our notice; these are Mademoiselle Eugénie Danglars and Mademoiselle Louise d'Armilly.

The betrothed had retired, as we said, with haughty air, disdainful lip, and the demeanor of an outraged queen, followed by her companion, who was paler and more disturbed than herself. On reaching her room Eugénie locked her door, while Louise fell on a chair.

"Ah, what a dreadful thing," said the young musician; "who would have suspected it? M. Andrea Cavalcanti a murderer—a galley-slave escaped—a convict!"

An ironical smile curled the lip of Eugénie. "In truth, I was fated," said she. "I escaped the Morcerf only to fall into the Cavalcanti."

"Oh, do not confound the two, Eugénie."

"Hold your tongue! The men are all infamous, and I am happy to be able now to do more than detest them—I despise them."

“What shall we do?” asked Louise.

“What shall we do?”

“Yes.”

“Why, the same we had intended doing three days since—set off.”

“What?—although you are not now going to be married, you intend still——”

“Listen, Louise. I hate this life of the fashionable world, always ordered, measured, ruled, like our music-paper. What I have always wished for, desired, and coveted, is the life of an artist, free and independent, relying only on my own resources, and accountable only to myself. Remain here? What for?—that they may try, a month hence, to marry me again; and to whom?—M. Debray, perhaps, as it was once proposed. No, Louise, no! This evening’s adventure will serve for my excuse. I did not seek one, I did not ask for one. God sends me this, and I hail it joyfully!”

“How strong and courageous you are!” said the fair, frail girl to her brunette companion.

“Did you not yet know me? Come, Louise, let us talk of our affairs. The post-chaise——”

“Was happily bought three days since.”

“Have you had it sent where we are to go for it?”

“Yes.”

“Our passport?”

“Here it is.”

And Eugénie, with her usual precision, opened a printed paper, and read:

“M. Léon d’Armilly, twenty years of age; profession, artist; hair black, eyes black; travelling with his sister.”

“Capital! How did you get this passport?”

“When I went to ask M. de Monte Cristo for letters to the directors of the theatres at Rome and Naples, I expressed my fears of travelling as a woman; he perfectly understood them, and undertook to procure for me a man’s passport, and two days after I received this, to which I have added with my own hand, ‘travelling with his sister.’”

50035m

“Well,” said Eugénie cheerfully, “we have then only to pack up our trunks; we shall start the evening of the signing of the contract, instead of the evening of the

wedding—that is all.”

“But consider the matter seriously, Eugénie!”

“Oh, I am done with considering! I am tired of hearing only of market reports, of the end of the month, of the rise and fall of Spanish funds, of Haitian bonds. Instead of that, Louise—do you understand?—air, liberty, melody of birds, plains of Lombardy, Venetian canals, Roman palaces, the Bay of Naples. How much have we, Louise?”

The young girl to whom this question was addressed drew from an inlaid secretaire a small portfolio with a lock, in which she counted twenty-three bank-notes.

“Twenty-three thousand francs,” said she.

“And as much, at least, in pearls, diamonds, and jewels,” said Eugénie. “We are rich. With forty-five thousand francs we can live like princesses for two years, and comfortably for four; but before six months—you with your music, and I with my voice—we shall double our capital. Come, you shall take charge of the money, I of the jewel-box; so that if one of us had the misfortune to lose her treasure, the other would still have hers left. Now, the portmanteau—let us make haste—the portmanteau!”

“Stop!” said Louise, going to listen at Madame Danglars’ door.

“What do you fear?”

“That we may be discovered.”

“The door is locked.”

“They may tell us to open it.”

“They may if they like, but we will not.”

“You are a perfect Amazon, Eugénie!” And the two young girls began to heap into a trunk all the things they thought they should require.

“There now,” said Eugénie, “while I change my costume do you lock the portmanteau.” Louise pressed with all the strength of her little hands on the top of the portmanteau.

“But I cannot,” said she; “I am not strong enough; do you shut it.”

“Ah, you do well to ask,” said Eugénie, laughing; “I forgot that I was Hercules, and you only the pale Omphale!”

And the young girl, kneeling on the top, pressed the two parts of the portmanteau together, and Mademoiselle d’Armilly passed the bolt of the padlock through. When this was done, Eugénie opened a drawer, of which she

kept the key, and took from it a wadded violet silk travelling cloak.

"Here," said she, "you see I have thought of everything; with this cloak you will not be cold."

"But you?"

"Oh, I am never cold, you know! Besides, with these men's clothes——"

"Will you dress here?"

"Certainly."

"Shall you have time?"

"Do not be uneasy, you little coward! All our servants are busy, discussing the grand affair. Besides, what is there astonishing, when you think of the grief I ought to be in, that I shut myself up?—tell me!"

"No, truly—you comfort me."

"Come and help me."

From the same drawer she took a man's complete costume, from the boots to the coat, and a provision of linen, where there was nothing superfluous, but every requisite. Then, with a promptitude which indicated that this was not the first time she had amused herself by adopting the garb of the opposite sex, Eugénie drew on the boots and pantaloons, tied her cravat, buttoned her waistcoat up to the throat, and put on a coat which admirably fitted her beautiful figure.

"Oh, that is very good—indeed, it is very good!" said Louise, looking at her with admiration; "but that beautiful black hair, those magnificent braids, which made all the ladies sigh with envy,—will they go under a man's hat like the one I see down there?"

"You shall see," said Eugénie. And with her left hand seizing the thick mass, which her long fingers could scarcely grasp, she took in her right hand a pair of long scissors, and soon the steel met through the rich and splendid hair, which fell in a cluster at her feet as she leaned back to keep it from her coat. Then she grasped the front hair, which she also cut off, without expressing the least regret; on the contrary, her eyes sparkled with greater pleasure than usual under her ebony eyebrows.

50039m

"Oh, the magnificent hair!" said Louise, with regret.

"And am I not a hundred times better thus?" cried Eugénie, smoothing the scattered curls of her hair, which had now quite a masculine appearance; "and do

you not think me handsomer so?"

"Oh, you are beautiful—always beautiful!" cried Louise. "Now, where are you going?"

"To Brussels, if you like; it is the nearest frontier. We can go to Brussels, Liège, Aix-la-Chapelle; then up the Rhine to Strasbourg. We will cross Switzerland, and go down into Italy by the Saint-Gothard. Will that do?"

"Yes."

"What are you looking at?"

"I am looking at you; indeed you are adorable like that! One would say you were carrying me off."

"And they would be right, *pardieu!*"

"Oh, I think you swore, Eugénie."

And the two young girls, whom everyone might have thought plunged in grief, the one on her own account, the other from interest in her friend, burst out laughing, as they cleared away every visible trace of the disorder which had naturally accompanied the preparations for their escape. Then, having blown out the lights, the two fugitives, looking and listening eagerly, with outstretched necks, opened the door of a dressing-room which led by a side staircase down to the yard,—Eugénie going first, and holding with one arm the portmanteau, which by the opposite handle Mademoiselle d'Armilly scarcely raised with both hands. The yard was empty; the clock was striking twelve. The porter was not yet gone to bed. Eugénie approached softly, and saw the old man sleeping soundly in an armchair in his lodge. She returned to Louise, took up the portmanteau, which she had placed for a moment on the ground, and they reached the archway under the shadow of the wall.

Eugénie concealed Louise in an angle of the gateway, so that if the porter chanced to awake he might see but one person. Then placing herself in the full light of the lamp which lit the yard:

"Gate!" cried she, with her finest contralto voice, and rapping at the window.

The porter got up as Eugénie expected, and even advanced some steps to recognize the person who was going out, but seeing a young man striking his boot impatiently with his riding-whip, he opened it immediately. Louise slid through the half-open gate like a snake, and bounded lightly forward. Eugénie, apparently calm, although in all probability her heart beat somewhat faster than usual, went out in her turn.

A porter was passing and they gave him the portmanteau; then the two young

girls, having told him to take it to No. 36, Rue de la Victoire, walked behind this man, whose presence comforted Louise. As for Eugénie, she was as strong as a Judith or a Delilah. They arrived at the appointed spot. Eugénie ordered the porter to put down the portmanteau, gave him some pieces of money, and having rapped at the shutter sent him away. The shutter where Eugénie had rapped was that of a little laundress, who had been previously warned, and was not yet gone to bed. She opened the door.

“Mademoiselle,” said Eugénie, “let the porter get the post-chaise from the coach-house, and fetch some post-horses from the hotel. Here are five francs for his trouble.”

“Indeed,” said Louise, “I admire you, and I could almost say respect you.” The laundress looked on in astonishment, but as she had been promised twenty louis, she made no remark.

In a quarter of an hour the porter returned with a post-boy and horses, which were harnessed, and put in the post-chaise in a minute, while the porter fastened the portmanteau on with the assistance of a cord and strap.

“Here is the passport,” said the postilion, “which way are we going, young gentleman?”

“To Fontainebleau,” replied Eugénie with an almost masculine voice.

“What do you say?” said Louise.

“I am giving them the slip,” said Eugénie; “this woman to whom we have given twenty louis may betray us for forty; we will soon alter our direction.”

And the young girl jumped into the britzka, which was admirably arranged for sleeping in, without scarcely touching the step.

“You are always right,” said the music teacher, seating herself by the side of her friend.

A quarter of an hour afterwards the postilion, having been put in the right road, passed with a crack of his whip through the gateway of the Barrière Saint-Martin.

“Ah,” said Louise, breathing freely, “here we are out of Paris.”

“Yes, my dear, the abduction is an accomplished fact,” replied Eugénie.

“Yes, and without violence,” said Louise.

“I shall bring that forward as an extenuating circumstance,” replied Eugénie.

These words were lost in the noise which the carriage made in rolling over the pavement of La Villette. M. Danglars no longer had a daughter.

Chapter 98. The Bell and Bottle Tavern

And now let us leave Mademoiselle Danglars and her friend pursuing their way to Brussels, and return to poor Andrea Cavalcanti, so inopportunely interrupted in his rise to fortune. Notwithstanding his youth, Master Andrea was a very skilful and intelligent boy. We have seen that on the first rumor which reached the salon he had gradually approached the door, and crossing two or three rooms at last disappeared. But we have forgotten to mention one circumstance, which nevertheless ought not to be omitted; in one of the rooms he crossed, the *trousseau* of the bride-elect was on exhibition. There were caskets of diamonds, cashmere shawls, Valenciennes lace, English veils, and in fact all the tempting things, the bare mention of which makes the hearts of young girls bound with joy, and which is called the *corbeille*.²² Now, in passing through this room, Andrea proved himself not only to be clever and intelligent, but also provident, for he helped himself to the most valuable of the ornaments before him.

Furnished with this plunder, Andrea leaped with a lighter heart from the window, intending to slip through the hands of the gendarmes. Tall and well proportioned as an ancient gladiator, and muscular as a Spartan, he walked for a quarter of an hour without knowing where to direct his steps, actuated by the sole idea of getting away from the spot where if he lingered he knew that he would surely be taken. Having passed through the Rue du Mont-Blanc, guided by the instinct which leads thieves always to take the safest path, he found himself at the end of the Rue La Fayette. There he stopped, breathless and panting. He was quite alone; on one side was the vast wilderness of the Saint-Lazare, on the other, Paris enshrouded in darkness.

“Am I to be captured?” he cried; “no, not if I can use more activity than my enemies. My safety is now a mere question of speed.”

At this moment he saw a cab at the top of the Faubourg Poissonnière. The dull driver, smoking his pipe, was plodding along toward the limits of the Faubourg Saint-Denis, where no doubt he ordinarily had his station.

“Ho, friend!” said Benedetto.

“What do you want, sir?” asked the driver.

“Is your horse tired?”

“Tired? oh, yes, tired enough—he has done nothing the whole of this blessed day! Four wretched fares, and twenty sous over, making in all seven francs, are all that I have earned, and I ought to take ten to the owner.”

“Will you add these twenty francs to the seven you have?”

“With pleasure, sir; twenty francs are not to be despised. Tell me what I am to do for this.”

“A very easy thing, if your horse isn’t tired.”

“I tell you he’ll go like the wind,—only tell me which way to drive.”

“Towards the Louvres.”

“Ah, I know the way—you get good sweetened rum over there.”

“Exactly so; I merely wish to overtake one of my friends, with whom I am going to hunt tomorrow at Chapelle-en-Serval. He should have waited for me here with a cabriolet till half-past eleven; it is twelve, and, tired of waiting, he must have gone on.”

“It is likely.”

“Well, will you try and overtake him?”

“Nothing I should like better.”

“If you do not overtake him before we reach Bourget you shall have twenty francs; if not before Louvres, thirty.”

“And if we do overtake him?”

“Forty,” said Andrea, after a moment’s hesitation, at the end of which he remembered that he might safely promise.

“That’s all right,” said the man; “hop in, and we’re off! Who-o-o-pla!”

Andrea got into the cab, which passed rapidly through the Faubourg Saint-Denis, along the Faubourg Saint-Martin, crossed the barrier, and threaded its way through the interminable Villette. They never overtook the chimerical friend, yet Andrea frequently inquired of people on foot whom he passed and at the inns which were not yet closed, for a green cabriolet and bay horse; and as there are a great many cabriolets to be seen on the road to the Low Countries, and as nine-tenths of them are green, the inquiries increased at every step. Everyone had just seen it pass; it was only five hundred, two hundred, one hundred steps in advance; at length they reached it, but it was not the friend. Once the cab was also passed by a calash rapidly whirled along by two post-horses.

"Ah," said Cavalcanti to himself, "if I only had that britzka, those two good post-horses, and above all the passport that carries them on!" And he sighed deeply.

The calash contained Mademoiselle Danglars and Mademoiselle d'Armilly.

"Hurry, hurry!" said Andrea, "we must overtake him soon."

And the poor horse resumed the desperate gallop it had kept up since leaving the barrier, and arrived steaming at Louvres.

"Certainly," said Andrea, "I shall not overtake my friend, but I shall kill your horse, therefore I had better stop. Here are thirty francs; I will sleep at the *Cheval Rouge*, and will secure a place in the first coach. Good-night, friend."

And Andrea, after placing six pieces of five francs each in the man's hand, leaped lightly on to the pathway. The cabman joyfully pocketed the sum, and turned back on his road to Paris. Andrea pretended to go towards the hotel of the *Cheval Rouge*, but after leaning an instant against the door, and hearing the last sound of the cab, which was disappearing from view, he went on his road, and with a lusty stride soon traversed the space of two leagues. Then he rested; he must be near Chapelle-en-Serval, where he pretended to be going.

It was not fatigue that stayed Andrea here; it was that he might form some resolution, adopt some plan. It would be impossible to make use of a diligence, equally so to engage post-horses; to travel either way a passport was necessary. It was still more impossible to remain in the department of the Oise, one of the most open and strictly guarded in France; this was quite out of the question, especially to a man like Andrea, perfectly conversant with criminal matters.

He sat down by the side of the moat, buried his face in his hands and reflected. Ten minutes after he raised his head; his resolution was made. He threw some dust over the topcoat, which he had found time to unhook from the antechamber and button over his ball costume, and going to Chapelle-en-Serval he knocked loudly at the door of the only inn in the place.

The host opened.

"My friend," said Andrea, "I was coming from Mortefontaine to Senlis, when my horse, which is a troublesome creature, stumbled and threw me. I must reach Compiègne tonight, or I shall cause deep anxiety to my family. Could you let me hire a horse of you?"

An innkeeper has always a horse to let, whether it be good or bad. The host called the stable-boy, and ordered him to saddle *Le Blanc* then he awoke his son, a child of seven years, whom he ordered to ride before the gentleman and bring

back the horse. Andrea gave the innkeeper twenty francs, and in taking them from his pocket dropped a visiting card. This belonged to one of his friends at the Café de Paris, so that the innkeeper, picking it up after Andrea had left, was convinced that he had let his horse to the Count of Mauléon, 25 Rue Saint-Dominique, that being the name and address on the card.

Le Blanc was not a fast animal, but he kept up an easy, steady pace; in three hours and a half Andrea had traversed the nine leagues which separated him from Compiègne, and four o'clock struck as he reached the place where the coaches stop. There is an excellent tavern at Compiègne, well remembered by those who have ever been there. Andrea, who had often stayed there in his rides about Paris, recollects the Bell and Bottle inn; he turned around, saw the sign by the light of a reflected lamp, and having dismissed the child, giving him all the small coin he had about him, he began knocking at the door, very reasonably concluding that having now three or four hours before him he had best fortify himself against the fatigues of the morrow by a sound sleep and a good supper. A waiter opened the door.

"My friend," said Andrea, "I have been dining at Saint-Jean-aux-Bois, and expected to catch the coach which passes by at midnight, but like a fool I have lost my way, and have been walking for the last four hours in the forest. Show me into one of those pretty little rooms which overlook the court, and bring me a cold fowl and a bottle of Bordeaux."

The waiter had no suspicions; Andrea spoke with perfect composure, he had a cigar in his mouth, and his hands in the pocket of his top coat; his clothes were fashionably made, his chin smooth, his boots irreproachable; he looked merely as if he had stayed out very late, that was all. While the waiter was preparing his room, the hostess arose; Andrea assumed his most charming smile, and asked if he could have No. 3, which he had occupied on his last stay at Compiègne. Unfortunately, No. 3 was engaged by a young man who was travelling with his sister. Andrea appeared in despair, but consoled himself when the hostess assured him that No. 7, prepared for him, was situated precisely the same as No. 3, and while warming his feet and chatting about the last races at Chantilly, he waited until they announced his room to be ready.

Andrea had not spoken without cause of the pretty rooms looking out upon the court of the Bell Hotel, which with its triple galleries like those of a theatre, with the jessamine and clematis twining round the light columns, forms one of the prettiest entrances to an inn that you can imagine. The fowl was tender, the wine old, the fire clear and sparkling, and Andrea was surprised to find himself eating with as good an appetite as though nothing had happened. Then he went to bed

and almost immediately fell into that deep sleep which is sure to visit men of twenty years of age, even when they are torn with remorse. Now, here we are obliged to own that Andrea ought to have felt remorse, but that he did not.

This was the plan which had appealed to him to afford the best chance of his security. Before daybreak he would awake, leave the inn after rigorously paying his bill, and reaching the forest, he would, under pretence of making studies in painting, test the hospitality of some peasants, procure himself the dress of a woodcutter and a hatchet, casting off the lion's skin to assume that of the woodman; then, with his hands covered with dirt, his hair darkened by means of a leaden comb, his complexion embrowned with a preparation for which one of his old comrades had given him the recipe, he intended, by following the wooded districts, to reach the nearest frontier, walking by night and sleeping in the day in the forests and quarries, and only entering inhabited regions to buy a loaf from time to time.

Once past the frontier, Andrea proposed making money of his diamonds; and by uniting the proceeds to ten bank-notes he always carried about with him in case of accident, he would then find himself possessor of about 50,000 livres, which he philosophically considered as no very deplorable condition after all. Moreover, he reckoned much on the interest of the Danglars to hush up the rumor of their own misadventures. These were the reasons which, added to the fatigue, caused Andrea to sleep so soundly. In order that he might wake early he did not close the shutters, but contented himself with bolting the door and placing on the table an unclasped and long-pointed knife, whose temper he well knew, and which was never absent from him.

About seven in the morning Andrea was awakened by a ray of sunlight, which played, warm and brilliant, upon his face. In all well-organized brains, the predominating idea—and there always is one—is sure to be the last thought before sleeping, and the first upon waking in the morning. Andrea had scarcely opened his eyes when his predominating idea presented itself, and whispered in his ear that he had slept too long. He jumped out of bed and ran to the window. A gendarme was crossing the court. A gendarme is one of the most striking objects in the world, even to a man void of uneasiness; but for one who has a timid conscience, and with good cause too, the yellow, blue, and white uniform is really very alarming.

“Why is that gendarme there?” asked Andrea of himself.

Then, all at once, he replied, with that logic which the reader has, doubtless, remarked in him, “There is nothing astonishing in seeing a gendarme at an inn; instead of being astonished, let me dress myself.” And the youth dressed himself

with a facility his valet de chambre had failed to rob him of during the two months of fashionable life he had led in Paris.

"Now then," said Andrea, while dressing himself, "I'll wait till he leaves, and then I'll slip away."

50047m

And, saying this, Andrea, who had now put on his boots and cravat, stole gently to the window, and a second time lifted up the muslin curtain. Not only was the first gendarme still there, but the young man now perceived a second yellow, blue, and white uniform at the foot of the staircase, the only one by which he could descend, while a third, on horseback, holding a musket in his fist, was posted as a sentinel at the great street-door which alone afforded the means of egress. The appearance of the third gendarme settled the matter, for a crowd of curious loungers was extended before him, effectually blocking the entrance to the hotel.

"They're after me!" was Andrea's first thought. "*Diable!*"

A pallor overspread the young man's forehead, and he looked around him with anxiety. His room, like all those on the same floor, had but one outlet to the gallery in the sight of everybody. "I am lost!" was his second thought; and, indeed, for a man in Andrea's situation, an arrest meant the assizes, trial, and death,—death without mercy or delay.

For a moment he convulsively pressed his head within his hands, and during that brief period he became nearly mad with terror; but soon a ray of hope glimmered in the multitude of thoughts which bewildered his mind, and a faint smile played upon his white lips and pallid cheeks. He looked around and saw the objects of his search upon the chimney-piece; they were a pen, ink, and paper. With forced composure he dipped the pen in the ink, and wrote the following lines upon a sheet of paper:

"I have no money to pay my bill, but I am not a dishonest man; I leave behind me as a pledge this pin, worth ten times the amount. I shall be excused for leaving at daybreak, for I was ashamed."

He then drew the pin from his cravat and placed it on the paper. This done, instead of leaving the door fastened, he drew back the bolts and even placed the door ajar, as though he had left the room, forgetting to close it, and slipping into the chimney like a man accustomed to that kind of gymnastic exercise, after replacing the chimney-board, which represented Achilles with Deidamia, and effacing the very marks of his feet upon the ashes, he commenced climbing the hollow tunnel, which afforded him the only means of escape left.

At this precise time, the first gendarme Andrea had noticed walked upstairs, preceded by the commissary of police, and supported by the second gendarme who guarded the staircase and was himself reinforced by the one stationed at the door.

Andrea was indebted for this visit to the following circumstances. At daybreak, the telegraphs were set at work in all directions, and almost immediately the authorities in every district had exerted their utmost endeavors to arrest the murderer of Caderousse. Compiègne, that royal residence and fortified town, is well furnished with authorities, gendarmes, and commissaries of police; they therefore began operations as soon as the telegraphic despatch arrived, and the Bell and Bottle being the best-known hotel in the town, they had naturally directed their first inquiries there.

Now, besides the reports of the sentinels guarding the Hôtel de Ville, which is next door to the Bell and Bottle, it had been stated by others that a number of travellers had arrived during the night. The sentinel who was relieved at six o'clock in the morning, remembered perfectly that, just as he was taking his post a few minutes past four, a young man arrived on horseback, with a little boy before him. The young man, having dismissed the boy and horse, knocked at the door of the hotel, which was opened, and again closed after his entrance. This late arrival had attracted much suspicion, and the young man being no other than Andrea, the commissary and gendarme, who was a brigadier, directed their steps towards his room. They found the door ajar.

"Oh, oh," said the brigadier, who thoroughly understood the trick; "a bad sign to find the door open! I would rather find it triply bolted."

And, indeed, the little note and pin upon the table confirmed, or rather corroborated, the sad truth. Andrea had fled. We say corroborated, because the brigadier was too experienced to be convinced by a single proof. He glanced around, looked in the bed, shook the curtains, opened the closets, and finally stopped at the chimney. Andrea had taken the precaution to leave no traces of his feet in the ashes, but still it was an outlet, and in this light was not to be passed over without serious investigation.

The brigadier sent for some sticks and straw, and having filled the chimney with them, set a light to it. The fire crackled, and the smoke ascended like the dull vapor from a volcano; but still no prisoner fell down, as they expected. The fact was, that Andrea, at war with society ever since his youth, was quite as deep as a gendarme, even though he were advanced to the rank of brigadier, and quite prepared for the fire, he had climbed out on the roof and was crouching down against the chimney-pots.

At one time he thought he was saved, for he heard the brigadier exclaim in a loud voice, to the two gendarmes, "He is not here!" But venturing to peep, he perceived that the latter, instead of retiring, as might have been reasonably expected upon this announcement, were watching with increased attention.

It was now his turn to look about him; the Hôtel de Ville, a massive sixteenth century building, was on his right; anyone could descend from the openings in the tower, and examine every corner of the roof below, and Andrea expected momentarily to see the head of a gendarme appear at one of these openings. If once discovered, he knew he would be lost, for the roof afforded no chance of escape; he therefore resolved to descend, not through the same chimney by which he had come up, but by a similar one conducting to another room.

He looked around for a chimney from which no smoke issued, and having reached it, he disappeared through the orifice without being seen by anyone. At the same minute, one of the little windows of the Hôtel de Ville was thrown open, and the head of a gendarme appeared. For an instant it remained motionless as one of the stone decorations of the building, then after a long sigh of disappointment the head disappeared. The brigadier, calm and dignified as the law he represented, passed through the crowd, without answering the thousand questions addressed to him, and re-entered the hotel.

"Well?" asked the two gendarmes.

"Well, my boys," said the brigadier, "the brigand must really have escaped early this morning; but we will send to the Villers-Coterets and Noyon roads, and search the forest, when we shall catch him, no doubt."

The honorable functionary had scarcely expressed himself thus, in that intonation which is peculiar to brigadiers of the gendarmerie, when a loud scream, accompanied by the violent ringing of a bell, resounded through the court of the hotel.

"Ah, what is that?" cried the brigadier.

"Some traveller seems impatient," said the host. "What number was it that rang?"

"Number 3."

"Run, waiter!"

At this moment the screams and ringing were redoubled.

"Aha!" said the brigadier, stopping the servant, "the person who is ringing appears to want something more than amwaiter; we will attend upon him with a

gendarme. Who occupies Number 3?"

"The little fellow who arrived last night in a post-chaise with his sister, and who asked for an apartment with two beds."

The bell here rang for the third time, with another shriek of anguish.

"Follow me, Mr. Commissary!" said the brigadier; "tread in my steps."

"Wait an instant," said the host; "Number 3 has two staircases,—inside and outside."

"Good," said the brigadier. "I will take charge of the inside one. Are the carbines loaded?"

"Yes, brigadier."

"Well, you guard the exterior, and if he attempts to fly, fire upon him; he must be a great criminal, from what the telegraph says."

The brigadier, followed by the commissary, disappeared by the inside staircase, accompanied by the noise which his assertions respecting Andrea had excited in the crowd.

This is what had happened: Andrea had very cleverly managed to descend two-thirds of the chimney, but then his foot slipped, and notwithstanding his endeavors, he came into the room with more speed and noise than he intended. It would have signified little had the room been empty, but unfortunately it was occupied. Two ladies, sleeping in one bed, were awakened by the noise, and fixing their eyes upon the spot whence the sound proceeded, they saw a man. One of these ladies, the fair one, uttered those terrible shrieks which resounded through the house, while the other, rushing to the bell-rope, rang with all her strength. Andrea, as we can see, was surrounded by misfortune.

"For pity's sake," he cried, pale and bewildered, without seeing whom he was addressing,—"for pity's sake do not call assistance! Save me!—I will not harm you."

"Andrea, the murderer!" cried one of the ladies.

"Eugénie! Mademoiselle Danglars!" exclaimed Andrea, stupefied.

"Help, help!" cried Mademoiselle d'Armilly, taking the bell from her companion's hand, and ringing it yet more violently.

"Save me, I am pursued!" said Andrea, clasping his hands. "For pity, for mercy's sake do not deliver me up!"

"It is too late, they are coming," said Eugénie.

"Well, conceal me somewhere; you can say you were needlessly alarmed; you

can turn their suspicions and save my life!"

50053m

The two ladies, pressing closely to one another, and drawing the bedclothes tightly around them, remained silent to this supplicating voice, repugnance and fear taking possession of their minds.

"Well, be it so," at length said Eugénie; "return by the same road you came, and we will say nothing about you, unhappy wretch."

"Here he is, here he is!" cried a voice from the landing; "here he is! I see him!"

The brigadier had put his eye to the keyhole, and had discovered Andrea in a posture of entreaty. A violent blow from the butt end of the musket burst open the lock, two more forced out the bolts, and the broken door fell in. Andrea ran to the other door, leading to the gallery, ready to rush out; but he was stopped short, and he stood with his body a little thrown back, pale, and with the useless knife in his clenched hand.

"Fly, then!" cried Mademoiselle d'Armilly, whose pity returned as her fears diminished; "fly!"

"Or kill yourself!" said Eugénie (in a tone which a Vestal in the amphitheatre would have used, when urging the victorious gladiator to finish his vanquished adversary). Andrea shuddered, and looked on the young girl with an expression which proved how little he understood such ferocious honor.

"Kill myself?" he cried, throwing down his knife; "why should I do so?"

"Why, you said," answered Mademoiselle Danglars, "that you would be condemned to die like the worst criminals."

50055m

"Bah," said Cavalcanti, crossing his arms, "one has friends."

The brigadier advanced to him, sword in hand.

"Come, come," said Andrea, "sheathe your sword, my fine fellow; there is no occasion to make such a fuss, since I give myself up;" and he held out his hands to be manacled.

The two girls looked with horror upon this shameful metamorphosis, the man of the world shaking off his covering and appearing as a galley-slave. Andrea turned towards them, and with an impudent smile asked, "Have you any message for your father, Mademoiselle Danglars, for in all probability I shall return to Paris?"

Eugénie covered her face with her hands.

“Oh, oh!” said Andrea, “you need not be ashamed, even though you did post after me. Was I not nearly your husband?”

50056m

And with this raillery Andrea went out, leaving the two girls a prey to their own feelings of shame, and to the comments of the crowd. An hour after they stepped into their calash, both dressed in feminine attire. The gate of the hotel had been closed to screen them from sight, but they were forced, when the door was open, to pass through a throng of curious glances and whispering voices.

Eugénie closed her eyes; but though she could not see, she could hear, and the sneers of the crowd reached her in the carriage.

“Oh, why is not the world a wilderness?” she exclaimed, throwing herself into the arms of Mademoiselle d’Armilly, her eyes sparkling with the same kind of rage which made Nero wish that the Roman world had but one neck, that he might sever it at a single blow.

The next day they stopped at the Hôtel de Flandre, at Brussels. The same evening Andrea was incarcerated in the Conciergerie.

Chapter 99. The Law

We have seen how quietly Mademoiselle Danglars and Mademoiselle d'Armilly accomplished their transformation and flight; the fact being that everyone was too much occupied in his or her own affairs to think of theirs.

We will leave the banker contemplating the enormous magnitude of his debt before the phantom of bankruptcy, and follow the baroness, who after being momentarily crushed under the weight of the blow which had struck her, had gone to seek her usual adviser, Lucien Debray. The baroness had looked forward to this marriage as a means of ridding her of a guardianship which, over a girl of Eugénie's character, could not fail to be rather a troublesome undertaking; for in the tacit relations which maintain the bond of family union, the mother, to maintain her ascendancy over her daughter, must never fail to be a model of wisdom and a type of perfection.

Now, Madame Danglars feared Eugénie's sagacity and the influence of Mademoiselle d'Armilly; she had frequently observed the contemptuous expression with which her daughter looked upon Debray,—an expression which seemed to imply that she understood all her mother's amorous and pecuniary relationships with the intimate secretary; moreover, she saw that Eugénie detested Debray, not only because he was a source of dissension and scandal under the paternal roof, but because she had at once classed him in that catalogue of bipeds whom Plato endeavors to withdraw from the appellation of men, and whom Diogenes designated as animals upon two legs without feathers.

Unfortunately, in this world of ours, each person views things through a certain medium, and so is prevented from seeing in the same light as others, and Madame Danglars, therefore, very much regretted that the marriage of Eugénie had not taken place, not only because the match was good, and likely to insure the happiness of her child, but because it would also set her at liberty. She ran therefore to Debray, who, after having, like the rest of Paris, witnessed the contract scene and the scandal attending it, had retired in haste to his club, where he was chatting with some friends upon the events which served as a subject of conversation for three-fourths of that city known as the capital of the world.

At the precise time when Madame Danglars, dressed in black and concealed

in a long veil, was ascending the stairs leading to Debray's apartments, notwithstanding the assurances of the concierge that the young man was not at home, Debray was occupied in repelling the insinuations of a friend, who tried to persuade him that after the terrible scene which had just taken place he ought, as a friend of the family, to marry Mademoiselle Danglars and her two millions. Debray did not defend himself very warmly, for the idea had sometimes crossed his mind; still, when he recollects the independent, proud spirit of Eugénie, he positively rejected it as utterly impossible, though the same thought again continually recurred and found a resting-place in his heart. Tea, play, and the conversation, which had become interesting during the discussion of such serious affairs, lasted till one o'clock in the morning.

Meanwhile Madame Danglars, veiled and uneasy, awaited the return of Debray in the little green room, seated between two baskets of flowers, which she had that morning sent, and which, it must be confessed, Debray had himself arranged and watered with so much care that his absence was half excused in the eyes of the poor woman.

At twenty minutes to twelve, Madame Danglars, tired of waiting, returned home. Women of a certain grade are like prosperous grisettes in one respect, they seldom return home after twelve o'clock. The baroness returned to the hotel with as much caution as Eugénie used in leaving it; she ran lightly upstairs, and with an aching heart entered her apartment, contiguous, as we know, to that of Eugénie. She was fearful of exciting any remark, and believed firmly in her daughter's innocence and fidelity to the paternal roof. She listened at Eugénie's door, and hearing no sound tried to enter, but the bolts were in place. Madame Danglars then concluded that the young girl had been overcome with the terrible excitement of the evening, and had gone to bed and to sleep. She called the maid and questioned her.

"Mademoiselle Eugénie," said the maid, "retired to her apartment with Mademoiselle d'Armilly; they then took tea together, after which they desired me to leave, saying that they needed me no longer."

Since then the maid had been below, and like everyone else she thought the young ladies were in their own room; Madame Danglars, therefore, went to bed without a shadow of suspicion, and began to muse over the recent events. In proportion as her memory became clearer, the occurrences of the evening were revealed in their true light; what she had taken for confusion was a tumult; what she had regarded as something distressing, was in reality a disgrace. And then the baroness remembered that she had felt no pity for poor Mercédès, who had been afflicted with as severe a blow through her husband and son.

“Eugénie,” she said to herself, “is lost, and so are we. The affair, as it will be reported, will cover us with shame; for in a society such as ours satire inflicts a painful and incurable wound. How fortunate that Eugénie is possessed of that strange character which has so often made me tremble!”

And her glance was turned towards heaven, where a mysterious Providence disposes all things, and out of a fault, nay, even a vice, sometimes produces a blessing. And then her thoughts, cleaving through space like a bird in the air, rested on Cavalcanti. This Andrea was a wretch, a robber, an assassin, and yet his manners showed the effects of a sort of education, if not a complete one; he had been presented to the world with the appearance of an immense fortune, supported by an honorable name. How could she extricate herself from this labyrinth? To whom would she apply to help her out of this painful situation? Debray, to whom she had run, with the first instinct of a woman towards the man she loves, and who yet betrays her,—Debray could but give her advice, she must apply to someone more powerful than he.

The baroness then thought of M. de Villefort. It was M. de Villefort who had remorselessly brought misfortune into her family, as though they had been strangers. But, no; on reflection, the procureur was not a merciless man; and it was not the magistrate, slave to his duties, but the friend, the loyal friend, who roughly but firmly cut into the very core of the corruption; it was not the executioner, but the surgeon, who wished to withdraw the honor of Danglars from ignominious association with the disgraced young man they had presented to the world as their son-in-law. And since Villefort, the friend of Danglars, had acted in this way, no one could suppose that he had been previously acquainted with, or had lent himself to, any of Andrea’s intrigues. Villefort’s conduct, therefore, upon reflection, appeared to the baroness as if shaped for their mutual advantage. But the inflexibility of the procureur should stop there; she would see him the next day, and if she could not make him fail in his duties as a magistrate, she would, at least, obtain all the indulgence he could allow. She would invoke the past, recall old recollections; she would supplicate him by the remembrance of guilty, yet happy days. M. de Villefort would stifle the affair; he had only to turn his eyes on one side, and allow Andrea to fly, and follow up the crime under that shadow of guilt called contempt of court. And after this reasoning she slept easily.

At nine o’clock next morning she arose, and without ringing for her maid or giving the least sign of her activity, she dressed herself in the same simple style as on the previous night; then running downstairs, she left the hotel, walked to the Rue de Provence, called a cab, and drove to M. de Villefort’s house.

For the last month this wretched house had presented the gloomy appearance of a lazaretto infected with the plague. Some of the apartments were closed within and without; the shutters were only opened to admit a minute's air, showing the scared face of a footman, and immediately afterwards the window would be closed, like a gravestone falling on a sepulchre, and the neighbors would say to each other in a low voice, "Will there be another funeral today at the procureur's house?"

Madame Danglars involuntarily shuddered at the desolate aspect of the mansion; descending from the cab, she approached the door with trembling knees, and rang the bell. Three times did the bell ring with a dull, heavy sound, seeming to participate, in the general sadness, before the concierge appeared and peeped through the door, which he opened just wide enough to allow his words to be heard. He saw a lady, a fashionable, elegantly dressed lady, and yet the door remained almost closed.

"Do you intend opening the door?" said the baroness.

"First, madame, who are you?"

"Who am I? You know me well enough."

"We no longer know anyone, madame."

"You must be mad, my friend," said the baroness.

"Where do you come from?"

"Oh, this is too much!"

"Madame, these are my orders; excuse me. Your name?"

"The baroness Danglars; you have seen me twenty times."

"Possibly, madame. And now, what do you want?"

"Oh, how extraordinary! I shall complain to M. de Villefort of the impertinence of his servants."

"Madame, this is precaution, not impertinence; no one enters here without an order from M. d'Avrigny, or without speaking to the procureur."

"Well, I have business with the procureur."

"Is it pressing business?"

"You can imagine so, since I have not even brought my carriage out yet. But enough of this—here is my card, take it to your master."

"Madame will await my return?"

"Yes; go."

The concierge closed the door, leaving Madame Danglars in the street. She

had not long to wait; directly afterwards the door was opened wide enough to admit her, and when she had passed through, it was again shut. Without losing sight of her for an instant, the concierge took a whistle from his pocket as soon as they entered the court, and blew it. The valet de chambre appeared on the door-steps.

“You will excuse this poor fellow, madame,” he said, as he preceded the baroness, “but his orders are precise, and M. de Villefort begged me to tell you that he could not act otherwise.”

In the court showing his merchandise, was a tradesman who had been admitted with the same precautions. The baroness ascended the steps; she felt herself strongly infected with the sadness which seemed to magnify her own, and still guided by the valet de chambre, who never lost sight of her for an instant, she was introduced to the magistrate’s study.

Preoccupied as Madame Danglars had been with the object of her visit, the treatment she had received from these underlings appeared to her so insulting, that she began by complaining of it. But Villefort, raising his head, bowed down by grief, looked up at her with so sad a smile that her complaints died upon her lips.

“Forgive my servants,” he said, “for a terror I cannot blame them for; from being suspected they have become suspicious.”

Madame Danglars had often heard of the terror to which the magistrate alluded, but without the evidence of her own eyesight she could never have believed that the sentiment had been carried so far.

“You too, then, are unhappy?” she said.

“Yes, madame,” replied the magistrate.

“Then you pity me!”

“Sincerely, madame.”

“And you understand what brings me here?”

“You wish to speak to me about the circumstance which has just happened?”

“Yes, sir,—a fearful misfortune.”

“You mean a mischance.”

“A mischance?” repeated the baroness.

“Alas, madame,” said the procureur with his imperturbable calmness of manner, “I consider those alone misfortunes which are irreparable.”

“And do you suppose this will be forgotten?”

“Everything will be forgotten, madame,” said Villefort. “Your daughter will be married tomorrow, if not today—in a week, if not tomorrow; and I do not think you can regret the intended husband of your daughter.”

Madame Danglars gazed on Villefort, stupefied to find him so almost insultingly calm. “Am I come to a friend?” she asked in a tone full of mournful dignity.

“You know that you are, madame,” said Villefort, whose pale cheeks became slightly flushed as he gave her the assurance. And truly this assurance carried him back to different events from those now occupying the baroness and him.

“Well, then, be more affectionate, my dear Villefort,” said the baroness. “Speak to me not as a magistrate, but as a friend; and when I am in bitter anguish of spirit, do not tell me that I ought to be gay.” Villefort bowed.

“When I hear misfortunes named, madame,” he said, “I have within the last few months contracted the bad habit of thinking of my own, and then I cannot help drawing up an egotistical parallel in my mind. That is the reason that by the side of my misfortunes yours appear to me mere mischances; that is why my dreadful position makes yours appear enviable. But this annoys you; let us change the subject. You were saying, madame——”

“I came to ask you, my friend,” said the baroness, “what will be done with this impostor?”

“Impostor,” repeated Villefort; “certainly, madame, you appear to extenuate some cases, and exaggerate others. Impostor, indeed!—M. Andrea Cavalcanti, or rather M. Benedetto, is nothing more nor less than an assassin!”

“Sir, I do not deny the justice of your correction, but the more severely you arm yourself against that unfortunate man, the more deeply will you strike our family. Come, forget him for a moment, and instead of pursuing him, let him go.”

“You are too late, madame; the orders are issued.”

“Well, should he be arrested—do they think they will arrest him?”

“I hope so.”

“If they should arrest him (I know that sometimes prisons afford means of escape), will you leave him in prison?”

The procureur shook his head.

“At least keep him there till my daughter be married.”

“Impossible, madame; justice has its formalities.”

“What, even for me?” said the baroness, half jesting, half in earnest.

“For all, even for myself among the rest,” replied Villefort.

50063m

“Ah!” exclaimed the baroness, without expressing the ideas which the exclamation betrayed. Villefort looked at her with that piercing glance which reads the secrets of the heart.

“Yes, I know what you mean,” he said; “you refer to the terrible rumors spread abroad in the world, that the deaths which have kept me in mourning for the last three months, and from which Valentine has only escaped by a miracle, have not happened by natural means.”

“I was not thinking of that,” replied Madame Danglars quickly.

“Yes, you were thinking of it, and with justice. You could not help thinking of it, and saying to yourself, ‘you, who pursue crime so vindictively, answer now, why are there unpunished crimes in your dwelling?’” The baroness became pale. “You were saying this, were you not?”

“Well, I own it.”

“I will answer you.”

Villefort drew his armchair nearer to Madame Danglars; then resting both hands upon his desk he said in a voice more hollow than usual:

“There are crimes which remain unpunished because the criminals are unknown, and we might strike the innocent instead of the guilty; but when the culprits are discovered” (Villefort here extended his hand toward a large crucifix placed opposite to his desk)—“when they are discovered, I swear to you, by all I hold most sacred, that whoever they may be they shall die. Now, after the oath I have just taken, and which I will keep, madame, dare you ask for mercy for that wretch!”

“But, sir, are you sure he is as guilty as they say?”

“Listen; this is his description: ‘Benedetto, condemned, at the age of sixteen, for five years to the galleys for forgery.’ He promised well, as you see—first a runaway, then an assassin.”

“And who is this wretch?”

“Who can tell?—a vagabond, a Corsican.”

“Has no one owned him?”

“No one; his parents are unknown.”

“But who was the man who brought him from Lucca?”

"Another rascal like himself, perhaps his accomplice." The baroness clasped her hands.

"Villefort," she exclaimed in her softest and most captivating manner.

"For Heaven's sake, madame," said Villefort, with a firmness of expression not altogether free from harshness—"for Heaven's sake, do not ask pardon of me for a guilty wretch! What am I?—the law. Has the law any eyes to witness your grief? Has the law ears to be melted by your sweet voice? Has the law a memory for all those soft recollections you endeavor to recall? No, madame; the law has commanded, and when it commands it strikes. You will tell me that I am a living being, and not a code—a man, and not a volume. Look at me, madame—look around me. Has mankind treated me as a brother? Have men loved me? Have they spared me? Has anyone shown the mercy towards me that you now ask at my hands? No, madame, they struck me, always struck me!"

50065m

"Woman, siren that you are, do you persist in fixing on me that fascinating eye, which reminds me that I ought to blush? Well, be it so; let me blush for the faults you know, and perhaps—perhaps for even more than those! But having sinned myself,—it may be more deeply than others,—I never rest till I have torn the disguises from my fellow-creatures, and found out their weaknesses. I have always found them; and more,—I repeat it with joy, with triumph,—I have always found some proof of human perversity or error. Every criminal I condemn seems to me living evidence that I am not a hideous exception to the rest. Alas, alas, alas; all the world is wicked; let us therefore strike at wickedness!"

Villefort pronounced these last words with a feverish rage, which gave a ferocious eloquence to his words.

"But" said Madame Danglars, resolving to make a last effort, "this young man, though a murderer, is an orphan, abandoned by everybody."

"So much the worse, or rather, so much the better; it has been so ordained that he may have none to weep his fate."

"But this is trampling on the weak, sir."

"The weakness of a murderer!"

"His dishonor reflects upon us."

"Is not death in my house?"

"Oh, sir," exclaimed the baroness, "you are without pity for others, well, then, I tell you they will have no mercy on you!"

"Be it so!" said Villefort, raising his arms to heaven with a threatening gesture.

"At least, delay the trial till the next assizes; we shall then have six months before us."

"No, madame," said Villefort; "instructions have been given. There are yet five days left; five days are more than I require. Do you not think that I also long for forgetfulness? While working night and day, I sometimes lose all recollection of the past, and then I experience the same sort of happiness I can imagine the dead feel; still, it is better than suffering."

"But, sir, he has fled; let him escape—inaction is a pardonable offence."

"I tell you it is too late; early this morning the telegraph was employed, and at this very minute——"

"Sir," said the valet de chambre, entering the room, "a dragoon has brought this despatch from the Minister of the Interior."

Villefort seized the letter, and hastily broke the seal. Madame Danglars trembled with fear; Villefort started with joy.

"Arrested!" he exclaimed; "he was taken at Compiègne, and all is over."

Madame Danglars rose from her seat, pale and cold.

"Adieu, sir," she said.

"Adieu, madame," replied the king's attorney, as in an almost joyful manner he conducted her to the door. Then, turning to his desk, he said, striking the letter with the back of his right hand:

"Come, I had a forgery, three robberies, and two cases of arson, I only wanted a murder, and here it is. It will be a splendid session!"

Chapter 100. The Apparition

As the procureur had told Madame Danglars, Valentine was not yet recovered. Bowed down with fatigue, she was indeed confined to her bed; and it was in her own room, and from the lips of Madame de Villefort, that she heard all the strange events we have related; we mean the flight of Eugénie and the arrest of Andrea Cavalcanti, or rather Benedetto, together with the accusation of murder pronounced against him. But Valentine was so weak that this recital scarcely produced the same effect it would have done had she been in her usual state of health. Indeed, her brain was only the seat of vague ideas, and confused forms, mingled with strange fancies, alone presented themselves before her eyes.

During the daytime Valentine's perceptions remained tolerably clear, owing to the constant presence of M. Noirtier, who caused himself to be carried to his granddaughter's room, and watched her with his paternal tenderness; Villefort also, on his return from the law courts, frequently passed an hour or two with his father and child.

At six o'clock Villefort retired to his study, at eight M. d'Avrigny himself arrived, bringing the night draught prepared for the young girl, and then M. Noirtier was carried away. A nurse of the doctor's choice succeeded them, and never left till about ten or eleven o'clock, when Valentine was asleep. As she went downstairs she gave the keys of Valentine's room to M. de Villefort, so that no one could reach the sick-room excepting through that of Madame de Villefort and little Edward.

Every morning Morrel called on Noirtier to receive news of Valentine, and, extraordinary as it seemed, each day found him less uneasy. Certainly, though Valentine still labored under dreadful nervous excitement, she was better; and moreover, Monte Cristo had told him when, half distracted, he had rushed to the count's house, that if she were not dead in two hours she would be saved. Now four days had elapsed, and Valentine still lived.

The nervous excitement of which we speak pursued Valentine even in her sleep, or rather in that state of somnolence which succeeded her waking hours; it was then, in the silence of night, in the dim light shed from the alabaster lamp on the chimney-piece, that she saw the shadows pass and repass which hover over

the bed of sickness, and fan the fever with their trembling wings. First she fancied she saw her stepmother threatening her, then Morrel stretched his arms towards her; sometimes mere strangers, like the Count of Monte Cristo came to visit her; even the very furniture, in these moments of delirium, seemed to move, and this state lasted till about three o'clock in the morning, when a deep, heavy slumber overcame the young girl, from which she did not awake till daylight.

On the evening of the day on which Valentine had learned of the flight of Eugénie and the arrest of Benedetto,—Villefort having retired as well as Noirtier and d'Avrigny,—her thoughts wandered in a confused maze, alternately reviewing her own situation and the events she had just heard.

Eleven o'clock had struck. The nurse, having placed the beverage prepared by the doctor within reach of the patient, and locked the door, was listening with terror to the comments of the servants in the kitchen, and storing her memory with all the horrible stories which had for some months past amused the occupants of the antechambers in the house of the king's attorney. Meanwhile an unexpected scene was passing in the room which had been so carefully locked.

Ten minutes had elapsed since the nurse had left; Valentine, who for the last hour had been suffering from the fever which returned nightly, incapable of controlling her ideas, was forced to yield to the excitement which exhausted itself in producing and reproducing a succession and recurrence of the same fancies and images. The night-lamp threw out countless rays, each resolving itself into some strange form to her disordered imagination, when suddenly by its flickering light Valentine thought she saw the door of her library, which was in the recess by the chimney-piece, open slowly, though she in vain listened for the sound of the hinges on which it turned.

At any other time Valentine would have seized the silken bell-pull and summoned assistance, but nothing astonished her in her present situation. Her reason told her that all the visions she beheld were but the children of her imagination, and the conviction was strengthened by the fact that in the morning no traces remained of the nocturnal phantoms, who disappeared with the coming of daylight.

From behind the door a human figure appeared, but the girl was too familiar with such apparitions to be alarmed, and therefore only stared, hoping to recognize Morrel. The figure advanced towards the bed and appeared to listen with profound attention. At this moment a ray of light glanced across the face of the midnight visitor.

"It is not he," she murmured, and waited, in the assurance that this was but a

dream, for the man to disappear or assume some other form. Still, she felt her pulse, and finding it throb violently she remembered that the best method of dispelling such illusions was to drink, for a draught of the beverage prepared by the doctor to allay her fever seemed to cause a reaction of the brain, and for a short time she suffered less. Valentine therefore reached her hand towards the glass, but as soon as her trembling arm left the bed the apparition advanced more quickly towards her, and approached the young girl so closely that she fancied she heard his breath, and felt the pressure of his hand.

This time the illusion, or rather the reality, surpassed anything Valentine had before experienced; she began to believe herself really alive and awake, and the belief that her reason was this time not deceived made her shudder. The pressure she felt was evidently intended to arrest her arm, and she slowly withdrew it. Then the figure, from whom she could not detach her eyes, and who appeared more protecting than menacing, took the glass, and walking towards the night-light held it up, as if to test its transparency. This did not seem sufficient; the man, or rather the ghost—for he trod so softly that no sound was heard—then poured out about a spoonful into the glass, and drank it.

Valentine witnessed this scene with a sentiment of stupefaction. Every minute she had expected that it would vanish and give place to another vision; but the man, instead of dissolving like a shadow, again approached her, and said in an agitated voice, “Now you may drink.”

Valentine shuddered. It was the first time one of these visions had ever addressed her in a living voice, and she was about to utter an exclamation. The man placed his finger on her lips.

“The Count of Monte Cristo!” she murmured.

It was easy to see that no doubt now remained in the young girl’s mind as to the reality of the scene; her eyes started with terror, her hands trembled, and she rapidly drew the bedclothes closer to her. Still, the presence of Monte Cristo at such an hour, his mysterious, fanciful, and extraordinary entrance into her room through the wall, might well seem impossibilities to her shattered reason.

“Do not call anyone—do not be alarmed,” said the count; “do not let a shade of suspicion or uneasiness remain in your breast; the man standing before you, Valentine (for this time it is no ghost), is nothing more than the tenderest father and the most respectful friend you could dream of.”

Valentine could not reply; the voice which indicated the real presence of a being in the room, alarmed her so much that she feared to utter a syllable; still the expression of her eyes seemed to inquire, “If your intentions are pure, why

are you here?" The count's marvellous sagacity understood all that was passing in the young girl's mind.

"Listen to me," he said, "or, rather, look upon me; look at my face, paler even than usual, and my eyes, red with weariness—for four days I have not closed them, for I have been constantly watching you, to protect and preserve you for Maximilian."

The blood mounted rapidly to the cheeks of Valentine, for the name just announced by the count dispelled all the fear with which his presence had inspired her.

"Maximilian!" she exclaimed, and so sweet did the sound appear to her, that she repeated it—"Maximilian!—has he then owned all to you?"

"Everything. He told me your life was his, and I have promised him that you shall live."

"You have promised him that I shall live?"

"Yes."

"But, sir, you spoke of vigilance and protection. Are you a doctor?"

"Yes; the best you could have at the present time, believe me."

"But you say you have watched?" said Valentine uneasily; "where have you been?—I have not seen you."

The count extended his hand towards the library.

"I was hidden behind that door," he said, "which leads into the next house, which I have rented."

Valentine turned her eyes away, and, with an indignant expression of pride and modest fear, exclaimed:

"Sir, I think you have been guilty of an unparalleled intrusion, and that what you call protection is more like an insult."

"Valentine," he answered, "during my long watch over you, all I have observed has been what people visited you, what nourishment was prepared, and what beverage was served; then, when the latter appeared dangerous to me, I entered, as I have now done, and substituted, in the place of the poison, a healthful draught; which, instead of producing the death intended, caused life to circulate in your veins."

"Poison—death!" exclaimed Valentine, half believing herself under the influence of some feverish hallucination; "what are you saying, sir?"

“Hush, my child,” said Monte Cristo, again placing his finger upon her lips, “I did say poison and death. But drink some of this;” and the count took a bottle from his pocket, containing a red liquid, of which he poured a few drops into the glass. “Drink this, and then take nothing more tonight.”

Valentine stretched out her hand, but scarcely had she touched the glass when she drew back in fear. Monte Cristo took the glass, drank half its contents, and then presented it to Valentine, who smiled and swallowed the rest.

“Oh, yes,” she exclaimed, “I recognize the flavor of my nocturnal beverage which refreshed me so much, and seemed to ease my aching brain. Thank you, sir, thank you!”

“This is how you have lived during the last four nights, Valentine,” said the count. “But, oh, how I passed that time! Oh, the wretched hours I have endured—the torture to which I have submitted when I saw the deadly poison poured into your glass, and how I trembled lest you should drink it before I could find time to throw it away!”

“Sir,” said Valentine, at the height of her terror, “you say you endured tortures when you saw the deadly poison poured into my glass; but if you saw this, you must also have seen the person who poured it?”

“Yes.”

Valentine raised herself in bed, and drew over her chest, which appeared whiter than snow, the embroidered cambric, still moist with the cold dews of delirium, to which were now added those of terror. “You saw the person?” repeated the young girl.

“Yes,” repeated the count.

“What you tell me is horrible, sir. You wish to make me believe something too dreadful. What?—attempt to murder me in my father’s house, in my room, on my bed of sickness? Oh, leave me, sir; you are tempting me—you make me doubt the goodness of Providence—it is impossible, it cannot be!”

“Are you the first that this hand has stricken? Have you not seen M. de Saint-Méran, Madame de Saint-Méran, Barrois, all fall? Would not M. Noirtier also have fallen a victim, had not the treatment he has been pursuing for the last three years neutralized the effects of the poison?”

“Oh, Heaven,” said Valentine; “is this the reason why grandpapa has made me share all his beverages during the last month?”

“And have they all tasted of a slightly bitter flavor, like that of dried orange-peel?”

“Oh, yes, yes!”

“Then that explains all,” said Monte Cristo. “Your grandfather knows, then, that a poisoner lives here; perhaps he even suspects the person. He has been fortifying you, his beloved child, against the fatal effects of the poison, which has failed because your system was already impregnated with it. But even this would have availed little against a more deadly medium of death employed four days ago, which is generally but too fatal.”

“But who, then, is this assassin, this murderer?”

“Let me also ask you a question. Have you never seen anyone enter your room at night?”

“Oh, yes; I have frequently seen shadows pass close to me, approach, and disappear; but I took them for visions raised by my feverish imagination, and indeed when you entered I thought I was under the influence of delirium.”

“Then you do not know who it is that attempts your life?”

50073m

“No,” said Valentine; “who could desire my death?”

“You shall know it now, then,” said Monte Cristo, listening.

“How do you mean?” said Valentine, looking anxiously around.

“Because you are not feverish or delirious tonight, but thoroughly awake; midnight is striking, which is the hour murderers choose.”

“Oh, heavens,” exclaimed Valentine, wiping off the drops which ran down her forehead. Midnight struck slowly and sadly; every hour seemed to strike with leaden weight upon the heart of the poor girl.

“Valentine,” said the count, “summon up all your courage; still the beatings of your heart; do not let a sound escape you, and feign to be asleep; then you will see.”

Valentine seized the count’s hand. “I think I hear a noise,” she said; “leave me.”

“Good-bye, for the present,” replied the count, walking upon tiptoe towards the library door, and smiling with an expression so sad and paternal that the young girl’s heart was filled with gratitude.

Before closing the door he turned around once more, and said, “Not a movement—not a word; let them think you asleep, or perhaps you may be killed before I have the power of helping you.”

And with this fearful injunction the count disappeared through the door, which

noiselessly closed after him.

Chapter 101. Locusta

Valentine was alone; two other clocks, slower than that of Saint-Philippe-du-Roule, struck the hour of midnight from different directions, and excepting the rumbling of a few carriages all was silent. Then Valentine's attention was engrossed by the clock in her room, which marked the seconds. She began counting them, remarking that they were much slower than the beatings of her heart; and still she doubted,—the inoffensive Valentine could not imagine that anyone should desire her death. Why should they? To what end? What had she done to excite the malice of an enemy?

There was no fear of her falling asleep. One terrible idea pressed upon her mind,—that someone existed in the world who had attempted to assassinate her, and who was about to endeavor to do so again. Supposing this person, wearied at the inefficacy of the poison, should, as Monte Cristo intimated, have recourse to steel!—What if the count should have no time to run to her rescue!—What if her last moments were approaching, and she should never again see Morrel!

When this terrible chain of ideas presented itself, Valentine was nearly persuaded to ring the bell, and call for help. But through the door she fancied she saw the luminous eye of the count—that eye which lived in her memory, and the recollection overwhelmed her with so much shame that she asked herself whether any amount of gratitude could ever repay his adventurous and devoted friendship.

Twenty minutes, twenty tedious minutes, passed thus, then ten more, and at last the clock struck the half-hour.

Just then the sound of finger-nails slightly grating against the door of the library informed Valentine that the count was still watching, and recommended her to do the same; at the same time, on the opposite side, that is towards Edward's room, Valentine fancied that she heard the creaking of the floor; she listened attentively, holding her breath till she was nearly suffocated; the lock turned, and the door slowly opened. Valentine had raised herself upon her elbow, and had scarcely time to throw herself down on the bed and shade her eyes with her arm; then, trembling, agitated, and her heart beating with indescribable terror, she awaited the event.

Someone approached the bed and drew back the curtains. Valentine summoned every effort, and breathed with that regular respiration which announces tranquil sleep.

“Valentine!” said a low voice.

The girl shuddered to the heart but did not reply.

“Valentine,” repeated the same voice.

Still silent: Valentine had promised not to wake. Then everything was still, excepting that Valentine heard the almost noiseless sound of some liquid being poured into the glass she had just emptied. Then she ventured to open her eyelids, and glance over her extended arm. She saw a woman in a white dressing-gown pouring a liquor from a phial into her glass. During this short time Valentine must have held her breath, or moved in some slight degree, for the woman, disturbed, stopped and leaned over the bed, in order the better to ascertain whether Valentine slept: it was Madame de Villefort.

On recognizing her step-mother, Valentine could not repress a shudder, which caused a vibration in the bed. Madame de Villefort instantly stepped back close to the wall, and there, shaded by the bed-curtains, she silently and attentively watched the slightest movement of Valentine. The latter recollected the terrible caution of Monte Cristo; she fancied that the hand not holding the phial clasped a long sharp knife. Then collecting all her remaining strength, she forced herself to close her eyes; but this simple operation upon the most delicate organs of our frame, generally so easy to accomplish, became almost impossible at this moment, so much did curiosity struggle to retain the eyelid open and learn the truth. Madame de Villefort, however, reassured by the silence, which was alone disturbed by the regular breathing of Valentine, again extended her hand, and half hidden by the curtains succeeded in emptying the contents of the phial into the glass. Then she retired so gently that Valentine did not know she had left the room. She only witnessed the withdrawal of the arm—the fair round arm of a woman but twenty-five years old, and who yet spread death around her.

50077m

It is impossible to describe the sensations experienced by Valentine during the minute and a half Madame de Villefort remained in the room.

The grating against the library-door aroused the young girl from the stupor in which she was plunged, and which almost amounted to insensibility. She raised her head with an effort. The noiseless door again turned on its hinges, and the Count of Monte Cristo reappeared.

“Well,” said he, “do you still doubt?”

“Oh,” murmured the young girl.

“Have you seen?”

“Alas!”

“Did you recognize?” Valentine groaned.

“Oh, yes;” she said, “I saw, but I cannot believe!”

“Would you rather die, then, and cause Maximilian’s death?”

“Oh,” repeated the young girl, almost bewildered, “can I not leave the house?—can I not escape?”

“Valentine, the hand which now threatens you will pursue you everywhere; your servants will be seduced with gold, and death will be offered to you disguised in every shape. You will find it in the water you drink from the spring, in the fruit you pluck from the tree.”

“But did you not say that my kind grandfather’s precaution had neutralized the poison?”

“Yes, but not against a strong dose; the poison will be changed, and the quantity increased.” He took the glass and raised it to his lips. “It is already done,” he said; “brucine is no longer employed, but a simple narcotic! I can recognize the flavor of the alcohol in which it has been dissolved. If you had taken what Madame de Villefort has poured into your glass, Valentine—Valentine—you would have been doomed!”

“But,” exclaimed the young girl, “why am I thus pursued?”

“Why?—are you so kind—so good—so unsuspicious of ill, that you cannot understand, Valentine?”

“No, I have never injured her.”

“But you are rich, Valentine; you have 200,000 livres a year, and you prevent her son from enjoying these 200,000 livres.”

“How so? The fortune is not her gift, but is inherited from my relations.”

“Certainly; and that is why M. and Madame de Saint-Méran have died; that is why M. Noirtier was sentenced the day he made you his heir; that is why you, in your turn, are to die—it is because your father would inherit your property, and your brother, his only son, succeed to his.”

“Edward? Poor child! Are all these crimes committed on his account?”

“Ah, then you at length understand?”

“Heaven grant that this may not be visited upon him!”

“Valentine, you are an angel!”

“But why is my grandfather allowed to live?”

“It was considered, that you dead, the fortune would naturally revert to your brother, unless he were disinherited; and besides, the crime appearing useless, it would be folly to commit it.”

“And is it possible that this frightful combination of crimes has been invented by a woman?”

“Do you recollect in the arbor of the Hôtel des Postes, at Perugia, seeing a man in a brown cloak, whom your stepmother was questioning upon *aqua tofana*? Well, ever since then, the infernal project has been ripening in her brain.”

“Ah, then, indeed, sir,” said the sweet girl, bathed in tears, “I see that I am condemned to die!”

“No, Valentine, for I have foreseen all their plots; no, your enemy is conquered since we know her, and you will live, Valentine—live to be happy yourself, and to confer happiness upon a noble heart; but to insure this you must rely on me.”

“Command me, sir—what am I to do?”

“You must blindly take what I give you.”

“Alas, were it only for my own sake, I should prefer to die!”

“You must not confide in anyone—not even in your father.”

“My father is not engaged in this fearful plot, is he, sir?” asked Valentine, clasping her hands.

“No; and yet your father, a man accustomed to judicial accusations, ought to have known that all these deaths have not happened naturally; it is he who should have watched over you—he should have occupied my place—he should have emptied that glass—he should have risen against the assassin. Spectre against spectre!” he murmured in a low voice, as he concluded his sentence.

“Sir,” said Valentine, “I will do all I can to live, for there are two beings who love me and will die if I die—my grandfather and Maximilian.”

“I will watch over them as I have over you.”

“Well, sir, do as you will with me;” and then she added, in a low voice, “oh, heavens, what will befall me?”

“Whatever may happen, Valentine, do not be alarmed; though you suffer; though you lose sight, hearing, consciousness, fear nothing; though you should

awake and be ignorant where you are, still do not fear; even though you should find yourself in a sepulchral vault or coffin. Reassure yourself, then, and say to yourself: ‘At this moment, a friend, a father, who lives for my happiness and that of Maximilian, watches over me!’”

“Alas, alas, what a fearful extremity!”

“Valentine, would you rather denounce your stepmother?”

“I would rather die a hundred times—oh, yes, die!”

“No, you will not die; but will you promise me, whatever happens, that you will not complain, but hope?”

“I will think of Maximilian!”

“You are my own darling child, Valentine! I alone can save you, and I will.”

Valentine in the extremity of her terror joined her hands,—for she felt that the moment had arrived to ask for courage,—and began to pray, and while uttering little more than incoherent words, she forgot that her white shoulders had no other covering than her long hair, and that the pulsations of her heart could be seen through the lace of her nightdress. Monte Cristo gently laid his hand on the young girl’s arm, drew the velvet coverlet close to her throat, and said with a paternal smile:

“My child, believe in my devotion to you as you believe in the goodness of Providence and the love of Maximilian.” Valentine gave him a look full of gratitude, and remained as docile as a child.

Then he drew from his waistcoat-pocket the little emerald box, raised the golden lid, and took from it a pastille about the size of a pea, which he placed in her hand. She took it, and looked attentively on the count; there was an expression on the face of her intrepid protector which commanded her veneration. She evidently interrogated him by her look.

“Yes,” said he.

Valentine carried the pastille to her mouth, and swallowed it.

“And now, my dear child, adieu for the present. I will try and gain a little sleep, for you are saved.”

“Go,” said Valentine, “whatever happens, I promise you not to fear.”

Monte Cristo for some time kept his eyes fixed on the young girl, who gradually fell asleep, yielding to the effects of the narcotic the count had given her. Then he took the glass, emptied three parts of the contents in the fireplace, that it might be supposed Valentine had taken it, and replaced it on the table; then he disappeared, after throwing a farewell glance on Valentine, who slept

with the confidence and innocence of an angel at the feet of the Lord.

Chapter 102. Valentine

The night-light continued to burn on the chimney-piece, exhausting the last drops of oil which floated on the surface of the water. The globe of the lamp appeared of a reddish hue, and the flame, brightening before it expired, threw out the last flickerings which in an inanimate object have been so often compared with the convulsions of a human creature in its final agonies. A dull and dismal light was shed over the bedclothes and curtains surrounding the young girl. All noise in the streets had ceased, and the silence was frightful.

It was then that the door of Edward's room opened, and a head we have before noticed appeared in the glass opposite; it was Madame de Villefort, who came to witness the effects of the drink she had prepared. She stopped in the doorway, listened for a moment to the flickering of the lamp, the only sound in that deserted room, and then advanced to the table to see if Valentine's glass were empty. It was still about a quarter full, as we before stated. Madame de Villefort emptied the contents into the ashes, which she disturbed that they might the more readily absorb the liquid; then she carefully rinsed the glass, and wiping it with her handkerchief replaced it on the table.

If anyone could have looked into the room just then he would have noticed the hesitation with which Madame de Villefort approached the bed and looked fixedly on Valentine. The dim light, the profound silence, and the gloomy thoughts inspired by the hour, and still more by her own conscience, all combined to produce a sensation of fear; the poisoner was terrified at the contemplation of her own work.

At length she rallied, drew aside the curtain, and leaning over the pillow gazed intently on Valentine. The young girl no longer breathed, no breath issued through the half-closed teeth; the white lips no longer quivered—the eyes were suffused with a bluish vapor, and the long black lashes rested on a cheek white as wax. Madame de Villefort gazed upon the face so expressive even in its stillness; then she ventured to raise the coverlet and press her hand upon the young girl's heart. It was cold and motionless. She only felt the pulsation in her own fingers, and withdrew her hand with a shudder. One arm was hanging out of the bed; from shoulder to elbow it was moulded after the arms of Germain Pillon's "Graces,"²³ but the fore-arm seemed to be slightly distorted by

convulsion, and the hand, so delicately formed, was resting with stiff outstretched fingers on the framework of the bed. The nails, too, were turning blue.

Madame de Villefort had no longer any doubt; all was over—she had consummated the last terrible work she had to accomplish. There was no more to do in the room, so the poisoner retired stealthily, as though fearing to hear the sound of her own footsteps; but as she withdrew she still held aside the curtain, absorbed in the irresistible attraction always exerted by the picture of death, so long as it is merely mysterious and does not excite disgust.

The minutes passed; Madame de Villefort could not drop the curtain which she held like a funeral pall over the head of Valentine. She was lost in reverie, and the reverie of crime is remorse.

Just then the lamp again flickered; the noise startled Madame de Villefort, who shuddered and dropped the curtain. Immediately afterwards the light expired, and the room was plunged in frightful obscurity, while the clock at that minute struck half-past four.

Overpowered with agitation, the poisoner succeeded in groping her way to the door, and reached her room in an agony of fear. The darkness lasted two hours longer; then by degrees a cold light crept through the Venetian blinds, until at length it revealed the objects in the room.

About this time the nurse's cough was heard on the stairs and the woman entered the room with a cup in her hand. To the tender eye of a father or a lover, the first glance would have sufficed to reveal Valentine's condition; but to this hireling, Valentine only appeared to sleep.

"Good," she exclaimed, approaching the table, "she has taken part of her draught; the glass is three-quarters empty."

Then she went to the fireplace and lit the fire, and although she had just left her bed, she could not resist the temptation offered by Valentine's sleep, so she threw herself into an armchair to snatch a little more rest. The clock striking eight awoke her. Astonished at the prolonged slumber of the patient, and frightened to see that the arm was still hanging out of the bed, she advanced towards Valentine, and for the first time noticed the white lips. She tried to replace the arm, but it moved with a frightful rigidity which could not deceive a sick-nurse. She screamed aloud; then running to the door exclaimed:

"Help, help!"

“What is the matter?” asked M. d’Avrigny, at the foot of the stairs, it being the hour he usually visited her.

“What is it?” asked Villefort, rushing from his room. “Doctor, do you hear them call for help?”

“Yes, yes; let us hasten up; it was in Valentine’s room.”

But before the doctor and the father could reach the room, the servants who were on the same floor had entered, and seeing Valentine pale and motionless on her bed, they lifted up their hands towards heaven and stood transfixed, as though struck by lightening.

“Call Madame de Villefort!—Wake Madame de Villefort!” cried the procureur from the door of his chamber, which apparently he scarcely dared to leave. But instead of obeying him, the servants stood watching M. d’Avrigny, who ran to Valentine, and raised her in his arms.

“What?—this one, too?” he exclaimed. “Oh, where will be the end?”

Villefort rushed into the room.

“What are you saying, doctor?” he exclaimed, raising his hands to heaven.

“I say that Valentine is dead!” replied d’Avrigny, in a voice terrible in its solemn calmness.

50085m

M. de Villefort staggered and buried his head in the bed. On the exclamation of the doctor and the cry of the father, the servants all fled with muttered imprecations; they were heard running down the stairs and through the long passages, then there was a rush in the court, afterwards all was still; they had, one and all, deserted the accursed house.

Just then, Madame de Villefort, in the act of slipping on her dressing-gown, threw aside the drapery and for a moment stood motionless, as though interrogating the occupants of the room, while she endeavored to call up some rebellious tears. On a sudden she stepped, or rather bounded, with outstretched arms, towards the table. She saw d’Avrigny curiously examining the glass, which she felt certain of having emptied during the night. It was now a third full, just as it was when she threw the contents into the ashes. The spectre of Valentine rising before the poisoner would have alarmed her less. It was, indeed, the same color as the draught she had poured into the glass, and which Valentine had drunk; it was indeed the poison, which could not deceive M. d’Avrigny, which he now examined so closely; it was doubtless a miracle from heaven, that, notwithstanding her precautions, there should be some trace, some proof

remaining to reveal the crime.

While Madame de Villefort remained rooted to the spot like a statue of terror, and Villefort, with his head hidden in the bedclothes, saw nothing around him, d'Avrigny approached the window, that he might the better examine the contents of the glass, and dipping the tip of his finger in, tasted it.

"Ah," he exclaimed, "it is no longer brucine that is used; let me see what it is!"

Then he ran to one of the cupboards in Valentine's room, which had been transformed into a medicine closet, and taking from its silver case a small bottle of nitric acid, dropped a little of it into the liquor, which immediately changed to a blood-red color.

"Ah," exclaimed d'Avrigny, in a voice in which the horror of a judge unveiling the truth was mingled with the delight of a student making a discovery.

Madame de Villefort was overpowered; her eyes first flashed and then swam, she staggered towards the door and disappeared. Directly afterwards the distant sound of a heavy weight falling on the ground was heard, but no one paid any attention to it; the nurse was engaged in watching the chemical analysis, and Villefort was still absorbed in grief. M. d'Avrigny alone had followed Madame de Villefort with his eyes, and watched her hurried retreat. He lifted up the drapery over the entrance to Edward's room, and his eye reaching as far as Madame de Villefort's apartment, he beheld her extended lifeless on the floor.

"Go to the assistance of Madame de Villefort," he said to the nurse. "Madame de Villefort is ill."

50087m

"But Mademoiselle de Villefort——" stammered the nurse.

"Mademoiselle de Villefort no longer requires help," said d'Avrigny, "since she is dead."

"Dead,—dead!" groaned forth Villefort, in a paroxysm of grief, which was the more terrible from the novelty of the sensation in the iron heart of that man.

"Dead!" repeated a third voice. "Who said Valentine was dead?"

The two men turned round, and saw Morrel standing at the door, pale and terror-stricken. This is what had happened. At the usual time, Morrel had presented himself at the little door leading to Noirtier's room. Contrary to custom, the door was open, and having no occasion to ring he entered. He waited for a moment in the hall and called for a servant to conduct him to M. Noirtier; but no one answered, the servants having, as we know, deserted the house.

Morrel had no particular reason for uneasiness; Monte Cristo had promised him that Valentine should live, and so far he had always fulfilled his word. Every night the count had given him news, which was the next morning confirmed by Noirtier. Still this extraordinary silence appeared strange to him, and he called a second and third time; still no answer. Then he determined to go up. Noirtier's room was opened, like all the rest. The first thing he saw was the old man sitting in his armchair in his usual place, but his eyes expressed alarm, which was confirmed by the pallor which overspread his features.

"How are you, sir?" asked Morrel, with a sickness of heart.

"Well," answered the old man, by closing his eyes; but his appearance manifested increasing uneasiness.

"You are thoughtful, sir," continued Morrel; "you want something; shall I call one of the servants?"

"Yes," replied Noirtier.

Morrel pulled the bell, but though he nearly broke the cord no one answered. He turned towards Noirtier; the pallor and anguish expressed on his countenance momentarily increased.

"Oh," exclaimed Morrel, "why do they not come? Is anyone ill in the house?" The eyes of Noirtier seemed as though they would start from their sockets. "What is the matter? You alarm me. Valentine? Valentine?"

"Yes, yes," signed Noirtier.

Maximilian tried to speak, but he could articulate nothing; he staggered, and supported himself against the wainscot. Then he pointed to the door.

"Yes, yes, yes!" continued the old man.

50089m

Maximilian rushed up the little staircase, while Noirtier's eyes seemed to say,—"Quicker, quicker!"

In a minute the young man darted through several rooms, till at length he reached Valentine's.

There was no occasion to push the door, it was wide open. A sob was the only sound he heard. He saw as though in a mist, a black figure kneeling and buried in a confused mass of white drapery. A terrible fear transfixed him. It was then he heard a voice exclaim "Valentine is dead!" and another voice which, like an echo repeated:

"Dead,—dead!"

50090m

Chapter 103. Maximilian

Villefort rose, half-ashamed of being surprised in such a paroxysm of grief. The terrible office he had held for twenty-five years had succeeded in making him more or less than man. His glance, at first wandering, fixed itself upon Morrel. "Who are you, sir," he asked, "that forget that this is not the manner to enter a house stricken with death? Go, sir, go!"

But Morrel remained motionless; he could not detach his eyes from that disordered bed, and the pale corpse of the young girl who was lying on it.

"Go!—do you hear?" said Villefort, while d'Avrigny advanced to lead Morrel out. Maximilian stared for a moment at the corpse, gazed all around the room, then upon the two men; he opened his mouth to speak, but finding it impossible to give utterance to the innumerable ideas that occupied his brain, he went out, thrusting his hands through his hair in such a manner that Villefort and d'Avrigny, for a moment diverted from the engrossing topic, exchanged glances, which seemed to say,—"He is mad!"

But in less than five minutes the staircase groaned beneath an extraordinary weight. Morrel was seen carrying, with superhuman strength, the armchair containing Noirtier upstairs. When he reached the landing he placed the armchair on the floor and rapidly rolled it into Valentine's room. This could only have been accomplished by means of unnatural strength supplied by powerful excitement. But the most fearful spectacle was Noirtier being pushed towards the bed, his face expressing all his meaning, and his eyes supplying the want of every other faculty. That pale face and flaming glance appeared to Villefort like a frightful apparition. Each time he had been brought into contact with his father, something terrible had happened.

"See what they have done!" cried Morrel, with one hand leaning on the back of the chair, and the other extended towards Valentine. "See, my father, see!"

Villefort drew back and looked with astonishment on the young man, who, almost a stranger to him, called Noirtier his father. At this moment the whole soul of the old man seemed centred in his eyes which became bloodshot; the veins of the throat swelled; his cheeks and temples became purple, as though he was struck with epilepsy; nothing was wanting to complete this but the utterance

of a cry. And the cry issued from his pores, if we may thus speak—a cry frightful in its silence. D'Avrigny rushed towards the old man and made him inhale a powerful restorative.

"Sir," cried Morrel, seizing the moist hand of the paralytic, "they ask me who I am, and what right I have to be here. Oh, you know it, tell them, tell them!" And the young man's voice was choked by sobs.

As for the old man, his chest heaved with his panting respiration. One could have thought that he was undergoing the agonies preceding death. At length, happier than the young man, who sobbed without weeping, tears glistened in the eyes of Noirtier.

"Tell them," said Morrel in a hoarse voice, "tell them that I am her betrothed. Tell them she was my beloved, my noble girl, my only blessing in the world. Tell them—oh, tell them, that corpse belongs to me!"

The young man overwhelmed by the weight of his anguish, fell heavily on his knees before the bed, which his fingers grasped with convulsive energy. D'Avrigny, unable to bear the sight of this touching emotion, turned away; and Villefort, without seeking any further explanation, and attracted towards him by the irresistible magnetism which draws us towards those who have loved the people for whom we mourn, extended his hand towards the young man.

But Morrel saw nothing; he had grasped the hand of Valentine, and unable to weep vented his agony in groans as he bit the sheets. For some time nothing was heard in that chamber but sobs, exclamations, and prayers. At length Villefort, the most composed of all, spoke:

"Sir," said he to Maximilian, "you say you loved Valentine, that you were betrothed to her. I knew nothing of this engagement, of this love, yet I, her father, forgive you, for I see that your grief is real and deep; and besides my own sorrow is too great for anger to find a place in my heart. But you see that the angel whom you hoped for has left this earth—she has nothing more to do with the adoration of men. Take a last farewell, sir, of her sad remains; take the hand you expected to possess once more within your own, and then separate yourself from her forever. Valentine now requires only the ministrations of the priest."

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"You are mistaken, sir," exclaimed Morrel, raising himself on one knee, his heart pierced by a more acute pang than any he had yet felt—"you are mistaken; Valentine, dying as she has, not only requires a priest, but an avenger. You, M. de Villefort, send for the priest; *I will be the avenger.*"

“What do you mean, sir?” asked Villefort, trembling at the new idea inspired by the delirium of Morrel.

“I tell you, sir, that two persons exist in you; the father has mourned sufficiently, now let the procureur fulfil his office.”

The eyes of Noirtier glistened, and d’Avrigny approached.

“Gentlemen,” said Morrel, reading all that passed through the minds of the witnesses to the scene, “I know what I am saying, and you know as well as I do what I am about to say—Valentine has been assassinated!”

Villefort hung his head, d’Avrigny approached nearer, and Noirtier said “Yes” with his eyes.

“Now, sir,” continued Morrel, “in these days no one can disappear by violent means without some inquiries being made as to the cause of her disappearance, even were she not a young, beautiful, and adorable creature like Valentine. Now, M. le Procureur du Roi,” said Morrel with increasing vehemence, “no mercy is allowed; I denounce the crime; it is your place to seek the assassin.”

The young man’s implacable eyes interrogated Villefort, who, on his side, glanced from Noirtier to d’Avrigny. But instead of finding sympathy in the eyes of the doctor and his father, he only saw an expression as inflexible as that of Maximilian.

“Yes,” indicated the old man.

“Assuredly,” said d’Avrigny.

“Sir,” said Villefort, striving to struggle against this triple force and his own emotion,—“sir, you are deceived; no one commits crimes here. I am stricken by fate. It is horrible, indeed, but no one assassinates.”

The eyes of Noirtier lighted up with rage, and d’Avrigny prepared to speak. Morrel, however, extended his arm, and commanded silence.

“And I say that murders *are* committed here,” said Morrel, whose voice, though lower in tone, lost none of its terrible distinctness: “I tell you that this is the fourth victim within the last four months. I tell you, Valentine’s life was attempted by poison four days ago, though she escaped, owing to the precautions of M. Noirtier. I tell you that the dose has been double, the poison changed, and that this time it has succeeded. I tell you that you know these things as well as I do, since this gentleman has forewarned you, both as a doctor and as a friend.”

“Oh, you rave, sir,” exclaimed Villefort, in vain endeavoring to escape the net in which he was taken.

"I rave?" said Morrel; "well, then, I appeal to M. d'Avrigny himself. Ask him, sir, if he recollects the words he uttered in the garden of this house on the night of Madame de Saint-Méran's death. You thought yourselves alone, and talked about that tragical death, and the fatality you mentioned then is the same which has caused the murder of Valentine." Villefort and d'Avrigny exchanged looks.

"Yes, yes," continued Morrel; "recall the scene, for the words you thought were only given to silence and solitude fell into my ears. Certainly, after witnessing the culpable indolence manifested by M. de Villefort towards his own relations, I ought to have denounced him to the authorities; then I should not have been an accomplice to thy death, as I now am, sweet, beloved Valentine; but the accomplice shall become the avenger. This fourth murder is apparent to all, and if thy father abandon thee, Valentine, it is I, and I swear it, that shall pursue the assassin."

And this time, as though nature had at least taken compassion on the vigorous frame, nearly bursting with its own strength, the words of Morrel were stifled in his throat; his breast heaved; the tears, so long rebellious, gushed from his eyes; and he threw himself weeping on his knees by the side of the bed.

Then d'Avrigny spoke. "And I, too," he exclaimed in a low voice, "I unite with M. Morrel in demanding justice for crime; my blood boils at the idea of having encouraged a murderer by my cowardly concession."

"Oh, merciful Heavens!" murmured Villefort. Morrel raised his head, and reading the eyes of the old man, which gleamed with unnatural lustre,—

"Stay," he said, "M. Noirtier wishes to speak."

"Yes," indicated Noirtier, with an expression the more terrible, from all his faculties being centred in his glance.

"Do you know the assassin?" asked Morrel.

"Yes," replied Noirtier.

"And will you direct us?" exclaimed the young man. "Listen, M. d'Avrigny, listen!"

Noirtier looked upon Morrel with one of those melancholy smiles which had so often made Valentine happy, and thus fixed his attention. Then, having riveted the eyes of his interlocutor on his own, he glanced towards the door.

"Do you wish me to leave?" said Morrel, sadly.

"Yes," replied Noirtier.

"Alas, alas, sir, have pity on me!"

The old man's eyes remained fixed on the door.

“May I, at least, return?” asked Morrel.

“Yes.”

“Must I leave alone?”

“No.”

“Whom am I to take with me? The procureur?”

“No.”

“The doctor?”

“Yes.”

“You wish to remain alone with M. de Villefort?”

“Yes.”

“But can he understand you?”

“Yes.”

“Oh,” said Villefort, inexpressibly delighted to think that the inquiries were to be made by him alone,—“oh, be satisfied, I can understand my father.” While uttering these words with this expression of joy, his teeth clashed together violently.

D’Avrigny took the young man’s arm, and led him out of the room. A more than deathlike silence then reigned in the house. At the end of a quarter of an hour a faltering脚步 was heard, and Villefort appeared at the door of the apartment where d’Avrigny and Morrel had been staying, one absorbed in meditation, the other in grief.

“You can come,” he said, and led them back to Noirtier.

Morrel looked attentively on Villefort. His face was livid, large drops rolled down his face, and in his fingers he held the fragments of a quill pen which he had torn to atoms.

“Gentlemen,” he said in a hoarse voice, “give me your word of honor that this horrible secret shall forever remain buried amongst ourselves!” The two men drew back.

“I entreat you——” continued Villefort.

“But,” said Morrel, “the culprit—the murderer—the assassin.”

“Do not alarm yourself, sir; justice will be done,” said Villefort. “My father has revealed the culprit’s name; my father thirsts for revenge as much as you do, yet even he conjures you as I do to keep this secret. Do you not, father?”

“Yes,” resolutely replied Noirtier. Morrel suffered an exclamation of horror

and surprise to escape him.

"Oh, sir," said Villefort, arresting Maximilian by the arm, "if my father, the inflexible man, makes this request, it is because he knows, be assured, that Valentine will be terribly revenged. Is it not so, father?"

The old man made a sign in the affirmative. Villefort continued:

"He knows me, and I have pledged my word to him. Rest assured, gentlemen, that within three days, in a less time than justice would demand, the revenge I shall have taken for the murder of my child will be such as to make the boldest heart tremble;" and as he spoke these words he ground his teeth, and grasped the old man's senseless hand.

"Will this promise be fulfilled, M. Noirtier?" asked Morrel, while d'Avrigny looked inquiringly.

"Yes," replied Noirtier with an expression of sinister joy.

"Swear, then," said Villefort, joining the hands of Morrel and d'Avrigny, "swear that you will spare the honor of my house, and leave me to avenge my child."

D'Avrigny turned round and uttered a very feeble "Yes," but Morrel, disengaging his hand, rushed to the bed, and after having pressed the cold lips of Valentine with his own, hurriedly left, uttering a long, deep groan of despair and anguish.

We have before stated that all the servants had fled. M. de Villefort was therefore obliged to request M. d'Avrigny to superintend all the arrangements consequent upon a death in a large city, more especially a death under such suspicious circumstances.

It was something terrible to witness the silent agony, the mute despair of Noirtier, whose tears silently rolled down his cheeks. Villefort retired to his study, and d'Avrigny left to summon the doctor of the mayoralty, whose office it is to examine bodies after decease, and who is expressly named "the doctor of the dead." M. Noirtier could not be persuaded to quit his grandchild. At the end of a quarter of an hour M. d'Avrigny returned with his associate; they found the outer gate closed, and not a servant remaining in the house; Villefort himself was obliged to open to them. But he stopped on the landing; he had not the courage to again visit the death chamber. The two doctors, therefore, entered the room alone. Noirtier was near the bed, pale, motionless, and silent as the corpse. The district doctor approached with the indifference of a man accustomed to spend half his time amongst the dead; he then lifted the sheet which was placed over the face, and just unclosed the lips.

“Alas,” said d’Avrigny, “she is indeed dead, poor child!”

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“Yes,” answered the doctor laconically, dropping the sheet he had raised. Noirtier uttered a kind of hoarse, rattling sound; the old man’s eyes sparkled, and the good doctor understood that he wished to behold his child. He therefore approached the bed, and while his companion was dipping the fingers with which he had touched the lips of the corpse in chloride of lime, he uncovered the calm and pale face, which looked like that of a sleeping angel.

A tear, which appeared in the old man’s eye, expressed his thanks to the doctor. The doctor of the dead then laid his permit on the corner of the table, and having fulfilled his duty, was conducted out by d’Avrigny. Villefort met them at the door of his study; having in a few words thanked the district doctor, he turned to d’Avrigny, and said:

“And now the priest.”

“Is there any particular priest you wish to pray with Valentine?” asked d’Avrigny.

“No.” said Villefort; “fetch the nearest.”

“The nearest,” said the district doctor, “is a good Italian abbé, who lives next door to you. Shall I call on him as I pass?”

“D’Avrigny,” said Villefort, “be so kind, I beseech you, as to accompany this gentleman. Here is the key of the door, so that you can go in and out as you please; you will bring the priest with you, and will oblige me by introducing him into my child’s room.”

50101m

“Do you wish to see him?”

“I only wish to be alone. You will excuse me, will you not? A priest can understand a father’s grief.”

And M. de Villefort, giving the key to d’Avrigny, again bade farewell to the strange doctor, and retired to his study, where he began to work. For some temperaments work is a remedy for all afflictions.

As the doctors entered the street, they saw a man in a cassock standing on the threshold of the next door.

“This is the abbé of whom I spoke,” said the doctor to d’Avrigny. D’Avrigny accosted the priest.

“Sir,” he said, “are you disposed to confer a great obligation on an unhappy

father who has just lost his daughter? I mean M. de Villefort, the king's attorney."

"Ah," said the priest, in a marked Italian accent; "yes, I have heard that death is in that house."

"Then I need not tell you what kind of service he requires of you."

"I was about to offer myself, sir," said the priest; "it is our mission to forestall our duties."

"It is a young girl."

"I know it, sir; the servants who fled from the house informed me. I also know that her name is Valentine, and I have already prayed for her."

"Thank you, sir," said d'Avrigny; "since you have commenced your sacred office, deign to continue it. Come and watch by the dead, and all the wretched family will be grateful to you."

"I am going, sir; and I do not hesitate to say that no prayers will be more fervent than mine."

D'Avrigny took the priest's hand, and without meeting Villefort, who was engaged in his study, they reached Valentine's room, which on the following night was to be occupied by the undertakers. On entering the room, Noirtier's eyes met those of the abbé, and no doubt he read some particular expression in them, for he remained in the room. D'Avrigny recommended the attention of the priest to the living as well as to the dead, and the abbé promised to devote his prayers to Valentine and his attentions to Noirtier.

In order, doubtless, that he might not be disturbed while fulfilling his sacred mission, the priest rose as soon as d'Avrigny departed, and not only bolted the door through which the doctor had just left, but also that leading to Madame de Villefort's room.

Chapter 104. Danglars' Signature

The next morning dawned dull and cloudy. During the night the undertakers had executed their melancholy office, and wrapped the corpse in the winding-sheet, which, whatever may be said about the equality of death, is at least a last proof of the luxury so pleasing in life. This winding-sheet was nothing more than a beautiful piece of cambric, which the young girl had bought a fortnight before.

During the evening two men, engaged for the purpose, had carried Noirtier from Valentine's room into his own, and contrary to all expectation there was no difficulty in withdrawing him from his child. The Abbé Busoni had watched till daylight, and then left without calling anyone. D'Avrigny returned about eight o'clock in the morning; he met Villefort on his way to Noirtier's room, and accompanied him to see how the old man had slept. They found him in the large armchair, which served him for a bed, enjoying a calm, nay, almost a smiling sleep. They both stood in amazement at the door.

"See," said d'Avrigny to Villefort, "nature knows how to alleviate the deepest sorrow. No one can say that M. Noirtier did not love his child, and yet he sleeps."

"Yes, you are right," replied Villefort, surprised; "he sleeps, indeed! And this is the more strange, since the least contradiction keeps him awake all night."

"Grief has stunned him," replied d'Avrigny; and they both returned thoughtfully to the procureur's study.

"See, I have not slept," said Villefort, showing his undisturbed bed; "grief does not stun me. I have not been in bed for two nights; but then look at my desk; see what I have written during these two days and nights. I have filled those papers, and have made out the accusation against the assassin Benedetto. Oh, work, work,—my passion, my joy, my delight,—it is for thee to alleviate my sorrows!" and he convulsively grasped the hand of d'Avrigny.

"Do you require my services now?" asked d'Avrigny.

"No," said Villefort; "only return again at eleven o'clock; at twelve the—the—oh, Heavens, my poor, poor child!" and the procureur again becoming a man, lifted up his eyes and groaned.

“Shall you be present in the reception-room?”

“No; I have a cousin who has undertaken this sad office. I shall work, doctor—when I work I forget everything.”

And, indeed, no sooner had the doctor left the room, than he was again absorbed in work. On the doorsteps d’Avrigny met the cousin whom Villefort had mentioned, a personage as insignificant in our story as in the world he occupied—one of those beings designed from their birth to make themselves useful to others. He was punctual, dressed in black, with crape around his hat, and presented himself at his cousin’s with a face made up for the occasion, and which he could alter as might be required.

At eleven o’clock the mourning-coaches rolled into the paved court, and the Rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré was filled with a crowd of idlers, equally pleased to witness the festivities or the mourning of the rich, and who rush with the same avidity to a funeral procession as to the marriage of a duchess.

Gradually the reception-room filled, and some of our old friends made their appearance—we mean Debray, Château-Renaud, and Beauchamp, accompanied by all the leading men of the day at the bar, in literature, or the army, for M. de Villefort moved in the first Parisian circles, less owing to his social position than to his personal merit.

The cousin standing at the door ushered in the guests, and it was rather a relief to the indifferent to see a person as unmoved as themselves, and who did not exact a mournful face or force tears, as would have been the case with a father, a brother, or a lover. Those who were acquainted soon formed into little groups. One of them was made of Debray, Château-Renaud, and Beauchamp.

“Poor girl,” said Debray, like the rest, paying an involuntary tribute to the sad event,—“poor girl, so young, so rich, so beautiful! Could you have imagined this scene, Château-Renaud, when we saw her, at the most three weeks ago, about to sign that contract?”

“Indeed, no,” said Château-Renaud.”

“Did you know her?”

“I spoke to her once or twice at Madame de Morcerf’s, among the rest; she appeared to me charming, though rather melancholy. Where is her stepmother? Do you know?”

“She is spending the day with the wife of the worthy gentleman who is receiving us.”

“Who is he?”

“Whom do you mean?”

“The gentleman who receives us? Is he a deputy?”

“Oh, no. I am condemned to witness those gentlemen every day,” said Beauchamp; “but he is perfectly unknown to me.”

“Have you mentioned this death in your paper?”

“It has been mentioned, but the article is not mine; indeed, I doubt if it will please M. Villefort, for it says that if four successive deaths had happened anywhere else than in the house of the king’s attorney, he would have interested himself somewhat more about it.”

“Still,” said Château-Renaud, “Dr. d’Avrigny, who attends my mother, declares he is in despair about it. But whom are you seeking, Debray?”

“I am seeking the Count of Monte Cristo” said the young man.

“I met him on the boulevard, on my way here,” said Beauchamp. “I think he is about to leave Paris; he was going to his banker.”

“His banker? Danglars is his banker, is he not?” asked Château-Renaud of Debray.

“I believe so,” replied the secretary with slight uneasiness. “But Monte Cristo is not the only one I miss here; I do not see Morrel.”

“Morrel? Do they know him?” asked Château-Renaud. “I think he has only been introduced to Madame de Villefort.”

“Still, he ought to have been here,” said Debray; “I wonder what will be talked about tonight; this funeral is the news of the day. But hush, here comes our minister of justice; he will feel obliged to make some little speech to the cousin,” and the three young men drew near to listen.

Beauchamp told the truth when he said that on his way to the funeral he had met Monte Cristo, who was directing his steps towards the Rue de la Chaussée d’Antin, to M. Danglars’. The banker saw the carriage of the count enter the courtyard, and advanced to meet him with a sad, though affable smile.

“Well,” said he, extending his hand to Monte Cristo, “I suppose you have come to sympathize with me, for indeed misfortune has taken possession of my house. When I perceived you, I was just asking myself whether I had not wished harm towards those poor Morcerfs, which would have justified the proverb of ‘He who wishes misfortunes to happen to others experiences them himself.’ Well, on my word of honor, I answered, ‘No!’ I wished no ill to Morcerf; he was a little proud, perhaps, for a man who like myself has risen from nothing; but we

all have our faults. Do you know, count, that persons of our time of life—not that you belong to the class, you are still a young man,—but as I was saying, persons of our time of life have been very unfortunate this year. For example, look at the puritanical procureur, who has just lost his daughter, and in fact nearly all his family, in so singular a manner; Morcerf dishonored and dead; and then myself covered with ridicule through the villany of Benedetto; besides——”

“Besides what?” asked the Count.

“Alas, do you not know?”

“What new calamity?”

“My daughter——”

“Mademoiselle Danglars?”

“Eugénie has left us!”

“Good heavens, what are you telling me?”

“The truth, my dear count. Oh, how happy you must be in not having either wife or children!”

“Do you think so?”

“Indeed I do.”

“And so Mademoiselle Danglars——”

“She could not endure the insult offered to us by that wretch, so she asked permission to travel.”

“And is she gone?”

“The other night she left.”

“With Madame Danglars?”

“No, with a relation. But still, we have quite lost our dear Eugénie; for I doubt whether her pride will ever allow her to return to France.”

“Still, baron,” said Monte Cristo, “family griefs, or indeed any other affliction which would crush a man whose child was his only treasure, are endurable to a millionaire. Philosophers may well say, and practical men will always support the opinion, that money mitigates many trials; and if you admit the efficacy of this sovereign balm, you ought to be very easily consoled—you, the king of finance, the focus of immeasurable power.”

Danglars looked at him askance, as though to ascertain whether he spoke seriously.

“Yes,” he answered, “if a fortune brings consolation, I ought to be consoled; I am rich.”

"So rich, dear sir, that your fortune resembles the pyramids; if you wished to demolish them you could not, and if it were possible, you would not dare!"

Danglars smiled at the good-natured pleasantry of the count. "That reminds me," he said, "that when you entered I was on the point of signing five little bonds; I have already signed two: will you allow me to do the same to the others?"

"Pray do so."

There was a moment's silence, during which the noise of the banker's pen was alone heard, while Monte Cristo examined the gilt mouldings on the ceiling.

"Are they Spanish, Haitian, or Neapolitan bonds?" said Monte Cristo.

"No," said Danglars, smiling, "they are bonds on the bank of France, payable to bearer. Stay, count," he added, "you, who may be called the emperor, if I claim the title of king of finance, have you many pieces of paper of this size, each worth a million?"

The count took into his hands the papers, which Danglars had so proudly presented to him, and read:—

"To the Governor of the Bank. Please pay to my order, from the fund deposited by me, the sum of a million, and charge the same to my account.

"Baron Danglars."

"One, two, three, four, five," said Monte Cristo; "five millions—why what a Croesus you are!"

"This is how I transact business," said Danglars.

"It is really wonderful," said the count; "above all, if, as I suppose, it is payable at sight."

"It is, indeed, said Danglars.

"It is a fine thing to have such credit; really, it is only in France these things are done. Five millions on five little scraps of paper!—it must be seen to be believed."

"You do not doubt it?"

"No!"

"You say so with an accent—stay, you shall be convinced; take my clerk to the bank, and you will see him leave it with an order on the Treasury for the same sum."

"No," said Monte Cristo folding the five notes, "most decidedly not; the thing is so curious, I will make the experiment myself. I am credited on you for six

millions. I have drawn nine hundred thousand francs, you therefore still owe me five millions and a hundred thousand francs. I will take the five scraps of paper that I now hold as bonds, with your signature alone, and here is a receipt in full for the six millions between us. I had prepared it beforehand, for I am much in want of money today."

And Monte Cristo placed the bonds in his pocket with one hand, while with the other he held out the receipt to Danglars. If a thunderbolt had fallen at the banker's feet, he could not have experienced greater terror.

"What," he stammered, "do you mean to keep that money? Excuse me, excuse me, but I owe this money to the charity fund,—a deposit which I promised to pay this morning."

"Oh, well, then," said Monte Cristo, "I am not particular about these five notes, pay me in a different form; I wished, from curiosity, to take these, that I might be able to say that without any advice or preparation the house of Danglars had paid me five millions without a minute's delay; it would have been remarkable. But here are your bonds; pay me differently;" and he held the bonds towards Danglars, who seized them like a vulture extending its claws to withhold the food that is being wrested from its grasp.

Suddenly he rallied, made a violent effort to restrain himself, and then a smile gradually widened the features of his disturbed countenance.

50109m

"Certainly," he said, "your receipt is money."

"Oh dear, yes; and if you were at Rome, the house of Thomson & French would make no more difficulty about paying the money on my receipt than you have just done."

"Pardon me, count, pardon me."

"Then I may keep this money?"

"Yes," said Danglars, while the perspiration started from the roots of his hair.
"Yes, keep it—keep it."

Monte Cristo replaced the notes in his pocket with that indescribable expression which seemed to say, "Come, reflect; if you repent there is still time."

"No," said Danglars, "no, decidedly no; keep my signatures. But you know none are so formal as bankers in transacting business; I intended this money for the charity fund, and I seemed to be robbing them if I did not pay them with these precise bonds. How absurd—as if one crown were not as good as another. Excuse me;" and he began to laugh loudly, but nervously.

"Certainly, I excuse you," said Monte Cristo graciously, "and pocket them." And he placed the bonds in his pocket-book.

"But," said Danglars, "there is still a sum of one hundred thousand francs?"

"Oh, a mere nothing," said Monte Cristo. "The balance would come to about that sum; but keep it, and we shall be quits."

"Count," said Danglars, "are you speaking seriously?"

"I never joke with bankers," said Monte Cristo in a freezing manner, which repelled impertinence; and he turned to the door, just as the valet de chambre announced:

"M. de Boville, Receiver-General of the charities."

"*Ma foi,*" said Monte Cristo; "I think I arrived just in time to obtain your signatures, or they would have been disputed with me."

Danglars again became pale, and hastened to conduct the count out. Monte Cristo exchanged a ceremonious bow with M. de Boville, who was standing in the waiting-room, and who was introduced into Danglars' room as soon as the count had left.

The count's serious face was illumined by a faint smile, as he noticed the portfolio which the receiver-general held in his hand. At the door he found his carriage, and was immediately driven to the bank. Meanwhile Danglars, repressing all emotion, advanced to meet the receiver-general. We need not say that a smile of condescension was stamped upon his lips.

"Good-morning, creditor," said he; "for I wager anything it is the creditor who visits me."

"You are right, baron," answered M. de Boville; "the charities present themselves to you through me; the widows and orphans depute me to receive alms to the amount of five millions from you."

"And yet they say orphans are to be pitied," said Danglars, wishing to prolong the jest. "Poor things!"

"Here I am in their name," said M. de Boville; "but did you receive my letter yesterday?"

"Yes."

"I have brought my receipt."

50111m

"My dear M. de Boville, your widows and orphans must oblige me by waiting twenty-four hours, since M. de Monte Cristo whom you just saw leaving here—

you did see him, I think?"

"Yes; well?"

"Well, M. de Monte Cristo has just carried off their five millions."

"How so?"

"The count has an unlimited credit upon me; a credit opened by Thomson & French, of Rome; he came to demand five millions at once, which I paid him with checks on the bank. My funds are deposited there, and you can understand that if I draw out ten millions on the same day it will appear rather strange to the governor. Two days will be a different thing," said Danglars, smiling.

"Come," said Boville, with a tone of entire incredulity, "five millions to that gentleman who just left, and who bowed to me as though he knew me?"

"Perhaps he knows you, though you do not know him; M. de Monte Cristo knows everybody."

"Five millions!"

"Here is his receipt. Believe your own eyes." M. de Boville took the paper Danglars presented him, and read:

"Received of Baron Danglars the sum of five million one hundred thousand francs, to be repaid on demand by the house of Thomson & French of Rome."

"It is really true," said M. de Boville.

"Do you know the house of Thomson & French?"

"Yes, I once had business to transact with it to the amount of 200,000 francs; but since then I have not heard it mentioned."

"It is one of the best houses in Europe," said Danglars, carelessly throwing down the receipt on his desk.

"And he had five millions in your hands alone! Why, this Count of Monte Cristo must be a nabob?"

"Indeed I do not know what he is; he has three unlimited credits—one on me, one on Rothschild, one on Lafitte; and, you see," he added carelessly, "he has given me the preference, by leaving a balance of 100,000 francs."

M. de Boville manifested signs of extraordinary admiration.

"I must visit him," he said, "and obtain some pious grant from him."

"Oh, you may make sure of him; his charities alone amount to 20,000 francs a month."

"It is magnificent! I will set before him the example of Madame de Morcerf and her son."

“What example?”

“They gave all their fortune to the hospitals.”

“What fortune?”

“Their own—M. de Morcerf’s, who is deceased.”

“For what reason?”

“Because they would not spend money so guiltily acquired.”

“And what are they to live upon?”

“The mother retires into the country, and the son enters the army.”

50113m

“Well, I must confess, these are scruples.”

“I registered their deed of gift yesterday.”

“And how much did they possess?”

“Oh, not much—from twelve to thirteen hundred thousand francs. But to return to our millions.”

“Certainly,” said Danglars, in the most natural tone in the world. “Are you then pressed for this money?”

“Yes; for the examination of our cash takes place tomorrow.”

“Tomorrow? Why did you not tell me so before? Why, it is as good as a century! At what hour does the examination take place?”

“At two o’clock.”

“Send at twelve,” said Danglars, smiling.

M. de Boville said nothing, but nodded his head, and took up the portfolio.

“Now I think of it, you can do better,” said Danglars.

“How do you mean?”

“The receipt of M. de Monte Cristo is as good as money; take it to Rothschild’s or Lafitte’s, and they will take it off your hands at once.”

“What, though payable at Rome?”

“Certainly; it will only cost you a discount of 5,000 or 6,000 francs.”

The receiver started back.

“*Ma foi!*” he said, “I prefer waiting till tomorrow. What a proposition!”

“I thought, perhaps,” said Danglars with supreme impertinence, “that you had a deficiency to make up?”

“Indeed,” said the receiver.

“And if that were the case it would be worth while to make some sacrifice.”

“Thank you, no, sir.”

“Then it will be tomorrow.”

“Yes; but without fail.”

“Ah, you are laughing at me; send tomorrow at twelve, and the bank shall be notified.”

“I will come myself.”

“Better still, since it will afford me the pleasure of seeing you.” They shook hands.

“By the way,” said M. de Boville, “are you not going to the funeral of poor Mademoiselle de Villefort, which I met on my road here?”

“No,” said the banker; “I have appeared rather ridiculous since that affair of Benedetto, so I remain in the background.”

“Bah, you are wrong. How were you to blame in that affair?”

“Listen—when one bears an irreproachable name, as I do, one is rather sensitive.”

“Everybody pities you, sir; and, above all, Mademoiselle Danglars!”

“Poor Eugénie!” said Danglars; “do you know she is going to embrace a religious life?”

“No.”

“Alas, it is unhappily but too true. The day after the event, she decided on leaving Paris with a nun of her acquaintance; they are gone to seek a very strict convent in Italy or Spain.”

“Oh, it is terrible!” and M. de Boville retired with this exclamation, after expressing acute sympathy with the father. But he had scarcely left before Danglars, with an energy of action those can alone understand who have seen Robert Macaire represented by Frédéric,²⁴ exclaimed:

“Fool!”

Then enclosing Monte Cristo’s receipt in a little pocket-book, he added: —“Yes, come at twelve o’clock; I shall then be far away.”

Then he double-locked his door, emptied all his drawers, collected about fifty thousand francs in bank-notes, burned several papers, left others exposed to view, and then commenced writing a letter which he addressed:

“To Madame la Baronne Danglars.”

“I will place it on her table myself tonight,” he murmured. Then taking a passport from his drawer he said,—“Good, it is available for two months longer.”

Chapter 105. The Cemetery of Père-Lachaise

M. de Boville had indeed met the funeral procession which was taking Valentine to her last home on earth. The weather was dull and stormy, a cold wind shook the few remaining yellow leaves from the boughs of the trees, and scattered them among the crowd which filled the boulevards. M. de Villefort, a true Parisian, considered the cemetery of Père-Lachaise alone worthy of receiving the mortal remains of a Parisian family; there alone the corpses belonging to him would be surrounded by worthy associates. He had therefore purchased a vault, which was quickly occupied by members of his family. On the front of the monument was inscribed: "The families of Saint-Méran and Villefort," for such had been the last wish expressed by poor Renée, Valentine's mother. The pompous procession therefore wended its way towards Père-Lachaise from the Faubourg Saint-Honoré. Having crossed Paris, it passed through the Faubourg du Temple, then leaving the exterior boulevards, it reached the cemetery. More than fifty private carriages followed the twenty mourning-coaches, and behind them more than five hundred persons joined in the procession on foot.

50117m

These last consisted of all the young people whom Valentine's death had struck like a thunderbolt, and who, notwithstanding the raw chilliness of the season, could not refrain from paying a last tribute to the memory of the beautiful, chaste, and adorable girl, thus cut off in the flower of her youth.

As they left Paris, an equipage with four horses, at full speed, was seen to draw up suddenly; it contained Monte Cristo. The count left the carriage and mingled in the crowd who followed on foot. Château-Renaud perceived him and immediately alighting from his *coupé*, joined him; Beauchamp did the same.

The count looked attentively through every opening in the crowd; he was evidently watching for someone, but his search ended in disappointment.

50119m

"Where is Morrel?" he asked; "do either of these gentlemen know where he is?"

"We have already asked that question," said Château-Renaud, "for none of us has seen him."

The count was silent, but continued to gaze around him. At length they arrived at the cemetery. The piercing eye of Monte Cristo glanced through clusters of bushes and trees, and was soon relieved from all anxiety, for seeing a shadow glide between the yew-trees, Monte Cristo recognized him whom he sought.

One funeral is generally very much like another in this magnificent metropolis. Black figures are seen scattered over the long white avenues; the silence of earth and heaven is alone broken by the noise made by the crackling branches of hedges planted around the monuments; then follows the melancholy chant of the priests, mingled now and then with a sob of anguish, escaping from some woman concealed behind a mass of flowers.

The shadow Monte Cristo had noticed passed rapidly behind the tomb of Abélard and Héloïse, placed itself close to the heads of the horses belonging to the hearse, and following the undertaker's men, arrived with them at the spot appointed for the burial. Each person's attention was occupied. Monte Cristo saw nothing but the shadow, which no one else observed. Twice the count left the ranks to see whether the object of his interest had any concealed weapon beneath his clothes. When the procession stopped, this shadow was recognized as Morrel, who, with his coat buttoned up to his throat, his face livid, and convulsively crushing his hat between his fingers, leaned against a tree, situated on an elevation commanding the mausoleum, so that none of the funeral details could escape his observation.

Everything was conducted in the usual manner. A few men, the least impressed of all by the scene, pronounced a discourse, some deplored this premature death, others expatiating on the grief of the father, and one very ingenious person quoting the fact that Valentine had solicited pardon of her father for criminals on whom the arm of justice was ready to fall—until at length they exhausted their stores of metaphor and mournful speeches, elaborate variations on the stanzas of Malherbe to Du Périer.

Monte Cristo heard and saw nothing, or rather he only saw Morrel, whose calmness had a frightful effect on those who knew what was passing in his heart.

"See," said Beauchamp, pointing out Morrel to Debray. "What is he doing up there?" And they called Château-Renaud's attention to him.

"How pale he is!" said Château-Renaud, shuddering.

"He is cold," said Debray.

"Not at all," said Château-Renaud, slowly; "I think he is violently agitated. He

is very susceptible."

"Bah," said Debray; "he scarcely knew Mademoiselle de Villefort; you said so yourself."

"True. Still I remember he danced three times with her at Madame de Morcerf's. Do you recollect that ball, count, where you produced such an effect?"

50121m

"No, I do not," replied Monte Cristo, without even knowing of what or to whom he was speaking, so much was he occupied in watching Morrel, who was holding his breath with emotion.

"The discourse is over; farewell, gentlemen," said the count, unceremoniously. And he disappeared without anyone seeing whither he went.

The funeral being over, the guests returned to Paris. Château-Renaud looked for a moment for Morrel; but while they were watching the departure of the count, Morrel had quitted his post, and Château-Renaud, failing in his search, joined Debray and Beauchamp.

Monte Cristo concealed himself behind a large tomb and awaited the arrival of Morrel, who by degrees approached the tomb now abandoned by spectators and workmen. Morrel threw a glance around, but before it reached the spot occupied by Monte Cristo the latter had advanced yet nearer, still unperceived. The young man knelt down. The count, with outstretched neck and glaring eyes, stood in an attitude ready to pounce upon Morrel upon the first occasion. Morrel bent his head till it touched the stone, then clutching the grating with both hands, he murmured:

"Oh, Valentine!"

The count's heart was pierced by the utterance of these two words; he stepped forward, and touching the young man's shoulder, said:

"I was looking for you, my friend." Monte Cristo expected a burst of passion, but he was deceived, for Morrel turning round, said calmly,—

"You see I was praying." The scrutinizing glance of the count searched the young man from head to foot. He then seemed more easy.

"Shall I drive you back to Paris?" he asked.

"No, thank you."

"Do you wish anything?"

"Leave me to pray."

The count withdrew without opposition, but it was only to place himself in a situation where he could watch every movement of Morrel, who at length arose, brushed the dust from his knees, and turned towards Paris, without once looking back. He walked slowly down the Rue de la Roquette. The count, dismissing his carriage, followed him about a hundred paces behind. Maximilian crossed the canal and entered the Rue Meslay by the boulevards.

Five minutes after the door had been closed on Morrel's entrance, it was again opened for the count. Julie was at the entrance of the garden, where she was attentively watching Penelon, who, entering with zeal into his profession of gardener, was very busy grafting some Bengal roses. "Ah, count," she exclaimed, with the delight manifested by every member of the family whenever he visited the Rue Meslay.

"Maximilian has just returned, has he not, madame?" asked the count.

50123m

"Yes, I think I saw him pass; but pray, call Emmanuel."

"Excuse me, madame, but I must go up to Maximilian's room this instant," replied Monte Cristo, "I have something of the greatest importance to tell him."

"Go, then," she said with a charming smile, which accompanied him until he had disappeared.

Monte Cristo soon ran up the staircase conducting from the ground floor to Maximilian's room; when he reached the landing he listened attentively, but all was still. Like many old houses occupied by a single family, the room door was panelled with glass; but it was locked, Maximilian was shut in, and it was impossible to see what was passing in the room, because a red curtain was drawn before the glass. The count's anxiety was manifested by a bright color which seldom appeared on the face of that imperturbable man.

"What shall I do!" he uttered, and reflected for a moment; "shall I ring? No, the sound of a bell, announcing a visitor, will but accelerate the resolution of one in Maximilian's situation, and then the bell would be followed by a louder noise."

Monte Cristo trembled from head to foot and as if his determination had been taken with the rapidity of lightning, he struck one of the panes of glass with his elbow; the glass was shivered to atoms, then withdrawing the curtain he saw Morrel, who had been writing at his desk, bound from his seat at the noise of the broken window.

"I beg a thousand pardons," said the count, "there is nothing the matter, but I

slipped down and broke one of your panes of glass with my elbow. Since it is opened, I will take advantage of it to enter your room; do not disturb yourself—do not disturb yourself!"

And passing his hand through the broken glass, the count opened the door. Morrel, evidently discomposed, came to meet Monte Cristo less with the intention of receiving him than to exclude his entry.

"*Ma foi,*" said Monte Cristo, rubbing his elbow, "it's all your servant's fault; your stairs are so polished, it is like walking on glass."

"Are you hurt, sir?" coldly asked Morrel.

"I believe not. But what are you about there? You were writing."

"I?"

"Your fingers are stained with ink."

"Ah, true, I was writing. I do sometimes, soldier though I am."

Monte Cristo advanced into the room; Maximilian was obliged to let him pass, but he followed him.

"You were writing?" said Monte Cristo with a searching look.

"I have already had the honor of telling you I was," said Morrel.

The count looked around him.

"Your pistols are beside your desk," said Monte Cristo, pointing with his finger to the pistols on the table.

"I am on the point of starting on a journey," replied Morrel disdainfully.

"My friend," exclaimed Monte Cristo in a tone of exquisite sweetness.

"Sir?"

"My friend, my dear Maximilian, do not make a hasty resolution, I entreat you."

"I make a hasty resolution?" said Morrel, shrugging his shoulders; "is there anything extraordinary in a journey?"

50125m

"Maximilian," said the count, "let us both lay aside the mask we have assumed. You no more deceive me with that false calmness than I impose upon you with my frivolous solicitude. You can understand, can you not, that to have acted as I have done, to have broken that glass, to have intruded on the solitude of a friend—you can understand that, to have done all this, I must have been actuated by real uneasiness, or rather by a terrible conviction. Morrel, you are

going to destroy yourself!"

"Indeed, count," said Morrel, shuddering; "what has put this into your head?"

"I tell you that you are about to destroy yourself," continued the count, "and here is proof of what I say;" and, approaching the desk, he removed the sheet of paper which Morrel had placed over the letter he had begun, and took the latter in his hands.

Morrel rushed forward to tear it from him, but Monte Cristo perceiving his intention, seized his wrist with his iron grasp.

"You wish to destroy yourself," said the count; "you have written it."

"Well," said Morrel, changing his expression of calmness for one of violence—"well, and if I do intend to turn this pistol against myself, who shall prevent me—who will dare prevent me? All my hopes are blighted, my heart is broken, my life a burden, everything around me is sad and mournful; earth has become distasteful to me, and human voices distract me. It is a mercy to let me die, for if I live I shall lose my reason and become mad. When, sir, I tell you all this with tears of heartfelt anguish, can you reply that I am wrong, can you prevent my putting an end to my miserable existence? Tell me, sir, could you have the courage to do so?"

"Yes, Morrel," said Monte Cristo, with a calmness which contrasted strangely with the young man's excitement; "yes, I would do so."

"You?" exclaimed Morrel, with increasing anger and reproach—"you, who have deceived me with false hopes, who have cheered and soothed me with vain promises, when I might, if not have saved her, at least have seen her die in my arms! You, who pretend to understand everything, even the hidden sources of knowledge,—and who enact the part of a guardian angel upon earth, and could not even find an antidote to a poison administered to a young girl! Ah, sir, indeed you would inspire me with pity, were you not hateful in my eyes."

"Morrel——"

"Yes; you tell me to lay aside the mask, and I will do so, be satisfied! When you spoke to me at the cemetery, I answered you—my heart was softened; when you arrived here, I allowed you to enter. But since you abuse my confidence, since you have devised a new torture after I thought I had exhausted them all, then, Count of Monte Cristo my pretended benefactor—then, Count of Monte Cristo, the universal guardian, be satisfied, you shall witness the death of your friend;" and Morrel, with a maniacal laugh, again rushed towards the pistols.

"And I again repeat, you shall not commit suicide."

“Prevent me, then!” replied Morrel, with another struggle, which, like the first, failed in releasing him from the count’s iron grasp.

“I will prevent you.”

50127m

“And who are you, then, that arrogate to yourself this tyrannical right over free and rational beings?”

“Who am I?” repeated Monte Cristo. “Listen; I am the only man in the world having the right to say to you, ‘Morrel, your father’s son shall not die today;’” and Monte Cristo, with an expression of majesty and sublimity, advanced with arms folded toward the young man, who, involuntarily overcome by the commanding manner of this man, recoiled a step.

“Why do you mention my father?” stammered he; “why do you mingle a recollection of him with the affairs of today?”

“Because I am he who saved your father’s life when he wished to destroy himself, as you do today—because I am the man who sent the purse to your young sister, and the *Pharaon* to old Morrel—because I am the Edmond Dantès who nursed you, a child, on my knees.”

Morrel made another step back, staggering, breathless, crushed; then all his strength give way, and he fell prostrate at the feet of Monte Cristo. Then his admirable nature underwent a complete and sudden revulsion; he arose, rushed out of the room and to the stairs, exclaiming energetically, “Julie, Julie—Emmanuel, Emmanuel!”

Monte Cristo endeavored also to leave, but Maximilian would have died rather than relax his hold of the handle of the door, which he closed upon the count. Julie, Emmanuel, and some of the servants, ran up in alarm on hearing the cries of Maximilian. Morrel seized their hands, and opening the door exclaimed in a voice choked with sobs:

“On your knees—on your knees—he is our benefactor—the saviour of our father! He is——”

He would have added “Edmond Dantès,” but the count seized his arm and prevented him.

Julie threw herself into the arms of the count; Emmanuel embraced him as a guardian angel; Morrel again fell on his knees, and struck the ground with his forehead. Then the iron-hearted man felt his heart swell in his breast; a flame seemed to rush from his throat to his eyes, he bent his head and wept. For a while nothing was heard in the room but a succession of sobs, while the incense

from their grateful hearts mounted to heaven. Julie had scarcely recovered from her deep emotion when she rushed out of the room, descended to the next floor, ran into the drawing-room with childlike joy and raised the crystal globe which covered the purse given by the unknown of the Allées de Meilhan. Meanwhile, Emmanuel in a broken voice said to the count:

“Oh, count, how could you, hearing us so often speak of our unknown benefactor, seeing us pay such homage of gratitude and adoration to his memory,—how could you continue so long without discovering yourself to us? Oh, it was cruel to us, and—dare I say it?—to you also.”

“Listen, my friends,” said the count—“I may call you so since we have really been friends for the last eleven years—the discovery of this secret has been occasioned by a great event which you must never know. I wished to bury it during my whole life in my own bosom, but your brother Maximilian wrested it from me by a violence he repents of now, I am sure.”

Then turning around, and seeing that Morrel, still on his knees, had thrown himself into an armchair, he added in a low voice, pressing Emmanuel’s hand significantly, “Watch over him.”

“Why so?” asked the young man, surprised.

“I cannot explain myself; but watch over him.” Emmanuel looked around the room and caught sight of the pistols; his eyes rested on the weapons, and he pointed to them. Monte Cristo bent his head. Emmanuel went towards the pistols.

“Leave them,” said Monte Cristo. Then walking towards Morrel, he took his hand; the tumultuous agitation of the young man was succeeded by a profound stupor. Julie returned, holding the silken purse in her hands, while tears of joy rolled down her cheeks, like dewdrops on the rose.

“Here is the relic,” she said; “do not think it will be less dear to us now we are acquainted with our benefactor!”

“My child,” said Monte Cristo, coloring, “allow me to take back that purse? Since you now know my face, I wish to be remembered alone through the affection I hope you will grant me.

“Oh,” said Julie, pressing the purse to her heart, “no, no, I beseech you do not take it, for some unhappy day you will leave us, will you not?”

“You have guessed rightly, madame,” replied Monte Cristo, smiling; “in a week I shall have left this country, where so many persons who merit the vengeance of Heaven lived happily, while my father perished of hunger and

grief."

While announcing his departure, the count fixed his eyes on Morrel, and remarked that the words, "I shall have left this country," had failed to rouse him from his lethargy. He then saw that he must make another struggle against the grief of his friend, and taking the hands of Emmanuel and Julie, which he pressed within his own, he said with the mild authority of a father:

"My kind friends, leave me alone with Maximilian."

Julie saw the means offered of carrying off her precious relic, which Monte Cristo had forgotten. She drew her husband to the door. "Let us leave them," she said.

The count was alone with Morrel, who remained motionless as a statue.

"Come," said Monte-Cristo, touching his shoulder with his finger, "are you a man again, Maximilian?"

"Yes; for I begin to suffer again."

The count frowned, apparently in gloomy hesitation.

"Maximilian, Maximilian," he said, "the ideas you yield to are unworthy of a Christian."

"Oh, do not fear, my friend," said Morrel, raising his head, and smiling with a sweet expression on the count; "I shall no longer attempt my life."

"Then we are to have no more pistols—no more despair?"

"No; I have found a better remedy for my grief than either a bullet or a knife."

"Poor fellow, what is it?"

"My grief will kill me of itself."

"My friend," said Monte Cristo, with an expression of melancholy equal to his own, "listen to me. One day, in a moment of despair like yours, since it led to a similar resolution, I also wished to kill myself; one day your father, equally desperate, wished to kill himself too. If anyone had said to your father, at the moment he raised the pistol to his head—if anyone had told me, when in my prison I pushed back the food I had not tasted for three days—if anyone had said to either of us then, 'Live—the day will come when you will be happy, and will bless life!'—no matter whose voice had spoken, we should have heard him with the smile of doubt, or the anguish of incredulity,—and yet how many times has your father blessed life while embracing you—how often have I myself——"

"Ah," exclaimed Morrel, interrupting the count, "you had only lost your liberty, my father had only lost his fortune, but I have lost Valentine."

“Look at me,” said Monte Cristo, with that expression which sometimes made him so eloquent and persuasive—“look at me. There are no tears in my eyes, nor is there fever in my veins, yet I see you suffer—you, Maximilian, whom I love as my own son. Well, does not this tell you that in grief, as in life, there is always something to look forward to beyond? Now, if I entreat, if I order you to live, Morrel, it is in the conviction that one day you will thank me for having preserved your life.”

“Oh, heavens,” said the young man, “oh, heavens—what are you saying, count? Take care. But perhaps you have never loved!”

“Child!” replied the count.

“I mean, as I love. You see, I have been a soldier ever since I attained manhood. I reached the age of twenty-nine without loving, for none of the feelings I before then experienced merit the appellation of love. Well, at twenty-nine I saw Valentine; for two years I have loved her, for two years I have seen written in her heart, as in a book, all the virtues of a daughter and wife. Count, to possess Valentine would have been a happiness too infinite, too ecstatic, too complete, too divine for this world, since it has been denied me; but without Valentine the earth is desolate.”

“I have told you to hope,” said the count.

“Then have a care, I repeat, for you seek to persuade me, and if you succeed I should lose my reason, for I should hope that I could again behold Valentine.”

The count smiled.

“My friend, my father,” said Morrel with excitement, “have a care, I again repeat, for the power you wield over me alarms me. Weigh your words before you speak, for my eyes have already become brighter, and my heart beats strongly; be cautious, or you will make me believe in supernatural agencies. I must obey you, though you bade me call forth the dead or walk upon the water.”

“Hope, my friend,” repeated the count.

“Ah,” said Morrel, falling from the height of excitement to the abyss of despair—“ah, you are playing with me, like those good, or rather selfish mothers who soothe their children with honeyed words, because their screams annoy them. No, my friend, I was wrong to caution you; do not fear, I will bury my grief so deep in my heart, I will disguise it so, that you shall not even care to sympathize with me. Adieu, my friend, adieu!”

“On the contrary,” said the count, “after this time you must live with me—you must not leave me, and in a week we shall have left France behind us.”

“And you still bid me hope?”

“I tell you to hope, because I have a method of curing you.”

“Count, you render me sadder than before, if it be possible. You think the result of this blow has been to produce an ordinary grief, and you would cure it by an ordinary remedy—change of scene.” And Morrel dropped his head with disdainful incredulity.

“What can I say more?” asked Monte Cristo. “I have confidence in the remedy I propose, and only ask you to permit me to assure you of its efficacy.”

“Count, you prolong my agony.”

“Then,” said the count, “your feeble spirit will not even grant me the trial I request? Come—do you know of what the Count of Monte Cristo is capable? do you know that he holds terrestrial beings under his control? nay, that he can almost work a miracle? Well, wait for the miracle I hope to accomplish, or——”

“Or?” repeated Morrel.

“Or, take care, Morrel, lest I call you ungrateful.”

“Have pity on me, count!”

“I feel so much pity towards you, Maximilian, that—listen to me attentively—if I do not cure you in a month, to the day, to the very hour, mark my words, Morrel, I will place loaded pistols before you, and a cup of the deadliest Italian poison—a poison more sure and prompt than that which has killed Valentine.”

“Will you promise me?”

“Yes; for I am a man, and have suffered like yourself, and also contemplated suicide; indeed, often since misfortune has left me I have longed for the delights of an eternal sleep.”

“But you are sure you will promise me this?” said Morrel, intoxicated.

“I not only promise, but swear it!” said Monte Cristo extending his hand.

“In a month, then, on your honor, if I am not consoled, you will let me take my life into my own hands, and whatever may happen you will not call me ungrateful?”

“In a month, to the day, the very hour and the date is a sacred one, Maximilian. I do not know whether you remember that this is the 5th of September; it is ten years today since I saved your father’s life, who wished to die.”

Morrel seized the count’s hand and kissed it; the count allowed him to pay the homage he felt due to him.

"In a month you will find on the table, at which we shall be then sitting, good pistols and a delicious draught; but, on the other hand, you must promise me not to attempt your life before that time."

"Oh, I also swear it!"

Monte Cristo drew the young man towards him, and pressed him for some time to his heart. "And now," he said, "after today, you will come and live with me; you can occupy Haydée's apartment, and my daughter will at least be replaced by my son."

"Haydée?" said Morrel, "what has become of her?"

"She departed last night."

"To leave you?"

"To wait for me. Hold yourself ready then to join me at the Champs-Élysées, and lead me out of this house without anyone seeing my departure."

Maximilian hung his head, and obeyed with childlike reverence.

Chapter 106. Dividing the Proceeds

The apartment on the first floor of the house in the Rue Saint-Germain-des-Prés, where Albert de Morcerf had selected a home for his mother, was let to a very mysterious person. This was a man whose face the concierge himself had never seen, for in the winter his chin was buried in one of the large red handkerchiefs worn by gentlemen's coachmen on a cold night, and in the summer he made a point of always blowing his nose just as he approached the door. Contrary to custom, this gentleman had not been watched, for as the report ran that he was a person of high rank, and one who would allow no impertinent interference, his *incognito* was strictly respected.

His visits were tolerably regular, though occasionally he appeared a little before or after his time, but generally, both in summer and winter, he took possession of his apartment about four o'clock, though he never spent the night there. At half-past three in the winter the fire was lighted by the discreet servant, who had the superintendence of the little apartment, and in the summer ices were placed on the table at the same hour. At four o'clock, as we have already stated, the mysterious personage arrived.

Twenty minutes afterwards a carriage stopped at the house, a lady alighted in a black or dark blue dress, and always thickly veiled; she passed like a shadow through the lodge, and ran upstairs without a sound escaping under the touch of her light foot. No one ever asked her where she was going. Her face, therefore, like that of the gentleman, was perfectly unknown to the two concierges, who were perhaps unequalled throughout the capital for discretion. We need not say she stopped at the first floor. Then she tapped in a peculiar manner at a door, which after being opened to admit her was again fastened, and curiosity penetrated no farther. They used the same precautions in leaving as in entering the house. The lady always left first, and as soon as she had stepped into her carriage, it drove away, sometimes towards the right hand, sometimes to the left; then about twenty minutes afterwards the gentleman would also leave, buried in his cravat or concealed by his handkerchief.

The day after Monte Cristo had called upon Danglars, the mysterious lodger entered at ten o'clock in the morning instead of four in the afternoon. Almost directly afterwards, without the usual interval of time, a cab arrived, and the

veiled lady ran hastily upstairs. The door opened, but before it could be closed, the lady exclaimed:

“Oh, Lucien—oh, my friend!”

The concierge therefore heard for the first time that the lodger’s name was Lucien; still, as he was the very perfection of a door-keeper, he made up his mind not to tell his wife.

“Well, what is the matter, my dear?” asked the gentleman whose name the lady’s agitation revealed; “tell me what is the matter.”

“Oh, Lucien, can I confide in you?”

“Of course, you know you can do so. But what can be the matter? Your note of this morning has completely bewildered me. This precipitation—this unusual appointment. Come, ease me of my anxiety, or else frighten me at once.”

“Lucien, a great event has happened!” said the lady, glancing inquiringly at Lucien,—“M. Danglars left last night!”

“Left?—M. Danglars left? Where has he gone?”

“I do not know.”

“What do you mean? Has he gone intending not to return?”

“Undoubtedly;—at ten o’clock at night his horses took him to the barrier of Charenton; there a post-chaise was waiting for him—he entered it with his valet de chambre, saying that he was going to Fontainebleau.”

“Then what did you mean——”

“Stay—he left a letter for me.”

“A letter?”

“Yes; read it.”

And the baroness took from her pocket a letter which she gave to Debray. Debray paused a moment before reading, as if trying to guess its contents, or perhaps while making up his mind how to act, whatever it might contain. No doubt his ideas were arranged in a few minutes, for he began reading the letter which caused so much uneasiness in the heart of the baroness, and which ran as follows:

“‘Madame and most faithful wife.’”

Debray mechanically stopped and looked at the baroness, whose face became covered with blushes.

“Read,” she said.

Debray continued:

“When you receive this, you will no longer have a husband. Oh, you need not be alarmed, you will only have lost him as you have lost your daughter; I mean that I shall be travelling on one of the thirty or forty roads leading out of France. I owe you some explanations for my conduct, and as you are a woman that can perfectly understand me, I will give them. Listen, then. I received this morning five millions which I paid away; almost directly afterwards another demand for the same sum was presented to me; I put this creditor off till tomorrow and I intend leaving today, to escape that tomorrow, which would be rather too unpleasant for me to endure. You understand this, do you not, my most precious wife? I say you understand this, because you are as conversant with my affairs as I am; indeed, I think you understand them better, since I am ignorant of what has become of a considerable portion of my fortune, once very tolerable, while I am sure, madame, that you know perfectly well. For women have infallible instincts; they can even explain the marvellous by an algebraic calculation they have invented; but I, who only understand my own figures, know nothing more than that one day these figures deceived me. Have you admired the rapidity of my fall? Have you been slightly dazzled at the sudden fusion of my ingots? I confess I have seen nothing but the fire; let us hope you have found some gold among the ashes. With this consoling idea, I leave you, madame, and most prudent wife, without any conscientious reproach for abandoning you; you have friends left, and the ashes I have already mentioned, and above all the liberty I hasten to restore to you. And here, madame, I must add another word of explanation. So long as I hoped you were working for the good of our house and for the fortune of our daughter, I philosophically closed my eyes; but as you have transformed that house into a vast ruin I will not be the foundation of another man’s fortune. You were rich when I married you, but little respected. Excuse me for speaking so very candidly, but as this is intended only for ourselves, I do not see why I should weigh my words. I have augmented our fortune, and it has continued to increase during the last fifteen years, till extraordinary and unexpected catastrophes have suddenly overturned it,—without any fault of mine, I can honestly declare. You, madame, have only sought to increase your own, and I am convinced that you have succeeded. I leave you, therefore, as I took you,—rich, but little respected. Adieu! I also intend from this time to work on my own account. Accept my acknowledgments for the example you have set me, and which I intend following.

“Your very devoted husband,

“Baron Danglars.”

The baroness had watched Debray while he read this long and painful letter,

and saw him, notwithstanding his self-control, change color once or twice. When he had ended the perusal, he folded the letter and resumed his pensive attitude.

“Well?” asked Madame Danglars, with an anxiety easy to be understood.

“Well, madame?” unhesitatingly repeated Debray.

“With what ideas does that letter inspire you?”

“Oh, it is simple enough, madame; it inspires me with the idea that M. Danglars has left suspiciously.”

“Certainly; but is this all you have to say to me?”

“I do not understand you,” said Debray with freezing coldness.

“He is gone! Gone, never to return!”

“Oh, madame, do not think that!”

“I tell you he will never return. I know his character; he is inflexible in any resolutions formed for his own interests. If he could have made any use of me, he would have taken me with him; he leaves me in Paris, as our separation will conduce to his benefit;—therefore he has gone, and I am free forever,” added Madame Danglars, in the same supplicating tone.

Debray, instead of answering, allowed her to remain in an attitude of nervous inquiry.

“Well?” she said at length, “do you not answer me?”

“I have but one question to ask you,—what do you intend to do?”

“I was going to ask you,” replied the baroness with a beating heart.

“Ah, then, you wish to ask advice of me?”

“Yes; I do wish to ask your advice,” said Madame Danglars with anxious expectation.

“Then if you wish to take my advice,” said the young man coldly, “I would recommend you to travel.”

“To travel!” she murmured.

“Certainly; as M. Danglars says, you are rich, and perfectly free. In my opinion, a withdrawal from Paris is absolutely necessary after the double catastrophe of Mademoiselle Danglars’ broken contract and M. Danglars’ disappearance. The world will think you abandoned and poor, for the wife of a bankrupt would never be forgiven, were she to keep up an appearance of opulence. You have only to remain in Paris for about a fortnight, telling the world you are abandoned, and relating the details of this desertion to your best friends, who will soon spread the report. Then you can quit your house, leaving

your jewels and giving up your jointure, and everyone's mouth will be filled with praises of your disinterestedness. They will know you are deserted, and think you also poor, for I alone know your real financial position, and am quite ready to give up my accounts as an honest partner."

The dread with which the pale and motionless baroness listened to this, was equalled by the calm indifference with which Debray had spoken.

"Deserted?" she repeated; "ah, yes, I am, indeed, deserted! You are right, sir, and no one can doubt my position."

These were the only words that this proud and violently enamoured woman could utter in response to Debray.

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"But then you are rich,—very rich, indeed," continued Debray, taking out some papers from his pocket-book, which he spread upon the table. Madame Danglars did not see them; she was engaged in stilling the beatings of her heart, and restraining the tears which were ready to gush forth. At length a sense of dignity prevailed, and if she did not entirely master her agitation, she at least succeeded in preventing the fall of a single tear.

"Madame," said Debray, "it is nearly six months since we have been associated. You furnished a principal of 100,000 francs. Our partnership began in the month of April. In May we commenced operations, and in the course of the month gained 450,000 francs. In June the profit amounted to 900,000. In July we added 1,700,000 francs,—it was, you know, the month of the Spanish bonds. In August we lost 300,000 francs at the beginning of the month, but on the 13th we made up for it, and we now find that our accounts, reckoning from the first day of partnership up to yesterday, when I closed them, showed a capital of 2,400,000 francs, that is, 1,200,000 for each of us. Now, madame," said Debray, delivering up his accounts in the methodical manner of a stockbroker, "there are still 80,000 francs, the interest of this money, in my hands."

"But," said the baroness, "I thought you never put the money out to interest."

"Excuse me, madame," said Debray coldly, "I had your permission to do so, and I have made use of it. There are, then, 40,000 francs for your share, besides the 100,000 you furnished me to begin with, making in all 1,340,000 francs for your portion. Now, madame, I took the precaution of drawing out your money the day before yesterday; it is not long ago, you see, and I was in continual expectation of being called on to deliver up my accounts. There is your money,—half in bank-notes, the other half in checks payable to bearer. I say *there*, for as I did not consider my house safe enough, or lawyers sufficiently discreet, and

as landed property carries evidence with it, and moreover since you have no right to possess anything independent of your husband, I have kept this sum, now your whole fortune, in a chest concealed under that closet, and for greater security I myself concealed it there.

“Now, madame,” continued Debray, first opening the closet, then the chest; —“now, madame, here are 800 notes of 1,000 francs each, resembling, as you see, a large book bound in iron; to this I add a certificate in the funds of 25,000 francs; then, for the odd cash, making I think about 110,000 francs, here is a check upon my banker, who, not being M. Danglars, will pay you the amount, you may rest assured.”

Madame Danglars mechanically took the check, the bond, and the heap of bank-notes. This enormous fortune made no great appearance on the table. Madame Danglars, with tearless eyes, but with her breast heaving with concealed emotion, placed the bank-notes in her bag, put the certificate and check into her pocket-book, and then, standing pale and mute, awaited one kind word of consolation.

But she waited in vain.

“Now, madame,” said Debray, “you have a splendid fortune, an income of about 60,000 livres a year, which is enormous for a woman who cannot keep an establishment here for a year, at least. You will be able to indulge all your fancies; besides, should you find your income insufficient, you can, for the sake of the past, madame, make use of mine; and I am ready to offer you all I possess, on loan.”

“Thank you, sir—thank you,” replied the baroness; “you forget that what you have just paid me is much more than a poor woman requires, who intends for some time, at least, to retire from the world.”

Debray was, for a moment, surprised, but immediately recovering himself, he bowed with an air which seemed to say, “As you please, madame.”

Madame Danglars had until then, perhaps, hoped for something; but when she saw the careless bow of Debray, and the glance by which it was accompanied, together with his significant silence, she raised her head, and without passion or violence or even hesitation, ran downstairs, disdaining to address a last farewell to one who could thus part from her.

“Bah,” said Debray, when she had left, “these are fine projects! She will remain at home, read novels, and speculate at cards, since she can no longer do so on the Bourse.”

Then taking up his account book, he cancelled with the greatest care all the

entries of the amounts he had just paid away.

"I have 1,060,000 francs remaining," he said. "What a pity Mademoiselle de Villefort is dead! She suited me in every respect, and I would have married her."

And he calmly waited until the twenty minutes had elapsed after Madame Danglars' departure before he left the house. During this time he occupied himself in making figures, with his watch by his side.

Asmodeus—that diabolical personage, who would have been created by every fertile imagination if Le Sage had not acquired the priority in his great masterpiece—would have enjoyed a singular spectacle, if he had lifted up the roof of the little house in the Rue Saint-Germain-des-Prés, while Debray was casting up his figures.

Above the room in which Debray had been dividing two millions and a half with Madame Danglars was another, inhabited by persons who have played too prominent a part in the incidents we have related for their appearance not to create some interest.

Mercédès and Albert were in that room.

Mercédès was much changed within the last few days; not that even in her days of fortune she had ever dressed with the magnificent display which makes us no longer able to recognize a woman when she appears in a plain and simple attire; nor indeed, had she fallen into that state of depression where it is impossible to conceal the garb of misery; no, the change in Mercédès was that her eye no longer sparkled, her lips no longer smiled, and there was now a hesitation in uttering the words which formerly sprang so fluently from her ready wit.

It was not poverty which had broken her spirit; it was not a want of courage which rendered her poverty burdensome. Mercédès, although deposed from the exalted position she had occupied, lost in the sphere she had now chosen, like a person passing from a room splendidly lighted into utter darkness, appeared like a queen, fallen from her palace to a hovel, and who, reduced to strict necessity, could neither become reconciled to the earthen vessels she was herself forced to place upon the table, nor to the humble pallet which had become her bed.

The beautiful Catalane and noble countess had lost both her proud glance and charming smile, because she saw nothing but misery around her; the walls were hung with one of the gray papers which economical landlords choose as not likely to show the dirt; the floor was uncarpeted; the furniture attracted the attention to the poor attempt at luxury; indeed, everything offended eyes accustomed to refinement and elegance.

Madame de Morcerf had lived there since leaving her house; the continual silence of the spot oppressed her; still, seeing that Albert continually watched her countenance to judge the state of her feelings, she constrained herself to assume a monotonous smile of the lips alone, which, contrasted with the sweet and beaming expression that usually shone from her eyes, seemed like “moonlight on a statue,”—yielding light without warmth.

Albert, too, was ill at ease; the remains of luxury prevented him from sinking into his actual position. If he wished to go out without gloves, his hands appeared too white; if he wished to walk through the town, his boots seemed too highly polished. Yet these two noble and intelligent creatures, united by the indissoluble ties of maternal and filial love, had succeeded in tacitly understanding one another, and economizing their stores, and Albert had been able to tell his mother without extorting a change of countenance:

“Mother, we have no more money.”

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Mercédès had never known misery; she had often, in her youth, spoken of poverty, but between want and necessity, those synonymous words, there is a wide difference.

Amongst the Catalans, Mercédès wished for a thousand things, but still she never really wanted any. So long as the nets were good, they caught fish; and so long as they sold their fish, they were able to buy twine for new nets. And then, shut out from friendship, having but one affection, which could not be mixed up with her ordinary pursuits, she thought of herself—of no one but herself. Upon the little she earned she lived as well as she could; now there were two to be supported, and nothing to live upon.

Winter approached. Mercédès had no fire in that cold and naked room—she, who was accustomed to stoves which heated the house from the hall to the boudoir; she had not even one little flower—she whose apartment had been a conservatory of costly exotics. But she had her son. Hitherto the excitement of fulfilling a duty had sustained them. Excitement, like enthusiasm, sometimes renders us unconscious to the things of earth. But the excitement had calmed down, and they felt themselves obliged to descend from dreams to reality; after having exhausted the ideal, they found they must talk of the actual.

“Mother,” exclaimed Albert, just as Madame Danglars was descending the stairs, “let us reckon our riches, if you please; I want capital to build my plans upon.”

“Capital—nothing!” replied Mercédès with a mournful smile.

"No, mother,—capital 3,000 francs. And I have an idea of our leading a delightful life upon this 3,000 francs."

"Child!" sighed Mercédès.

"Alas, dear mother," said the young man, "I have unhappily spent too much of your money not to know the value of it. These 3,000 francs are enormous, and I intend building upon this foundation a miraculous certainty for the future."

"You say this, my dear boy; but do you think we ought to accept these 3,000 francs?" said Mercédès, coloring.

"I think so," answered Albert in a firm tone. "We will accept them the more readily, since we have them not here; you know they are buried in the garden of the little house in the Allées de Meilhan, at Marseilles. With 200 francs we can reach Marseilles."

"With 200 francs?—are you sure, Albert?"

"Oh, as for that, I have made inquiries respecting the diligences and steamboats, and my calculations are made. You will take your place in the *coupé* to Châlons. You see, mother, I treat you handsomely for thirty-five francs."

Albert then took a pen, and wrote:

	Frs.
Coupé, thirty-five francs.....	35.
From Châlons to Lyons you will go on by the steamboat..	6.
From Lyons to Avignon (still by steamboat).....	16.
From Avignon to Marseilles, seven francs.....	7.
Expenses on the road, about fifty francs.....	50.
Total.....	114 frs.

"Let us put down 120," added Albert, smiling. "You see I am generous, am I not, mother?"

"But you, my poor child?"

"I? do you not see that I reserve eighty francs for myself? A young man does not require luxuries; besides, I know what travelling is."

"With a post-chaise and valet de chambre?"

"Any way, mother."

"Well, be it so. But these 200 francs?"

"Here they are, and 200 more besides. See, I have sold my watch for 100 francs, and the guard and seals for 300. How fortunate that the ornaments were worth more than the watch. Still the same story of superfluities! Now I think we are rich, since instead of the 114 francs we require for the journey we find ourselves in possession of 250."

“But we owe something in this house?”

“Thirty francs; but I pay that out of my 150 francs,—that is understood,—and as I require only eighty francs for my journey, you see I am overwhelmed with luxury. But that is not all. What do you say to this, mother?”

And Albert took out of a little pocket-book with golden clasps, a remnant of his old fancies, or perhaps a tender souvenir from one of the mysterious and veiled ladies who used to knock at his little door,—Albert took out of this pocket-book a note of 1,000 francs.

“What is this?” asked Mercédès.

“A thousand francs.”

“But whence have you obtained them?”

“Listen to me, mother, and do not yield too much to agitation.” And Albert, rising, kissed his mother on both cheeks, then stood looking at her. “You cannot imagine, mother, how beautiful I think you!” said the young man, impressed with a profound feeling of filial love. “You are, indeed, the most beautiful and most noble woman I ever saw!”

“Dear child!” said Mercédès, endeavoring in vain to restrain a tear which glistened in the corner of her eye. “Indeed, you only wanted misfortune to change my love for you to admiration. I am not unhappy while I possess my son!”

“Ah, just so,” said Albert; “here begins the trial. Do you know the decision we have come to, mother?”

“Have we come to any?”

“Yes; it is decided that you are to live at Marseilles, and that I am to leave for Africa, where I will earn for myself the right to use the name I now bear, instead of the one I have thrown aside.” Mercédès sighed. “Well, mother, I yesterday engaged myself as substitute in the Spahis,”²⁵ added the young man, lowering his eyes with a certain feeling of shame, for even he was unconscious of the sublimity of his self-abasement. “I thought my body was my own, and that I might sell it. I yesterday took the place of another. I sold myself for more than I thought I was worth,” he added, attempting to smile; “I fetched 2,000 francs.”

“Then these 1,000 francs——” said Mercédès, shuddering.

“Are the half of the sum, mother; the other will be paid in a year.”

Mercédès raised her eyes to heaven with an expression it would be impossible to describe, and tears, which had hitherto been restrained, now yielded to her emotion, and ran down her cheeks.

“The price of his blood!” she murmured.

“Yes, if I am killed,” said Albert, laughing. “But I assure you, mother, I have a strong intention of defending my person, and I never felt half so strong an inclination to live as I do now.”

“Merciful Heavens!”

“Besides, mother, why should you make up your mind that I am to be killed? Has Lamoricière, that Ney of the South, been killed? Has Changarnier been killed? Has Bedeau been killed? Has Morrel, whom we know, been killed? Think of your joy, mother, when you see me return with an embroidered uniform! I declare, I expect to look magnificent in it, and chose that regiment only from vanity.”

Mercédès sighed while endeavoring to smile; the devoted mother felt that she ought not to allow the whole weight of the sacrifice to fall upon her son.

“Well, now you understand, mother!” continued Albert; “here are more than 4,000 francs settled on you; upon these you can live at least two years.”

“Do you think so?” said Mercédès.

These words were uttered in so mournful a tone that their real meaning did not escape Albert; he felt his heart beat, and taking his mother’s hand within his own he said, tenderly:

“Yes, you will live!”

“I shall live!—then you will not leave me, Albert?”

“Mother, I must go,” said Albert in a firm, calm voice; “you love me too well to wish me to remain useless and idle with you; besides, I have signed.”

50145m

“You will obey your own wish and the will of Heaven!”

“Not my own wish, mother, but reason—necessity. Are we not two despairing creatures? What is life to you?—Nothing. What is life to me?—Very little without you, mother; for believe me, but for you I should have ceased to live on the day I doubted my father and renounced his name. Well, I will live, if you promise me still to hope; and if you grant me the care of your future prospects, you will redouble my strength. Then I will go to the governor of Algeria; he has a royal heart, and is essentially a soldier; I will tell him my gloomy story. I will beg him to turn his eyes now and then towards me, and if he keep his word and interest himself for me, in six months I shall be an officer, or dead. If I am an officer, your fortune is certain, for I shall have money enough for both, and, moreover, a name we shall both be proud of, since it will be our own. If I am

killed—well then mother, you can also die, and there will be an end of our misfortunes.”

“It is well,” replied Mercédès, with her eloquent glance; “you are right, my love; let us prove to those who are watching our actions that we are worthy of compassion.”

“But let us not yield to gloomy apprehensions,” said the young man; “I assure you we are, or rather we shall be, very happy. You are a woman at once full of spirit and resignation; I have become simple in my tastes, and am without passion, I hope. Once in service, I shall be rich—once in M. Dantès’ house, you will be at rest. Let us strive, I beseech you,—let us strive to be cheerful.”

“Yes, let us strive, for you ought to live, and to be happy, Albert.”

“And so our division is made, mother,” said the young man, affecting ease of mind. “We can now part; come, I shall engage your passage.”

“And you, my dear boy?”

“I shall stay here for a few days longer; we must accustom ourselves to parting. I want recommendations and some information relative to Africa. I will join you again at Marseilles.”

“Well, be it so—let us part,” said Mercédès, folding around her shoulders the only shawl she had taken away, and which accidentally happened to be a valuable black cashmere. Albert gathered up his papers hastily, rang the bell to pay the thirty francs he owed to the landlord, and offering his arm to his mother, they descended the stairs.

Someone was walking down before them, and this person, hearing the rustling of a silk dress, turned around. “Debray!” muttered Albert.

“You, Morcerf?” replied the secretary, resting on the stairs. Curiosity had vanquished the desire of preserving his *incognito*, and he was recognized. It was, indeed, strange in this unknown spot to find the young man whose misfortunes had made so much noise in Paris.

“Morcerf!” repeated Debray. Then noticing in the dim light the still youthful and veiled figure of Madame de Morcerf:

“Pardon me,” he added with a smile, “I leave you, Albert.” Albert understood his thoughts.

“Mother,” he said, turning towards Mercédès, “this is M. Debray, secretary of the Minister for the Interior, once a friend of mine.”

“How once?” stammered Debray; “what do you mean?”

“I say so, M. Debray, because I have no friends now, and I ought not to have

any. I thank you for having recognized me, sir.” Debray stepped forward, and cordially pressed the hand of his interlocutor.

“Believe me, dear Albert,” he said, with all the emotion he was capable of feeling,—“believe me, I feel deeply for your misfortunes, and if in any way I can serve you, I am yours.”

“Thank you, sir,” said Albert, smiling. “In the midst of our misfortunes, we are still rich enough not to require assistance from anyone. We are leaving Paris, and when our journey is paid, we shall have 5,000 francs left.”

The blood mounted to the temples of Debray, who held a million in his pocket-book, and unimaginative as he was he could not help reflecting that the same house had contained two women, one of whom, justly dishonored, had left it poor with 1,500,000 francs under her cloak, while the other, unjustly stricken, but sublime in her misfortune, was yet rich with a few deniers. This parallel disturbed his usual politeness, the philosophy he witnessed appalled him, he muttered a few words of general civility and ran downstairs.

That day the minister’s clerks and the subordinates had a great deal to put up with from his ill-humor. But that same night, he found himself the possessor of a fine house, situated on the Boulevard de la Madeleine, and an income of 50,000 livres.

The next day, just as Debray was signing the deed, that is about five o’clock in the afternoon, Madame de Morcerf, after having affectionately embraced her son, entered the *coupé* of the diligence, which closed upon her.

A man was hidden in Lafitte’s banking-house, behind one of the little arched windows which are placed above each desk; he saw Mercédès enter the diligence, and he also saw Albert withdraw. Then he passed his hand across his forehead, which was clouded with doubt.

“Alas,” he exclaimed, “how can I restore the happiness I have taken away from these poor innocent creatures? God help me!”

Chapter 107. The Lions' Den

One division of La Force, in which the most dangerous and desperate prisoners are confined, is called the court of Saint-Bernard. The prisoners, in their expressive language, have named it the "Lions' Den," probably because the captives possess teeth which frequently gnaw the bars, and sometimes the keepers also. It is a prison within a prison; the walls are double the thickness of the rest. The gratings are every day carefully examined by jailers, whose herculean proportions and cold pitiless expression prove them to have been chosen to reign over their subjects for their superior activity and intelligence.

The courtyard of this quarter is enclosed by enormous walls, over which the sun glances obliquely, when it deigns to penetrate into this gulf of moral and physical deformity. On this paved yard are to be seen,—pacing to and fro from morning till night, pale, careworn, and haggard, like so many shadows,—the men whom justice holds beneath the steel she is sharpening. There, crouched against the side of the wall which attracts and retains the most heat, they may be seen sometimes talking to one another, but more frequently alone, watching the door, which sometimes opens to call forth one from the gloomy assemblage, or to throw in another outcast from society.

The court of Saint-Bernard has its own particular apartment for the reception of guests; it is a long rectangle, divided by two upright gratings placed at a distance of three feet from one another to prevent a visitor from shaking hands with or passing anything to the prisoners. It is a wretched, damp, nay, even horrible spot, more especially when we consider the agonizing conferences which have taken place between those iron bars. And yet, frightful though this spot may be, it is looked upon as a kind of paradise by the men whose days are numbered; it is so rare for them to leave the Lions' Den for any other place than the barrier Saint-Jacques, the galleys! or solitary confinement.

In the court which we have attempted to describe, and from which a damp vapor was rising, a young man with his hands in his pockets, who had excited much curiosity among the inhabitants of the "Den," might be seen walking. The cut of his clothes would have made him pass for an elegant man, if those clothes had not been torn to shreds; still they did not show signs of wear, and the fine cloth, beneath the careful hands of the prisoner, soon recovered its gloss in the

parts which were still perfect, for the wearer tried his best to make it assume the appearance of a new coat. He bestowed the same attention upon the cambric front of a shirt, which had considerably changed in color since his entrance into the prison, and he polished his varnished boots with the corner of a handkerchief embroidered with initials surmounted by a coronet.

Some of the inmates of the “Lions’ Den” were watching the operations of the prisoner’s toilet with considerable interest.

“See, the prince is pluming himself,” said one of the thieves.

“He’s a fine looking fellow,” said another; “if he had only a comb and hair-grease, he’d take the shine off the gentlemen in white kids.”

“His coat looks almost new, and his boots shine like a nigger’s face. It’s pleasant to have such well-dressed comrades; but didn’t those gendarmes behave shameful?—must ‘a been jealous, to tear such clothes!”

“He looks like a big-bug,” said another; “dresses in fine style. And, then, to be here so young! Oh, what larks!”

Meanwhile the object of this hideous admiration approached the wicket, against which one of the keepers was leaning.

“Come, sir,” he said, “lend me twenty francs; you will soon be paid; you run no risks with me. Remember, I have relations who possess more millions than you have deniers. Come, I beseech you, lend me twenty francs, so that I may buy a dressing-gown; it is intolerable always to be in a coat and boots! And what a coat, sir, for a prince of the Cavalcanti!”

The keeper turned his back, and shrugged his shoulders; he did not even laugh at what would have caused anyone else to do so; he had heard so many utter the same things,—indeed, he heard nothing else.

“Come,” said Andrea, “you are a man void of compassion; I’ll have you turned out.”

This made the keeper turn around, and he burst into a loud laugh. The prisoners then approached and formed a circle.

“I tell you that with that wretched sum,” continued Andrea, “I could obtain a coat, and a room in which to receive the illustrious visitor I am daily expecting.”

“Of course—of course,” said the prisoners;—“anyone can see he’s a gentleman!”

“Well, then, lend him the twenty francs,” said the keeper, leaning on the other shoulder; “surely you will not refuse a comrade!”

"I am no comrade of these people," said the young man, proudly, "you have no right to insult me thus."

The thieves looked at one another with low murmurs, and a storm gathered over the head of the aristocratic prisoner, raised less by his own words than by the manner of the keeper. The latter, sure of quelling the tempest when the waves became too violent, allowed them to rise to a certain pitch that he might be revenged on the importunate Andrea, and besides it would afford him some recreation during the long day.

The thieves had already approached Andrea, some screaming, "*La savate—La savate!*"²⁶ a cruel operation, which consists in cuffing a comrade who may have fallen into disgrace, not with an old shoe, but with an iron-heeled one. Others proposed the *anguille*, another kind of recreation, in which a handkerchief is filled with sand, pebbles, and two-sous pieces, when they have them, which the wretches beat like a flail over the head and shoulders of the unhappy sufferer.

"Let us horsewhip the fine gentleman!" said others.

But Andrea, turning towards them, winked his eyes, rolled his tongue around his cheeks, and smacked his lips in a manner equivalent to a hundred words among the bandits when forced to be silent. It was a Masonic sign Caderousse had taught him. He was immediately recognized as one of them; the handkerchief was thrown down, and the iron-heeled shoe replaced on the foot of the wretch to whom it belonged.

Some voices were heard to say that the gentleman was right; that he intended to be civil, in his way, and that they would set the example of liberty of conscience,—and the mob retired. The keeper was so stupefied at this scene that he took Andrea by the hands and began examining his person, attributing the sudden submission of the inmates of the Lions' Den to something more substantial than mere fascination.

Andrea made no resistance, although he protested against it. Suddenly a voice was heard at the wicket.

"Benedetto!" exclaimed an inspector. The keeper relaxed his hold.

"I am called," said Andrea.

"To the visitors' room!" said the same voice.

"You see someone pays me a visit. Ah, my dear sir, you will see whether a Cavalcanti is to be treated like a common person!"

And Andrea, gliding through the court like a black shadow, rushed out through the wicket, leaving his comrades, and even the keeper, lost in wonder.

Certainly a call to the visitors' room had scarcely astonished Andrea less than themselves, for the wily youth, instead of making use of his privilege of waiting to be claimed on his entry into La Force, had maintained a rigid silence.

50153m

"Everything," he said, "proves me to be under the protection of some powerful person,—this sudden fortune, the facility with which I have overcome all obstacles, an unexpected family and an illustrious name awarded to me, gold showered down upon me, and the most splendid alliances about to be entered into. An unhappy lapse of fortune and the absence of my protector have cast me down, certainly, but not forever. The hand which has retreated for a while will be again stretched forth to save me at the very moment when I shall think myself sinking into the abyss. Why should I risk an imprudent step? It might alienate my protector. He has two means of extricating me from this dilemma,—the one by a mysterious escape, managed through bribery; the other by buying off my judges with gold. I will say and do nothing until I am convinced that he has quite abandoned me, and then——"

Andrea had formed a plan which was tolerably clever. The unfortunate youth was intrepid in the attack, and rude in the defence. He had borne with the public prison, and with privations of all sorts; still, by degrees nature, or rather custom, had prevailed, and he suffered from being naked, dirty, and hungry. It was at this moment of discomfort that the inspector's voice called him to the visiting-room. Andrea felt his heart leap with joy. It was too soon for a visit from the examining magistrate, and too late for one from the director of the prison, or the doctor; it must, then, be the visitor he hoped for. Behind the grating of the room into which Andrea had been led, he saw, while his eyes dilated with surprise, the dark and intelligent face of M. Bertuccio, who was also gazing with sad astonishment upon the iron bars, the bolted doors, and the shadow which moved behind the other grating.

"Ah," said Andrea, deeply affected.

"Good morning, Benedetto," said Bertuccio, with his deep, hollow voice.

"You—you?" said the young man, looking fearfully around him.

"Do you not recognize me, unhappy child?"

"Silence,—be silent!" said Andrea, who knew the delicate sense of hearing possessed by the walls; "for Heaven's sake, do not speak so loud!"

"You wish to speak with me alone, do you not?" said Bertuccio.

"Oh, yes."

“That is well.”

And Bertuccio, feeling in his pocket, signed to a keeper whom he saw through the window of the wicket.

“Read?” he said.

“What is that?” asked Andrea.

“An order to conduct you to a room, and to leave you there to talk to me.”

“Oh,” cried Andrea, leaping with joy. Then he mentally added,—“Still my unknown protector! I am not forgotten. They wish for secrecy, since we are to converse in a private room. I understand, Bertuccio has been sent by my protector.”

The keeper spoke for a moment with an official, then opened the iron gates and conducted Andrea to a room on the first floor. The room was whitewashed, as is the custom in prisons, but it looked quite brilliant to a prisoner, though a stove, a bed, a chair, and a table formed the whole of its sumptuous furniture. Bertuccio sat down upon the chair, Andrea threw himself upon the bed; the keeper retired.

“Now,” said the steward, “what have you to tell me?”

“And you?” said Andrea.

“You speak first.”

“Oh, no. You must have much to tell me, since you have come to seek me.”

50155m

“Well, be it so. You have continued your course of villainy; you have robbed—you have assassinated.”

“Well, I should say! If you had me taken to a private room only to tell me this, you might have saved yourself the trouble. I know all these things. But there are some with which, on the contrary, I am not acquainted. Let us talk of those, if you please. Who sent you?”

“Come, come, you are going on quickly, M. Benedetto!”

“Yes, and to the point. Let us dispense with useless words. Who sends you?”

“No one.”

“How did you know I was in prison?”

“I recognized you, some time since, as the insolent dandy who so gracefully mounted his horse in the Champs-Élysées.”

“Oh, the Champs-Élysées? Ah, yes; we burn, as they say at the game of

pincette. The Champs-Élysées? Come, let us talk a little about my father.”

“Who, then, am I?”

“You, sir?—you are my adopted father. But it was not you, I presume, who placed at my disposal 100,000 francs, which I spent in four or five months; it was not you who manufactured an Italian gentleman for my father; it was not you who introduced me into the world, and had me invited to a certain dinner at Auteuil, which I fancy I am eating at this moment, in company with the most distinguished people in Paris—amongst the rest with a certain procureur, whose acquaintance I did very wrong not to cultivate, for he would have been very useful to me just now;—it was not you, in fact, who bailed me for one or two millions, when the fatal discovery of my little secret took place. Come, speak, my worthy Corsican, speak!”

“What do you wish me to say?”

“I will help you. You were speaking of the Champs-Élysées just now, worthy foster-father.”

“Well?”

“Well, in the Champs-Élysées there resides a very rich gentleman.”

“At whose house you robbed and murdered, did you not?”

“I believe I did.”

“The Count of Monte Cristo?”

“‘Tis you who have named him, as M. Racine says. Well, am I to rush into his arms, and strain him to my heart, crying, ‘My father, my father!’ like Monsieur Pixérécourt.”²⁷

“Do not let us jest,” gravely replied Bertuccio, “and dare not to utter that name again as you have pronounced it.”

“Bah,” said Andrea, a little overcome, by the solemnity of Bertuccio’s manner, “why not?”

“Because the person who bears it is too highly favored by Heaven to be the father of such a wretch as you.”

“Oh, these are fine words.”

“And there will be fine doings, if you do not take care.”

“Menaces—I do not fear them. I will say——”

“Do you think you are engaged with a pygmy like yourself?” said Bertuccio, in so calm a tone, and with so steadfast a look, that Andrea was moved to the very soul. “Do you think you have to do with galley-slaves, or novices in the

world? Benedetto, you are fallen into terrible hands; they are ready to open for you—make use of them. Do not play with the thunderbolt they have laid aside for a moment, but which they can take up again instantly, if you attempt to intercept their movements.”

50157m

“My father—I will know who my father is,” said the obstinate youth; “I will perish if I must, but I *will* know it. What does scandal signify to me? What possessions, what reputation, what ‘pull,’ as Beauchamp says,—have I? You great people always lose something by scandal, notwithstanding your millions. Come, who is my father?”

“I came to tell you.”

“Ah,” cried Benedetto, his eyes sparkling with joy. Just then the door opened, and the jailer, addressing himself to Bertuccio, said:

“Excuse me, sir, but the examining magistrate is waiting for the prisoner.”

“And so closes our interview,” said Andrea to the worthy steward; “I wish the troublesome fellow were at the devil!”

“I will return tomorrow,” said Bertuccio.

“Good! Gendarmes, I am at your service. Ah, sir, do leave a few crowns for me at the gate that I may have some things I am in need of!”

“It shall be done,” replied Bertuccio.

Andrea extended his hand; Bertuccio kept his own in his pocket, and merely jingled a few pieces of money.

“That’s what I mean,” said Andrea, endeavoring to smile, quite overcome by the strange tranquillity of Bertuccio.

“Can I be deceived?” he murmured, as he stepped into the oblong and grated vehicle which they call “the salad basket.”

“Never mind, we shall see! Tomorrow, then!” he added, turning towards Bertuccio.

“Tomorrow!” replied the steward.

Chapter 108. The Judge

We remember that the Abbé Busoni remained alone with Noirtier in the chamber of death, and that the old man and the priest were the sole guardians of the young girl's body. Perhaps it was the Christian exhortations of the abbé, perhaps his kind charity, perhaps his persuasive words, which had restored the courage of Noirtier, for ever since he had conversed with the priest his violent despair had yielded to a calm resignation which surprised all who knew his excessive affection for Valentine.

M. de Villefort had not seen his father since the morning of the death. The whole establishment had been changed; another valet was engaged for himself, a new servant for Noirtier, two women had entered Madame de Villefort's service,—in fact, everywhere, to the concierge and coachmen, new faces were presented to the different masters of the house, thus widening the division which had always existed between the members of the same family. The assizes, also, were about to begin, and Villefort, shut up in his room, exerted himself with feverish anxiety in drawing up the case against the murderer of Caderousse. This affair, like all those in which the Count of Monte Cristo had interfered, caused a great sensation in Paris. The proofs were certainly not convincing, since they rested upon a few words written by an escaped galley-slave on his death-bed, and who might have been actuated by hatred or revenge in accusing his companion. But the mind of the procureur was made up; he felt assured that Benedetto was guilty, and he hoped by his skill in conducting this aggravated case to flatter his self-love, which was about the only vulnerable point left in his frozen heart.

The case was therefore prepared owing to the incessant labor of Villefort, who wished it to be the first on the list in the coming assizes. He had been obliged to seclude himself more than ever, to evade the enormous number of applications presented to him for the purpose of obtaining tickets of admission to the court on the day of trial. And then so short a time had elapsed since the death of poor Valentine, and the gloom which overshadowed the house was so recent, that no one wondered to see the father so absorbed in his professional duties, which were the only means he had of dissipating his grief.

Once only had Villefort seen his father; it was the day after that upon which Bertuccio had paid his second visit to Benedetto, when the latter was to learn his

father's name. The magistrate, harassed and fatigued, had descended to the garden of his house, and in a gloomy mood, similar to that in which Tarquin lopped off the tallest poppies, he began knocking off with his cane the long and dying branches of the rose-trees, which, placed along the avenue, seemed like the spectres of the brilliant flowers which had bloomed in the past season.

More than once he had reached that part of the garden where the famous boarded gate stood overlooking the deserted enclosure, always returning by the same path, to begin his walk again, at the same pace and with the same gesture, when he accidentally turned his eyes towards the house, whence he heard the noisy play of his son, who had returned from school to spend the Sunday and Monday with his mother.

While doing so, he observed M. Noirtier at one of the open windows, where the old man had been placed that he might enjoy the last rays of the sun which yet yielded some heat, and was now shining upon the dying flowers and red leaves of the creeper which twined around the balcony.

The eye of the old man was riveted upon a spot which Villefort could scarcely distinguish. His glance was so full of hate, of ferocity, and savage impatience, that Villefort turned out of the path he had been pursuing, to see upon what person this dark look was directed.

Then he saw beneath a thick clump of linden-trees, which were nearly divested of foliage, Madame de Villefort sitting with a book in her hand, the perusal of which she frequently interrupted to smile upon her son, or to throw back his elastic ball, which he obstinately threw from the drawing-room into the garden.

Villefort became pale; he understood the old man's meaning.

Noirtier continued to look at the same object, but suddenly his glance was transferred from the wife to the husband, and Villefort himself had to submit to the searching investigation of eyes, which, while changing their direction and even their language, had lost none of their menacing expression. Madame de Villefort, unconscious of the passions that exhausted their fire over her head, at that moment held her son's ball, and was making signs to him to reclaim it with a kiss. Edward begged for a long while, the maternal kiss probably not offering sufficient recompense for the trouble he must take to obtain it; however at length he decided, leaped out of the window into a cluster of heliotropes and daisies, and ran to his mother, his forehead streaming with perspiration. Madame de Villefort wiped his forehead, pressed her lips upon it, and sent him back with the ball in one hand and some bonbons in the other.

Villefort, drawn by an irresistible attraction, like that of the bird to the serpent, walked towards the house. As he approached it, Noirtier's gaze followed him, and his eyes appeared of such a fiery brightness that Villefort felt them pierce to the depths of his heart. In that earnest look might be read a deep reproach, as well as a terrible menace. Then Noirtier raised his eyes to heaven, as though to remind his son of a forgotten oath.

"It is well, sir," replied Villefort from below,—"it is well; have patience but one day longer; what I have said I will do."

Noirtier seemed to be calmed by these words, and turned his eyes with indifference to the other side. Villefort violently unbuttoned his greatcoat, which seemed to strangle him, and passing his livid hand across his forehead, entered his study.

The night was cold and still; the family had all retired to rest but Villefort, who alone remained up, and worked till five o'clock in the morning, reviewing the last interrogatories made the night before by the examining magistrates, compiling the depositions of the witnesses, and putting the finishing stroke to the deed of accusation, which was one of the most energetic and best conceived of any he had yet delivered.

The next day, Monday, was the first sitting of the assizes. The morning dawned dull and gloomy, and Villefort saw the dim gray light shine upon the lines he had traced in red ink. The magistrate had slept for a short time while the lamp sent forth its final struggles; its flickerings awoke him, and he found his fingers as damp and purple as though they had been dipped in blood.

He opened the window; a bright yellow streak crossed the sky, and seemed to divide in half the poplars, which stood out in black relief on the horizon. In the clover-fields beyond the chestnut-trees, a lark was mounting up to heaven, while pouring out her clear morning song. The damps of the dew bathed the head of Villefort, and refreshed his memory.

"Today," he said with an effort,—"today the man who holds the blade of justice must strike wherever there is guilt."

Involuntarily his eyes wandered towards the window of Noirtier's room, where he had seen him the preceding night. The curtain was drawn, and yet the image of his father was so vivid to his mind that he addressed the closed window as though it had been open, and as if through the opening he had beheld the menacing old man.

"Yes," he murmured,—"yes, be satisfied."

His head dropped upon his chest, and in this position he paced his study; then

he threw himself, dressed as he was, upon a sofa, less to sleep than to rest his limbs, cramped with cold and study. By degrees everyone awoke. Villefort, from his study, heard the successive noises which accompany the life of a house,—the opening and shutting of doors, the ringing of Madame de Villefort's bell, to summon the waiting-maid, mingled with the first shouts of the child, who rose full of the enjoyment of his age. Villefort also rang; his new valet brought him the papers, and with them a cup of chocolate.

"What are you bringing me?" said he.

"A cup of chocolate."

"I did not ask for it. Who has paid me this attention?"

"My mistress, sir. She said you would have to speak a great deal in the murder case, and that you should take something to keep up your strength;" and the valet placed the cup on the table nearest to the sofa, which was, like all the rest, covered with papers.

The valet then left the room. Villefort looked for an instant with a gloomy expression, then, suddenly, taking it up with a nervous motion, he swallowed its contents at one draught. It might have been thought that he hoped the beverage would be mortal, and that he sought for death to deliver him from a duty which he would rather die than fulfil. He then rose, and paced his room with a smile it would have been terrible to witness. The chocolate was inoffensive, for M. de Villefort felt no effects.

The breakfast-hour arrived, but M. de Villefort was not at table. The valet re-entered.

"Madame de Villefort wishes to remind you, sir," he said, "that eleven o'clock has just struck, and that the trial commences at twelve."

"Well," said Villefort, "what then?"

"Madame de Villefort is dressed; she is quite ready, and wishes to know if she is to accompany you, sir?"

"Where to?"

"To the Palais."

"What to do?"

"My mistress wishes much to be present at the trial."

"Ah," said Villefort, with a startling accent; "does she wish that?"

The servant drew back and said, "If you wish to go alone, sir, I will go and tell my mistress."

Villefort remained silent for a moment, and dented his pale cheeks with his nails.

"Tell your mistress," he at length answered, "that I wish to speak to her, and I beg she will wait for me in her own room."

"Yes, sir."

"Then come to dress and shave me."

"Directly, sir."

The valet re-appeared almost instantly, and, having shaved his master, assisted him to dress entirely in black. When he had finished, he said:

"My mistress said she should expect you, sir, as soon as you had finished dressing."

"I am going to her."

And Villefort, with his papers under his arm and hat in hand, directed his steps toward the apartment of his wife.

At the door he paused for a moment to wipe his damp, pale brow. He then entered the room. Madame de Villefort was sitting on an ottoman and impatiently turning over the leaves of some newspapers and pamphlets which young Edward, by way of amusing himself, was tearing to pieces before his mother could finish reading them. She was dressed to go out, her bonnet was placed beside her on a chair, and her gloves were on her hands.

"Ah, here you are, monsieur," she said in her naturally calm voice; "but how pale you are! Have you been working all night? Why did you not come down to breakfast? Well, will you take me, or shall I take Edward?"

Madame de Villefort had multiplied her questions in order to gain one answer, but to all her inquiries M. de Villefort remained mute and cold as a statue.

"Edward," said Villefort, fixing an imperious glance on the child, "go and play in the drawing-room, my dear; I wish to speak to your mamma."

Madame de Villefort shuddered at the sight of that cold countenance, that resolute tone, and the awfully strange preliminaries. Edward raised his head, looked at his mother, and then, finding that she did not confirm the order, began cutting off the heads of his leaden soldiers.

"Edward," cried M. de Villefort, so harshly that the child started up from the floor, "do you hear me?—Go!"

The child, unaccustomed to such treatment, arose, pale and trembling; it would be difficult to say whether his emotion were caused by fear or passion.

His father went up to him, took him in his arms, and kissed his forehead.

“Go,” he said: “go, my child.” Edward ran out.

M. de Villefort went to the door, which he closed behind the child, and bolted.

“Dear me!” said the young woman, endeavoring to read her husband’s inmost thoughts, while a smile passed over her countenance which froze the impassibility of Villefort; “what is the matter?”

“Madame, where do you keep the poison you generally use?” said the magistrate, without any introduction, placing himself between his wife and the door.

Madame de Villefort must have experienced something of the sensation of a bird which, looking up, sees the murderous trap closing over its head.

A hoarse, broken tone, which was neither a cry nor a sigh, escaped from her, while she became deadly pale.

“Monsieur,” she said, “I—I do not understand you.”

And, in her first paroxysm of terror, she had raised herself from the sofa, in the next, stronger very likely than the other, she fell down again on the cushions.

“I asked you,” continued Villefort, in a perfectly calm tone, “where you conceal the poison by the aid of which you have killed my father-in-law, M. de Saint-Méran, my mother-in-law, Madame de Saint-Méran, Barrois, and my daughter Valentine.”

“Ah, sir,” exclaimed Madame de Villefort, clasping her hands, “what do you say?”

“It is not for you to interrogate, but to answer.”

“Is it to the judge or to the husband?” stammered Madame de Villefort.

“To the judge—to the judge, madame!” It was terrible to behold the frightful pallor of that woman, the anguish of her look, the trembling of her whole frame.

“Ah, sir,” she muttered, “ah, sir,” and this was all.

“You do not answer, madame!” exclaimed the terrible interrogator. Then he added, with a smile yet more terrible than his anger, “It is true, then; you do not deny it!” She moved forward. “And you cannot deny it!” added Villefort, extending his hand toward her, as though to seize her in the name of justice. “You have accomplished these different crimes with impudent address, but which could only deceive those whose affections for you blinded them. Since the death of Madame de Saint-Méran, I have known that a poisoner lived in my house. M. d’Avrigny warned me of it. After the death of Barrois my suspicions

were directed towards an angel,—those suspicions which, even when there is no crime, are always alive in my heart; but after the death of Valentine, there has been no doubt in my mind, madame, and not only in mine, but in those of others; thus your crime, known by two persons, suspected by many, will soon become public, and, as I told you just now, you no longer speak to the husband, but to the judge.”

50165m

The young woman hid her face in her hands.

“Oh, sir,” she stammered, “I beseech you, do not believe appearances.”

“Are you, then, a coward?” cried Villefort, in a contemptuous voice. “But I have always observed that poisoners were cowards. Can you be a coward, you, who have had the courage to witness the death of two old men and a young girl murdered by you?”

“Sir! sir!”

“Can you be a coward?” continued Villefort, with increasing excitement, “you, who could count, one by one, the minutes of four death agonies? You, who have arranged your infernal plans, and removed the beverages with a talent and precision almost miraculous? Have you, then, who have calculated everything with such nicety, have you forgotten to calculate one thing—I mean where the revelation of your crimes will lead you to? Oh, it is impossible—you must have saved some surer, more subtle and deadly poison than any other, that you might escape the punishment that you deserve. You have done this—I hope so, at least.”

Madame de Villefort stretched out her hands, and fell on her knees.

“I understand,” he said, “you confess; but a confession made to the judges, a confession made at the last moment, extorted when the crime cannot be denied, diminishes not the punishment inflicted on the guilty!”

“The punishment?” exclaimed Madame de Villefort, “the punishment, monsieur? Twice you have pronounced that word!”

“Certainly. Did you hope to escape it because you were four times guilty? Did you think the punishment would be withheld because you are the wife of him who pronounces it?—No, madame, no; the scaffold awaits the poisoner, whoever she may be, unless, as I just said, the poisoner has taken the precaution of keeping for herself a few drops of her deadliest poison.”

Madame de Villefort uttered a wild cry, and a hideous and uncontrollable terror spread over her distorted features.

"Oh, do not fear the scaffold, madame," said the magistrate; "I will not dishonor you, since that would be dishonor to myself; no, if you have heard me distinctly, you will understand that you are not to die on the scaffold."

"No, I do not understand; what do you mean?" stammered the unhappy woman, completely overwhelmed.

"I mean that the wife of the first magistrate in the capital shall not, by her infamy, soil an unblemished name; that she shall not, with one blow, dishonor her husband and her child."

"No, no—oh, no!"

"Well, madame, it will be a laudable action on your part, and I will thank you for it!"

"You will thank me—for what?"

"For what you have just said."

"What did I say? Oh, my brain whirls; I no longer understand anything. Oh, my God, my God!"

And she rose, with her hair dishevelled, and her lips foaming.

"Have you answered the question I put to you on entering the room?—where do you keep the poison you generally use, madame?"

Madame de Villefort raised her arms to heaven, and convulsively struck one hand against the other.

"No, no," she vociferated, "no, you cannot wish that!"

50169m

"What I do not wish, madame, is that you should perish on the scaffold. Do you understand?" asked Villefort.

"Oh, mercy, mercy, monsieur!"

"What I require is, that justice be done. I am on the earth to punish, madame," he added, with a flaming glance; "any other woman, were it the queen herself, I would send to the executioner; but to you I shall be merciful. To you I will say, 'Have you not, madame, put aside some of the surest, deadliest, most speedy poison?'"

50170m

"Oh, pardon me, sir; let me live!"

"She is cowardly," said Villefort.

"Reflect that I am your wife!"

“You are a poisoner.”

“In the name of Heaven!”

“No!”

“In the name of the love you once bore me!”

“No, no!”

“In the name of our child! Ah, for the sake of our child, let me live!”

50167m

“No, no, no, I tell you; one day, if I allow you to live, you will perhaps kill him, as you have the others!”

“I?—I kill my boy?” cried the distracted mother, rushing toward Villefort; “I kill my son? Ha, ha, ha!” and a frightful, demoniac laugh finished the sentence, which was lost in a hoarse rattle.

Madame de Villefort fell at her husband’s feet. He approached her.

“Think of it, madame,” he said; “if, on my return, justice has not been satisfied, I will denounce you with my own mouth, and arrest you with my own hands!”

She listened, panting, overwhelmed, crushed; her eye alone lived, and glared horribly.

“Do you understand me?” he said. “I am going down there to pronounce the sentence of death against a murderer. If I find you alive on my return, you shall sleep tonight in the conciergerie.”

Madame de Villefort sighed; her nerves gave way, and she sunk on the carpet. The king’s attorney seemed to experience a sensation of pity; he looked upon her less severely, and, bowing to her, said slowly:

“Farewell, madame, farewell!”

That farewell struck Madame de Villefort like the executioner’s knife. She fainted. The procureur went out, after having double-locked the door.

Chapter 109. The Assizes

The Benedetto affair, as it was called at the Palais, and by people in general, had produced a tremendous sensation. Frequenting the Café de Paris, the Boulevard de Gand, and the Bois de Boulogne, during his brief career of splendor, the false Cavalcanti had formed a host of acquaintances. The papers had related his various adventures, both as the man of fashion and the galley-slave; and as everyone who had been personally acquainted with Prince Andrea Cavalcanti experienced a lively curiosity in his fate, they all determined to spare no trouble in endeavoring to witness the trial of M. Benedetto for the murder of his comrade in chains.

In the eyes of many, Benedetto appeared, if not a victim to, at least an instance of, the fallibility of the law. M. Cavalcanti, his father, had been seen in Paris, and it was expected that he would re-appear to claim the illustrious outcast. Many, also, who were not aware of the circumstances attending his withdrawal from Paris, were struck with the worthy appearance, the gentlemanly bearing, and the knowledge of the world displayed by the old patrician, who certainly played the nobleman very well, so long as he said nothing, and made no arithmetical calculations.

As for the accused himself, many remembered him as being so amiable, so handsome, and so liberal, that they chose to think him the victim of some conspiracy, since in this world large fortunes frequently excite the malevolence and jealousy of some unknown enemy.

Everyone, therefore, ran to the court; some to witness the sight, others to comment upon it. From seven o'clock in the morning a crowd was stationed at the iron gates, and an hour before the trial commenced the hall was full of the privileged. Before the entrance of the magistrates, and indeed frequently afterwards, a court of justice, on days when some especial trial is to take place, resembles a drawing-room where many persons recognize each other and converse if they can do so without losing their seats; or, if they are separated by too great a number of lawyers, communicate by signs.

It was one of the magnificent autumn days which make amends for a short summer; the clouds which M. de Villefort had perceived at sunrise had all

disappeared as if by magic, and one of the softest and most brilliant days of September shone forth in all its splendor.

Beauchamp, one of the kings of the press, and therefore claiming the right of a throne everywhere, was eying everybody through his monocle. He perceived Château-Renaud and Debray, who had just gained the good graces of a sergeant-at-arms, and who had persuaded the latter to let them stand before, instead of behind him, as they ought to have done. The worthy sergeant had recognized the minister's secretary and the millionaire, and, by way of paying extra attention to his noble neighbors, promised to keep their places while they paid a visit to Beauchamp.

"Well," said Beauchamp, "we shall see our friend!"

"Yes, indeed!" replied Debray. "That worthy prince. Deuce take those Italian princes!"

"A man, too, who could boast of Dante for a genealogist, and could reckon back to the *Divina Comedia*."

"A nobility of the rope!" said Château-Renaud phlegmatically.

"He will be condemned, will he not?" asked Debray of Beauchamp.

"My dear fellow, I think we should ask you that question; you know such news much better than we do. Did you see the president at the minister's last night?"

"Yes."

"What did he say?"

"Something which will surprise you."

"Oh, make haste and tell me, then; it is a long time since that has happened."

"Well, he told me that Benedetto, who is considered a serpent of subtlety and a giant of cunning, is really but a very commonplace, silly rascal, and altogether unworthy of the experiments that will be made on his phrenological organs after his death."

"Bah," said Beauchamp, "he played the prince very well."

"Yes, for you who detest those unhappy princes, Beauchamp, and are always delighted to find fault with them; but not for me, who discover a gentleman by instinct, and who scent out an aristocratic family like a very bloodhound of heraldry."

"Then you never believed in the principality?"

"Yes.—in the principality, but not in the prince."

“Not so bad,” said Beauchamp; “still, I assure you, he passed very well with many people; I saw him at the ministers’ houses.”

“Ah, yes,” said Château-Renaud. “The idea of thinking ministers understand anything about princes!”

“There is something in what you have just said,” said Beauchamp, laughing.

“But,” said Debray to Beauchamp, “if I spoke to the president, *you* must have been with the procureur.”

“It was an impossibility; for the last week M. de Villefort has secluded himself. It is natural enough; this strange chain of domestic afflictions, followed by the no less strange death of his daughter——”

“Strange? What do you mean, Beauchamp?”

“Oh, yes; do you pretend that all this has been unobserved at the minister’s?” said Beauchamp, placing his eye-glass in his eye, where he tried to make it remain.

“My dear sir,” said Château-Renaud, “allow me to tell you that you do not understand that manœuvre with the eye-glass half so well as Debray. Give him a lesson, Debray.”

“Stay,” said Beauchamp, “surely I am not deceived.”

“What is it?”

“It is she!”

“Whom do you mean?”

“They said she had left.”

“Mademoiselle Eugénie?” said Château-Renaud; “has she returned?”

“No, but her mother.”

“Madame Danglars? Nonsense! Impossible!” said Château-Renaud; “only ten days after the flight of her daughter, and three days from the bankruptcy of her husband?”

Debray colored slightly, and followed with his eyes the direction of Beauchamp’s glance.

“Come,” he said, “it is only a veiled lady, some foreign princess, perhaps the mother of Cavalcanti. But you were just speaking on a very interesting topic, Beauchamp.”

“I?”

“Yes; you were telling us about the extraordinary death of Valentine.”

“Ah, yes, so I was. But how is it that Madame de Villefort is not here?”

“Poor, dear woman,” said Debray, “she is no doubt occupied in distilling balm for the hospitals, or in making cosmetics for herself or friends. Do you know she spends two or three thousand crowns a year in this amusement? But I wonder she is not here. I should have been pleased to see her, for I like her very much.”

“And I hate her,” said Château-Renaud.

“Why?”

“I do not know. Why do we love? Why do we hate? I detest her, from antipathy.”

“Or, rather, by instinct.”

“Perhaps so. But to return to what you were saying, Beauchamp.”

“Well, do you know why they die so multitudinously at M. de Villefort’s?”

“‘Multitudinously’ is good,” said Château-Renaud.

“My good fellow, you’ll find the word in Saint-Simon.”

“But the thing itself is at M. de Villefort’s; but let’s get back to the subject.”

“Talking of that,” said Debray, “Madame was making inquiries about that house, which for the last three months has been hung with black.”

“Who is Madame?” asked Château-Renaud.

“The minister’s wife, *pardieu!*”

“Oh, your pardon! I never visit ministers; I leave that to the princes.”

“Really, you were only before sparkling, but now you are brilliant; take compassion on us, or, like Jupiter, you will wither us up.”

“I will not speak again,” said Château-Renaud; “pray have compassion upon me, and do not take up every word I say.”

“Come, let us endeavor to get to the end of our story, Beauchamp; I told you that yesterday Madame made inquiries of me upon the subject; enlighten me, and I will then communicate my information to her.”

“Well, gentlemen, the reason people die so multitudinously (I like the word) at M. de Villefort’s is that there is an assassin in the house!”

The two young men shuddered, for the same idea had more than once occurred to them.

“And who is the assassin;” they asked together.

“Young Edward!” A burst of laughter from the auditors did not in the least disconcert the speaker, who continued,—“Yes, gentlemen; Edward, the infant

phenomenon, who is quite an adept in the art of killing.”

“You are jesting.”

“Not at all. I yesterday engaged a servant, who had just left M. de Villefort—I intend sending him away tomorrow, for he eats so enormously, to make up for the fast imposed upon him by his terror in that house. Well, now listen.”

“We are listening.”

“It appears the dear child has obtained possession of a bottle containing some drug, which he every now and then uses against those who have displeased him. First, M. and Madame de Saint-Méran incurred his displeasure, so he poured out three drops of his elixir—three drops were sufficient; then followed Barrois, the old servant of M. Noirtier, who sometimes rebuffed this little wretch—he therefore received the same quantity of the elixir; the same happened to Valentine, of whom he was jealous; he gave her the same dose as the others, and all was over for her as well as the rest.”

“Why, what nonsense are you telling us?” said Château-Renaud.

“Yes, it is an extraordinary story,” said Beauchamp; “is it not?”

“It is absurd,” said Debray.

“Ah,” said Beauchamp, “you doubt me? Well, you can ask my servant, or rather him who will no longer be my servant tomorrow, it was the talk of the house.”

“And this elixir, where is it? what is it?”

“The child conceals it.”

“But where did he find it?”

“In his mother’s laboratory.”

“Does his mother then, keep poisons in her laboratory?”

“How can I tell? You are questioning me like a king’s attorney. I only repeat what I have been told, and like my informant I can do no more. The poor devil would eat nothing, from fear.”

“It is incredible!”

“No, my dear fellow, it is not at all incredible. You saw the child pass through the Rue Richelieu last year, who amused himself with killing his brothers and sisters by sticking pins in their ears while they slept. The generation who follow us are very precocious.”

“Come, Beauchamp,” said Château-Renaud, “I will bet anything you do not believe a word of all you have been telling us. But I do not see the Count of

Monte Cristo here."

"He is worn out," said Debray; "besides, he could not well appear in public, since he has been the dupe of the Cavalcanti, who, it appears, presented themselves to him with false letters of credit, and cheated him out of 100,000 francs upon the hypothesis of this principality."

"By the way, M. de Château-Renaud," asked Beauchamp, "how is Morrel?"

"*Ma foi*, I have called three times without once seeing him. Still, his sister did not seem uneasy, and told me that though she had not seen him for two or three days, she was sure he was well."

"Ah, now I think of it, the Count of Monte Cristo cannot appear in the hall," said Beauchamp.

"Why not?"

"Because he is an actor in the drama."

"Has he assassinated anyone, then?"

"No, on the contrary, they wished to assassinate him. You know that it was in leaving his house that M. de Caderousse was murdered by his friend Benedetto. You know that the famous waistcoat was found in his house, containing the letter which stopped the signature of the marriage-contract. Do you see the waistcoat? There it is, all blood-stained, on the desk, as a testimony of the crime."

"Ah, very good."

"Hush, gentlemen, here is the court; let us go back to our places."

A noise was heard in the hall; the sergeant called his two patrons with an energetic "hem!" and the door-keeper appearing, called out with that shrill voice peculiar to his order, ever since the days of Beaumarchais:

"The court, gentlemen!"

Chapter 110. The Indictment

The judges took their places in the midst of the most profound silence; the jury took their seats; M. de Villefort, the object of unusual attention, and we had almost said of general admiration, sat in the armchair and cast a tranquil glance around him. Everyone looked with astonishment on that grave and severe face, whose calm expression personal griefs had been unable to disturb, and the aspect of a man who was a stranger to all human emotions excited something very like terror.

“Gendarmes,” said the president, “lead in the accused.”

At these words the public attention became more intense, and all eyes were turned towards the door through which Benedetto was to enter. The door soon opened and the accused appeared.

The same impression was experienced by all present, and no one was deceived by the expression of his countenance. His features bore no sign of that deep emotion which stops the beating of the heart and blanches the cheek. His hands, gracefully placed, one upon his hat, the other in the opening of his white waistcoat, were not at all tremulous; his eye was calm and even brilliant. Scarcely had he entered the hall when he glanced at the whole body of magistrates and assistants; his eye rested longer on the president, and still more so on the king’s attorney.

By the side of Andrea was stationed the lawyer who was to conduct his defence, and who had been appointed by the court, for Andrea disdained to pay any attention to those details, to which he appeared to attach no importance. The lawyer was a young man with light hair whose face expressed a hundred times more emotion than that which characterized the prisoner.

50181m

The president called for the indictment, revised as we know, by the clever and implacable pen of Villefort. During the reading of this, which was long, the public attention was continually drawn towards Andrea, who bore the inspection with Spartan unconcern. Villefort had never been so concise and eloquent. The crime was depicted in the most vivid colors; the former life of the prisoner, his transformation, a review of his life from the earliest period, were set forth with

all the talent that a knowledge of human life could furnish to a mind like that of the procureur. Benedetto was thus forever condemned in public opinion before the sentence of the law could be pronounced.

Andrea paid no attention to the successive charges which were brought against him. M. de Villefort, who examined him attentively, and who no doubt practiced upon him all the psychological studies he was accustomed to use, in vain endeavored to make him lower his eyes, notwithstanding the depth and profundity of his gaze. At length the reading of the indictment was ended.

“Accused,” said the president, “your name and surname?”

Andrea arose.

“Excuse me, Mr. President,” he said, in a clear voice, “but I see you are going to adopt a course of questions through which I cannot follow you. I have an idea, which I will explain by and by, of making an exception to the usual form of accusation. Allow me, then, if you please, to answer in different order, or I will not do so at all.”

The astonished president looked at the jury, who in turn looked at Villefort. The whole assembly manifested great surprise, but Andrea appeared quite unmoved.

“Your age?” said the president; “will you answer that question?”

“I will answer that question, as well as the rest, Mr. President, but in its turn.”

“Your age?” repeated the president.

“I am twenty-one years old, or rather I shall be in a few days, as I was born the night of the 27th of September, 1817.”

M. de Villefort, who was busy taking down some notes, raised his head at the mention of this date.

“Where were you born?” continued the president.

“At Auteuil, near Paris.”

M. de Villefort a second time raised his head, looked at Benedetto as if he had been gazing at the head of Medusa, and became livid. As for Benedetto, he gracefully wiped his lips with a fine cambric pocket-handkerchief.

“Your profession?”

“First I was a forger,” answered Andrea, as calmly as possible; “then I became a thief, and lately have become an assassin.”

A murmur, or rather storm, of indignation burst from all parts of the assembly. The judges themselves appeared to be stupefied, and the jury manifested tokens

of disgust for a cynicism so unexpected in a man of fashion. M. de Villefort pressed his hand upon his brow, which, at first pale, had become red and burning; then he suddenly arose and looked around as though he had lost his senses—he wanted air.

50183m

“Are you looking for anything, Mr. Procureur?” asked Benedetto, with his most ingratiating smile.

M. de Villefort answered nothing, but sat, or rather threw himself down again upon his chair.

“And now, prisoner, will you consent to tell your name?” said the president. “The brutal affectation with which you have enumerated and classified your crimes calls for a severe reprimand on the part of the court, both in the name of morality, and for the respect due to humanity. You appear to consider this a point of honor, and it may be for this reason, that you have delayed acknowledging your name. You wished it to be preceded by all these titles.”

“It is quite wonderful, Mr. President, how entirely you have read my thoughts,” said Benedetto, in his softest voice and most polite manner. “This is, indeed, the reason why I begged you to alter the order of the questions.”

The public astonishment had reached its height. There was no longer any deceit or bravado in the manner of the accused. The audience felt that a startling revelation was to follow this ominous prelude.

“Well,” said the president; “your name?”

“I cannot tell you my name, since I do not know it; but I know my father’s, and can tell it to you.”

A painful giddiness overwhelmed Villefort; great drops of acrid sweat fell from his face upon the papers which he held in his convulsed hand.

“Repeat your father’s name,” said the president.

Not a whisper, not a breath, was heard in that vast assembly; everyone waited anxiously.

“My father is king’s attorney,” replied Andrea calmly.

50179m

“King’s attorney?” said the president, stupefied, and without noticing the agitation which spread over the face of M. de Villefort; “king’s attorney?”

“Yes; and if you wish to know his name, I will tell it,—he is named Villefort.”

The explosion, which had been so long restrained from a feeling of respect to

the court of justice, now burst forth like thunder from the breasts of all present; the court itself did not seek to restrain the feelings of the audience. The exclamations, the insults addressed to Benedetto, who remained perfectly unconcerned, the energetic gestures, the movement of the gendarmes, the sneers of the scum of the crowd always sure to rise to the surface in case of any disturbance—all this lasted five minutes, before the door-keepers and magistrates were able to restore silence. In the midst of this tumult the voice of the president was heard to exclaim:

“Are you playing with justice, accused, and do you dare set your fellow-citizens an example of disorder which even in these times has never been equalled?”

Several persons hurried up to M. de Villefort, who sat half bowed over in his chair, offering him consolation, encouragement, and protestations of zeal and sympathy. Order was re-established in the hall, except that a few people still moved about and whispered to one another. A lady, it was said, had just fainted; they had supplied her with a smelling-bottle, and she had recovered. During the scene of tumult, Andrea had turned his smiling face towards the assembly; then, leaning with one hand on the oaken rail of the dock, in the most graceful attitude possible, he said:

“Gentlemen, I assure you I had no idea of insulting the court, or of making a useless disturbance in the presence of this honorable assembly. They ask my age; I tell it. They ask where I was born; I answer. They ask my name, I cannot give it, since my parents abandoned me. But though I cannot give my own name, not possessing one, I can tell them my father’s. Now I repeat, my father is named M. de Villefort, and I am ready to prove it.”

There was an energy, a conviction, and a sincerity in the manner of the young man, which silenced the tumult. All eyes were turned for a moment towards the procureur, who sat as motionless as though a thunderbolt had changed him into a corpse.

“Gentlemen,” said Andrea, commanding silence by his voice and manner; “I owe you the proofs and explanations of what I have said.”

“But,” said the irritated president, “you called yourself Benedetto, declared yourself an orphan, and claimed Corsica as your country.”

“I said anything I pleased, in order that the solemn declaration I have just made should not be withheld, which otherwise would certainly have been the case. I now repeat that I was born at Auteuil on the night of the 27th of September, 1817, and that I am the son of the procureur, M. de Villefort. Do you

wish for any further details? I will give them. I was born in No. 28, Rue de la Fontaine, in a room hung with red damask; my father took me in his arms, telling my mother I was dead, wrapped me in a napkin marked with an H and an N, and carried me into a garden, where he buried me alive."

A shudder ran through the assembly when they saw that the confidence of the prisoner increased in proportion to the terror of M. de Villefort.

"But how have you become acquainted with all these details?" asked the president.

"I will tell you, Mr. President. A man who had sworn vengeance against my father, and had long watched his opportunity to kill him, had introduced himself that night into the garden in which my father buried me. He was concealed in a thicket; he saw my father bury something in the ground, and stabbed him; then thinking the deposit might contain some treasure he turned up the ground, and found me still living. The man carried me to the foundling asylum, where I was registered under the number 37. Three months afterwards, a woman travelled from Rogliano to Paris to fetch me, and having claimed me as her son, carried me away. Thus, you see, though born in Paris, I was brought up in Corsica."

There was a moment's silence, during which one could have fancied the hall empty, so profound was the stillness.

"Proceed," said the president.

"Certainly, I might have lived happily amongst those good people, who adored me, but my perverse disposition prevailed over the virtues which my adopted mother endeavored to instil into my heart. I increased in wickedness till I committed crime. One day when I cursed Providence for making me so wicked, and ordaining me to such a fate, my adopted father said to me, 'Do not blaspheme, unhappy child, the crime is that of your father, not yours,—of your father, who consigned you to hell if you died, and to misery if a miracle preserved you alive.' After that I ceased to blaspheme, but I cursed my father. That is why I have uttered the words for which you blame me; that is why I have filled this whole assembly with horror. If I have committed an additional crime, punish me, but if you will allow that ever since the day of my birth my fate has been sad, bitter, and lamentable, then pity me."

"But your mother?" asked the president.

"My mother thought me dead; she is not guilty. I did not even wish to know her name, nor do I know it."

Just then a piercing cry, ending in a sob, burst from the centre of the crowd, who encircled the lady who had before fainted, and who now fell into a violent

fit of hysterics. She was carried out of the hall, the thick veil which concealed her face dropped off, and Madame Danglars was recognized. Notwithstanding his shattered nerves, the ringing sensation in his ears, and the madness which turned his brain, Villefort rose as he perceived her.

“The proofs, the proofs!” said the president; “remember this tissue of horrors must be supported by the clearest proofs.”

“The proofs?” said Benedetto, laughing; “do you want proofs?”

“Yes.”

“Well, then, look at M. de Villefort, and then ask me for proofs.”

Everyone turned towards the procureur, who, unable to bear the universal gaze now riveted on him alone, advanced staggering into the midst of the tribunal, with his hair dishevelled and his face indented with the mark of his nails. The whole assembly uttered a long murmur of astonishment.

“Father,” said Benedetto, “I am asked for proofs, do you wish me to give them?”

“No, no, it is useless,” stammered M. de Villefort in a hoarse voice; “no, it is useless!”

“How useless?” cried the president, “what do you mean?”

“I mean that I feel it impossible to struggle against this deadly weight which crushes me. Gentlemen, I know I am in the hands of an avenging God! We need no proofs; everything relating to this young man is true.”

A dull, gloomy silence, like that which precedes some awful phenomenon of nature, pervaded the assembly, who shuddered in dismay.

“What, M. de Villefort,” cried the president, “do you yield to an hallucination? What, are you no longer in possession of your senses? This strange, unexpected, terrible accusation has disordered your reason. Come, recover.”

The procureur dropped his head; his teeth chattered like those of a man under a violent attack of fever, and yet he was deadly pale.

“I am in possession of all my senses, sir,” he said; “my body alone suffers, as you may suppose. I acknowledge myself guilty of all the young man has brought against me, and from this hour hold myself under the authority of the procureur who will succeed me.”

And as he spoke these words with a hoarse, choking voice, he staggered towards the door, which was mechanically opened by a door-keeper. The whole assembly were dumb with astonishment at the revelation and confession which had produced a catastrophe so different from that which had been expected

during the last fortnight by the Parisian world.

“Well,” said Beauchamp, “let them now say that drama is unnatural!”

“*Ma foi!*” said Château-Renaud, “I would rather end my career like M. de Morcerf; a pistol-shot seems quite delightful compared with this catastrophe.”

“And moreover, it kills,” said Beauchamp.

“And to think that I had an idea of marrying his daughter,” said Debray. “She did well to die, poor girl!”

“The sitting is adjourned, gentlemen,” said the president; “fresh inquiries will be made, and the case will be tried next session by another magistrate.”

As for Andrea, who was calm and more interesting than ever, he left the hall, escorted by gendarmes, who involuntarily paid him some attention.

“Well, what do you think of this, my fine fellow?” asked Debray of the sergeant-at-arms, slipping a louis into his hand.

“There will be extenuating circumstances,” he replied.

Chapter 111. Expiation

Notwithstanding the density of the crowd, M. de Villefort saw it open before him. There is something so awe-inspiring in great afflictions that even in the worst times the first emotion of a crowd has generally been to sympathize with the sufferer in a great catastrophe. Many people have been assassinated in a tumult, but even criminals have rarely been insulted during trial. Thus Villefort passed through the mass of spectators and officers of the Palais, and withdrew. Though he had acknowledged his guilt, he was protected by his grief. There are some situations which men understand by instinct, but which reason is powerless to explain; in such cases the greatest poet is he who gives utterance to the most natural and vehement outburst of sorrow. Those who hear the bitter cry are as much impressed as if they listened to an entire poem, and when the sufferer is sincere they are right in regarding his outburst as sublime.

It would be difficult to describe the state of stupor in which Villefort left the Palais. Every pulse beat with feverish excitement, every nerve was strained, every vein swollen, and every part of his body seemed to suffer distinctly from the rest, thus multiplying his agony a thousand-fold. He made his way along the corridors through force of habit; he threw aside his magisterial robe, not out of deference to etiquette, but because it was an unbearable burden, a veritable garb of Nessus, insatiate in torture. Having staggered as far as the Rue Dauphine, he perceived his carriage, awoke his sleeping coachman by opening the door himself, threw himself on the cushions, and pointed towards the Faubourg Saint-Honoré; the carriage drove on.

All the weight of his fallen fortune seemed suddenly to crush him; he could not foresee the consequences; he could not contemplate the future with the indifference of the hardened criminal who merely faces a contingency already familiar.

God was still in his heart. "God," he murmured, not knowing what he said,—"God—God!" Behind the event that had overwhelmed him he saw the hand of God. The carriage rolled rapidly onward. Villefort, while turning restlessly on the cushions, felt something press against him. He put out his hand to remove the object; it was a fan which Madame de Villefort had left in the carriage; this fan awakened a recollection which darted through his mind like lightning. He

thought of his wife.

50189m

"Oh!" he exclaimed, as though a red-hot iron were piercing his heart.

During the last hour his own crime had alone been presented to his mind; now another object, not less terrible, suddenly presented itself. His wife! He had just acted the inexorable judge with her, he had condemned her to death, and she, crushed by remorse, struck with terror, covered with the shame inspired by the eloquence of *his* irreproachable virtue,—she, a poor, weak woman, without help or the power of defending herself against his absolute and supreme will,—she might at that very moment, perhaps, be preparing to die!

An hour had elapsed since her condemnation; at that moment, doubtless, she was recalling all her crimes to her memory; she was asking pardon for her sins; perhaps she was even writing a letter imploring forgiveness from her virtuous husband—a forgiveness she was purchasing with her death! Villefort again groaned with anguish and despair.

"Ah," he exclaimed, "that woman became criminal only from associating with me! I carried the infection of crime with me, and she has caught it as she would the typhus fever, the cholera, the plague! And yet I have punished her—I have dared to tell her—I have—'Repent and die!' But no, she must not die; she shall live, and with me. We will flee from Paris and go as far as the earth reaches. I told her of the scaffold; oh, Heavens, I forgot that it awaits me also! How could I pronounce that word? Yes, we will fly; I will confess all to her,—I will tell her daily that I also have committed a crime!—Oh, what an alliance—the tiger and the serpent; worthy wife of such as I am! She *must* live that my infamy may diminish hers."

And Villefort dashed open the window in front of the carriage.

"Faster, faster!" he cried, in a tone which electrified the coachman. The horses, impelled by fear, flew towards the house.

"Yes, yes," repeated Villefort, as he approached his home—"yes, that woman must live; she must repent, and educate my son, the sole survivor, with the exception of the indestructible old man, of the wreck of my house. She loves him; it was for his sake she has committed these crimes. We ought never to despair of softening the heart of a mother who loves her child. She will repent, and no one will know that she has been guilty. The events which have taken place in my house, though they now occupy the public mind, will be forgotten in time, or if, indeed, a few enemies should persist in remembering them, why then I will add them to my list of crimes. What will it signify if one, two, or three

more are added? My wife and child shall escape from this gulf, carrying treasures with them; she will live and may yet be happy, since her child, in whom all her love is centred, will be with her. I shall have performed a good action, and my heart will be lighter."

And the procureur breathed more freely than he had done for some time.

50191m

The carriage stopped at the door of the house. Villefort leaped out of the carriage, and saw that his servants were surprised at his early return; he could read no other expression on their features. Neither of them spoke to him; they merely stood aside to let him pass by, as usual, nothing more. As he passed by M. Noirtier's room, he perceived two figures through the half-open door; but he experienced no curiosity to know who was visiting his father; anxiety carried him on further.

"Come," he said, as he ascended the stairs leading to his wife's room, "nothing is changed here."

He then closed the door of the landing.

"No one must disturb us," he said; "I must speak freely to her, accuse myself, and say"—he approached the door, touched the crystal handle, which yielded to his hand. "Not locked," he cried; "that is well."

And he entered the little room in which Edward slept; for though the child went to school during the day, his mother could not allow him to be separated from her at night. With a single glance Villefort's eye ran through the room.

"Not here," he said; "doubtless she is in her bedroom." He rushed towards the door, found it bolted, and stopped, shuddering.

"Héloïse!" he cried. He fancied he heard the sound of a piece of furniture being removed.

"Héloïse!" he repeated.

"Who is there?" answered the voice of her he sought. He thought that voice more feeble than usual.

"Open the door!" cried Villefort. "Open; it is I."

But notwithstanding this request, notwithstanding the tone of anguish in which it was uttered, the door remained closed. Villefort burst it open with a violent blow. At the entrance of the room which led to her boudoir, Madame de Villefort was standing erect, pale, her features contracted, and her eyes glaring horribly.

"Héloïse, Héloïse!" he said, "what is the matter? Speak!" The young woman extended her stiff white hands towards him.

"It is done, monsieur," she said with a rattling noise which seemed to tear her throat. "What more do you want?" and she fell full length on the floor.

Villefort ran to her and seized her hand, which convulsively clasped a crystal bottle with a golden stopper. Madame de Villefort was dead. Villefort, maddened with horror, stepped back to the threshhold of the door, fixing his eyes on the corpse.

"My son!" he exclaimed suddenly, "where is my son?—Edward, Edward!" and he rushed out of the room, still crying, "Edward, Edward!" The name was pronounced in such a tone of anguish that the servants ran up.

"Where is my son?" asked Villefort; "let him be removed from the house, that he may not see——"

"Master Edward is not downstairs, sir," replied the valet.

"Then he must be playing in the garden; go and see."

50193m

"No, sir; Madame de Villefort sent for him half an hour ago; he went into her room, and has not been downstairs since."

A cold perspiration burst out on Villefort's brow; his legs trembled, and his thoughts flew about madly in his brain like the wheels of a disordered watch.

"In Madame de Villefort's room?" he murmured and slowly returned, with one hand wiping his forehead, and with the other supporting himself against the wall. To enter the room he must again see the body of his unfortunate wife. To call Edward he must reawaken the echo of that room which now appeared like a sepulchre; to speak seemed like violating the silence of the tomb. His tongue was paralyzed in his mouth.

"Edward!" he stammered—"Edward!"

The child did not answer. Where, then, could he be, if he had entered his mother's room and not since returned? He stepped forward. The corpse of Madame de Villefort was stretched across the doorway leading to the room in which Edward must be; those glaring eyes seemed to watch over the threshhold, and the lips bore the stamp of a terrible and mysterious irony. Through the open door was visible a portion of the boudoir, containing an upright piano and a blue satin couch. Villefort stepped forward two or three paces, and beheld his child lying—no doubt asleep—on the sofa. The unhappy man uttered an exclamation of joy; a ray of light seemed to penetrate the abyss of despair and darkness. He

had only to step over the corpse, enter the boudoir, take the child in his arms, and flee far, far away.

Villefort was no longer the civilized man; he was a tiger hurt unto death, gnashing his teeth in his wound. He no longer feared realities, but phantoms. He leaped over the corpse as if it had been a burning brazier. He took the child in his arms, embraced him, shook him, called him, but the child made no response. He pressed his burning lips to the cheeks, but they were icy cold and pale; he felt the stiffened limbs; he pressed his hand upon the heart, but it no longer beat,—the child was dead.

A folded paper fell from Edward's breast. Villefort, thunderstruck, fell upon his knees; the child dropped from his arms, and rolled on the floor by the side of its mother. He picked up the paper, and, recognizing his wife's writing, ran his eyes rapidly over its contents; it ran as follows:

"You know that I was a good mother, since it was for my son's sake I became criminal. A good mother cannot depart without her son."

Villefort could not believe his eyes,—he could not believe his reason; he dragged himself towards the child's body, and examined it as a lioness contemplates its dead cub. Then a piercing cry escaped from his breast, and he cried,

"Still the hand of God."

The presence of the two victims alarmed him; he could not bear solitude shared only by two corpses. Until then he had been sustained by rage, by his strength of mind, by despair, by the supreme agony which led the Titans to scale the heavens, and Ajax to defy the gods. He now arose, his head bowed beneath the weight of grief, and, shaking his damp, dishevelled hair, he who had never felt compassion for anyone determined to seek his father, that he might have someone to whom he could relate his misfortunes,—someone by whose side he might weep.

50195m

He descended the little staircase with which we are acquainted, and entered Noirtier's room. The old man appeared to be listening attentively and as affectionately as his infirmities would allow to the Abbé Busoni, who looked cold and calm, as usual. Villefort, perceiving the abbé, passed his hand across his brow. The past came to him like one of those waves whose wrath foams fiercer than the others.

He recollects the call he had made upon him after the dinner at Auteuil, and

then the visit the abbé had himself paid to his house on the day of Valentine's death.

"You here, sir!" he exclaimed; "do you, then, never appear but to act as an escort to death?"

Busoni turned around, and, perceiving the excitement depicted on the magistrate's face, the savage lustre of his eyes, he understood that the revelation had been made at the assizes; but beyond this he was ignorant.

"I came to pray over the body of your daughter."

"And now why are you here?"

"I come to tell you that you have sufficiently repaid your debt, and that from this moment I will pray to God to forgive you, as I do."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Villefort, stepping back fearfully, "surely that is not the voice of the Abbé Busoni!"

"No!" The abbé threw off his wig, shook his head, and his hair, no longer confined, fell in black masses around his manly face.

"It is the face of the Count of Monte Cristo!" exclaimed the procureur, with a haggard expression.

"You are not exactly right, M. Procureur; you must go farther back."

"That voice, that voice!—where did I first hear it?"

"You heard it for the first time at Marseilles, twenty-three years ago, the day of your marriage with Mademoiselle de Saint-Méran. Refer to your papers."

"You are not Busoni?—you are not Monte Cristo? Oh, heavens! you are, then, some secret, implacable, and mortal enemy! I must have wronged you in some way at Marseilles. Oh, woe to me!"

"Yes; you are now on the right path," said the count, crossing his arms over his broad chest; "search—search!"

"But what have I done to you?" exclaimed Villefort, whose mind was balancing between reason and insanity, in that cloud which is neither a dream nor reality; "what have I done to you? Tell me, then! Speak!"

"You condemned me to a horrible, tedious death; you killed my father; you deprived me of liberty, of love, and happiness."

"Who are you, then? Who are you?"

"I am the spectre of a wretch you buried in the dungeons of the Château d'If. God gave that spectre the form of the Count of Monte Cristo when he at length issued from his tomb, enriched him with gold and diamonds, and led him to

you!"

"Ah, I recognize you—I recognize you!" exclaimed the king's attorney; "you are——"

"I am Edmond Dantès!"

"You are Edmond Dantès," cried Villefort, seizing the count by the wrist; "then come here!"

And up the stairs he dragged Monte Cristo; who, ignorant of what had happened, followed him in astonishment, foreseeing some new catastrophe.

"There, Edmond Dantès!" he said, pointing to the bodies of his wife and child, "see, are you well avenged?"

Monte Cristo became pale at this horrible sight; he felt that he had passed beyond the bounds of vengeance, and that he could no longer say, "God is for and with me." With an expression of indescribable anguish he threw himself upon the body of the child, reopened its eyes, felt its pulse, and then rushed with him into Valentine's room, of which he double-locked the door.

"My child," cried Villefort, "he carries away the body of my child! Oh, curses, woe, death to you!"

He tried to follow Monte Cristo; but as though in a dream he was transfixed to the spot,—his eyes glared as though they were starting through the sockets; he gripped the flesh on his chest until his nails were stained with blood; the veins of his temples swelled and boiled as though they would burst their narrow boundary, and deluge his brain with living fire. This lasted several minutes, until the frightful overturn of reason was accomplished; then uttering a loud cry followed by a burst of laughter, he rushed down the stairs.

A quarter of an hour afterwards the door of Valentine's room opened, and Monte Cristo reappeared. Pale, with a dull eye and heavy heart, all the noble features of that face, usually so calm and serene, were overcast by grief. In his arms he held the child, whom no skill had been able to recall to life. Bending on one knee, he placed it reverently by the side of its mother, with its head upon her breast. Then, rising, he went out, and meeting a servant on the stairs, he asked:

"Where is M. de Villefort?"

The servant, instead of answering, pointed to the garden. Monte Cristo ran down the steps, and advancing towards the spot designated beheld Villefort, encircled by his servants, with a spade in his hand, and digging the earth with fury.

"It is not here!" he cried. "It is not here!"

And then he moved farther on, and began again to dig.

Monte Cristo approached him, and said in a low voice, with an expression almost humble:

“Sir, you have indeed lost a son; but——”

Villefort interrupted him; he had neither listened nor heard.

“Oh, I *will* find it,” he cried; “you may pretend he is not here, but I *will* find him, though I dig forever!”

Monte Cristo drew back in horror.

“Oh,” he said, “he is mad!” And as though he feared that the walls of the accursed house would crumble around him, he rushed into the street, for the first time doubting whether he had the right to do as he had done. “Oh, enough of this,—enough of this,” he cried; “let me save the last.” On entering his house, he met Morrel, who wandered about like a ghost awaiting the heavenly mandate for return to the tomb.

“Prepare yourself, Maximilian,” he said with a smile; “we leave Paris tomorrow.”

“Have you nothing more to do there?” asked Morrel.

“No,” replied Monte Cristo; “God grant I may not have done too much already.”

The next day they indeed left, accompanied only by Baptistin. Haydée had taken away Ali, and Bertuccio remained with Noirtier.

Chapter 112. The Departure

The recent events formed the theme of conversation throughout all Paris. Emmanuel and his wife conversed with natural astonishment in their little apartment in the Rue Meslay upon the three successive, sudden, and most unexpected catastrophes of Morcerf, Danglars, and Villefort. Maximilian, who was paying them a visit, listened to their conversation, or rather was present at it, plunged in his accustomed state of apathy.

“Indeed,” said Julie, “might we not almost fancy, Emmanuel, that those people, so rich, so happy but yesterday, had forgotten in their prosperity that an evil genius—like the wicked fairies in Perrault’s stories who present themselves unbidden at a wedding or baptism—hovered over them, and appeared all at once to revenge himself for their fatal neglect?”

“What a dire misfortune!” said Emmanuel, thinking of Morcerf and Danglars.

“What dreadful sufferings!” said Julie, remembering Valentine, but whom, with a delicacy natural to women, she did not name before her brother.

“If the Supreme Being has directed the fatal blow,” said Emmanuel, “it must be that he in his great goodness has perceived nothing in the past lives of these people to merit mitigation of their awful punishment.”

“Do you not form a very rash judgment, Emmanuel?” said Julie. “When my father, with a pistol in his hand, was once on the point of committing suicide, had anyone then said, ‘This man deserves his misery,’ would not that person have been deceived?”

“Yes; but your father was not allowed to fall. A being was commissioned to arrest the fatal hand of death about to descend on him.”

Emmanuel had scarcely uttered these words when the sound of the bell was heard, the well-known signal given by the porter that a visitor had arrived. Nearly at the same instant the door was opened and the Count of Monte Cristo appeared on the threshold. The young people uttered a cry of joy, while Maximilian raised his head, but let it fall again immediately.

impressions which his presence produced on the little circle, “I come to seek you.”

“To seek me?” repeated Morrel, as if awakening from a dream.

“Yes,” said Monte Cristo; “has it not been agreed that I should take you with me, and did I not tell you yesterday to prepare for departure?”

“I am ready,” said Maximilian; “I came expressly to wish them farewell.”

“Whither are you going, count?” asked Julie.

“In the first instance to Marseilles, madame.”

“To Marseilles!” exclaimed the young couple.

“Yes, and I take your brother with me.”

“Oh, count.” said Julie, “will you restore him to us cured of his melancholy?”
Morrel turned away to conceal the confusion of his countenance.

“You perceive, then, that he is not happy?” said the count.

“Yes,” replied the young woman; “and fear much that he finds our home but a dull one.”

“I will undertake to divert him,” replied the count.

“I am ready to accompany you, sir,” said Maximilian. “Adieu, my kind friends! Emmanuel—Julie—farewell!”

“How farewell?” exclaimed Julie; “do you leave us thus, so suddenly, without any preparations for your journey, without even a passport?”

“Needless delays but increase the grief of parting,” said Monte Cristo, “and Maximilian has doubtless provided himself with everything requisite; at least, I advised him to do so.”

“I have a passport, and my clothes are ready packed,” said Morrel in his tranquil but mournful manner.

“Good,” said Monte Cristo, smiling; “in these prompt arrangements we recognize the order of a well-disciplined soldier.”

“And you leave us,” said Julie, “at a moment’s warning? you do not give us a day—no, not even an hour before your departure?”

“My carriage is at the door, madame, and I must be in Rome in five days.”

“But does Maximilian go to Rome?” exclaimed Emmanuel.

“I am going wherever it may please the count to take me,” said Morrel, with a smile full of grief; “I am under his orders for the next month.”

“Oh, heavens, how strangely he expresses himself, count!” said Julie.

"Maximilian goes with *me*," said the count, in his kindest and most persuasive manner; "therefore do not make yourself uneasy on your brother's account."

"Once more farewell, my dear sister; Emmanuel, adieu!" Morrel repeated.

"His carelessness and indifference touch me to the heart," said Julie. "Oh, Maximilian, Maximilian, you are certainly concealing something from us."

"Pshaw!" said Monte Cristo, "you will see him return to you gay, smiling, and joyful."

Maximilian cast a look of disdain, almost of anger, on the count.

"We must leave you," said Monte Cristo.

50203m

"Before you quit us, count," said Julie, "will you permit us to express to you all that the other day——"

"Madame," interrupted the count, taking her two hands in his, "all that you could say in words would never express what I read in your eyes; the thoughts of your heart are fully understood by mine. Like benefactors in romances, I should have left you without seeing you again, but that would have been a virtue beyond my strength, because I am a weak and vain man, fond of the tender, kind, and thankful glances of my fellow-creatures. On the eve of departure I carry my egotism so far as to say, 'Do not forget me, my kind friends, for probably you will never see me again.'"

"Never see you again?" exclaimed Emmanuel, while two large tears rolled down Julie's cheeks, "never behold you again? It is not a man, then, but some angel that leaves us, and this angel is on the point of returning to heaven after having appeared on earth to do good."

"Say not so," quickly returned Monte Cristo—"say not so, my friends; angels never err, celestial beings remain where they wish to be. Fate is not more powerful than they; it is they who, on the contrary, overcome fate. No, Emmanuel, I am but a man, and your admiration is as unmerited as your words are sacrilegious."

And pressing his lips on the hand of Julie, who rushed into his arms, he extended his other hand to Emmanuel; then tearing himself from this abode of peace and happiness, he made a sign to Maximilian, who followed him passively, with the indifference which had been perceptible in him ever since the death of Valentine had so stunned him.

"Restore my brother to peace and happiness," whispered Julie to Monte Cristo. And the count pressed her hand in reply, as he had done eleven years

before on the staircase leading to Morrel's study.

"You still confide, then, in Sinbad the Sailor?" asked he, smiling.

"Oh, yes," was the ready answer.

"Well, then, sleep in peace, and put your trust in the Lord."

As we have before said, the post-chaise was waiting; four powerful horses were already pawing the ground with impatience, while Ali, apparently just arrived from a long walk, was standing at the foot of the steps, his face bathed in perspiration.

"Well," asked the count in Arabic, "have you been to see the old man?" Ali made a sign in the affirmative.

"And have you placed the letter before him, as I ordered you to do?"

The slave respectfully signalized that he had.

"And what did he say, or rather do?" Ali placed himself in the light, so that his master might see him distinctly, and then imitating in his intelligent manner the countenance of the old man, he closed his eyes, as Noirtier was in the custom of doing when saying "Yes."

"Good; he accepts," said Monte Cristo. "Now let us go."

50205m

These words had scarcely escaped him, when the carriage was on its way, and the feet of the horses struck a shower of sparks from the pavement. Maximilian settled himself in his corner without uttering a word. Half an hour had passed when the carriage stopped suddenly; the count had just pulled the silken check-string, which was fastened to Ali's finger. The Nubian immediately descended and opened the carriage door. It was a lovely starlight night—they had just reached the top of the hill Villejuif, from whence Paris appears like a sombre sea tossing its millions of phosphoric waves into light—waves indeed more noisy, more passionate, more changeable, more furious, more greedy, than those of the tempestuous ocean,—waves which never rest as those of the sea sometimes do,—waves ever dashing, ever foaming, ever ingulping what falls within their grasp.

The count stood alone, and at a sign from his hand, the carriage went on for a short distance. With folded arms, he gazed for some time upon the great city. When he had fixed his piercing look on this modern Babylon, which equally engages the contemplation of the religious enthusiast, the materialist, and the scoffer,—

"Great city," murmured he, inclining his head, and joining his hands as if in prayer, "less than six months have elapsed since first I entered thy gates. I

believe that the Spirit of God led my steps to thee and that he also enables me to quit thee in triumph; the secret cause of my presence within thy walls I have confided alone to him who only has had the power to read my heart. God only knows that I retire from thee without pride or hatred, but not without many regrets; he only knows that the power confided to me has never been made subservient to my personal good or to any useless cause. Oh, great city, it is in thy palpitating bosom that I have found that which I sought; like a patient miner, I have dug deep into thy very entrails to root out evil thence. Now my work is accomplished, my mission is terminated, now thou canst neither afford me pain nor pleasure. Adieu, Paris, adieu!"

His look wandered over the vast plain like that of some genius of the night; he passed his hand over his brow, got into the carriage, the door was closed on him, and the vehicle quickly disappeared down the other side of the hill in a whirlwind of dust and noise.

Ten leagues were passed and not a single word was uttered. Morrel was dreaming, and Monte Cristo was looking at the dreamer.

"Morrel," said the count to him at length, "do you repent having followed me?"

"No, count; but to leave Paris——"

"If I thought happiness might await you in Paris, Morrel, I would have left you there."

"Valentine reposes within the walls of Paris, and to leave Paris is like losing her a second time."

"Maximilian," said the count, "the friends that we have lost do not repose in the bosom of the earth, but are buried deep in our hearts, and it has been thus ordained that we may always be accompanied by them. I have two friends, who in this way never depart from me; the one who gave me being, and the other who conferred knowledge and intelligence on me. Their spirits live in me. I consult them when doubtful, and if I ever do any good, it is due to their beneficent counsels. Listen to the voice of your heart, Morrel, and ask it whether you ought to preserve this melancholy exterior towards me."

"My friend," said Maximilian, "the voice of my heart is very sorrowful, and promises me nothing but misfortune."

"It is the way of weakened minds to see everything through a black cloud. The soul forms its own horizons; your soul is darkened, and consequently the sky of the future appears stormy and unpromising."

“That may possibly be true,” said Maximilian, and he again subsided into his thoughtful mood.

The journey was performed with that marvellous rapidity which the unlimited power of the count ever commanded. Towns fled from them like shadows on their path, and trees shaken by the first winds of autumn seemed like giants madly rushing on to meet them, and retreating as rapidly when once reached. The following morning they arrived at Châlons, where the count’s steamboat waited for them. Without the loss of an instant, the carriage was placed on board and the two travellers embarked without delay. The boat was built for speed; her two paddle-wheels were like two wings with which she skimmed the water like a bird.

Morrel was not insensible to that sensation of delight which is generally experienced in passing rapidly through the air, and the wind which occasionally raised the hair from his forehead seemed on the point of dispelling momentarily the clouds collected there.

As the distance increased between the travellers and Paris, almost superhuman serenity appeared to surround the count; he might have been taken for an exile about to revisit his native land.

Ere long Marseilles presented herself to view,—Marseilles, white, fervid, full of life and energy,—Marseilles, the younger sister of Tyre and Carthage, the successor to them in the empire of the Mediterranean,—Marseilles, old, yet always young. Powerful memories were stirred within them by the sight of the round tower, Fort Saint-Nicolas, the City Hall designed by Puget,²⁸ the port with its brick quays, where they had both played in childhood, and it was with one accord that they stopped on the Canebière.

A vessel was setting sail for Algiers, on board of which the bustle usually attending departure prevailed. The passengers and their relations crowded on the deck, friends taking a tender but sorrowful leave of each other, some weeping, others noisy in their grief, the whole forming a spectacle that might be exciting even to those who witnessed similar sights daily, but which had no power to disturb the current of thought that had taken possession of the mind of Maximilian from the moment he had set foot on the broad pavement of the quay.

“Here,” said he, leaning heavily on the arm of Monte Cristo,—“here is the spot where my father stopped, when the *Pharaon* entered the port; it was here that the good old man, whom you saved from death and dishonor, threw himself into my arms. I yet feel his warm tears on my face, and his were not the only tears shed, for many who witnessed our meeting wept also.”

Monte Cristo gently smiled and said,—“I was there;” at the same time pointing to the corner of a street. As he spoke, and in the very direction he indicated, a groan, expressive of bitter grief, was heard, and a woman was seen waving her hand to a passenger on board the vessel about to sail. Monte Cristo looked at her with an emotion that must have been remarked by Morrel had not his eyes been fixed on the vessel.

“Oh, heavens!” exclaimed Morrel, “I do not deceive myself—that young man who is waving his hat, that youth in the uniform of a lieutenant, is Albert de Morcerf!”

“Yes,” said Monte Cristo, “I recognized him.”

“How so?—you were looking the other way.”

50209m

The count smiled, as he was in the habit of doing when he did not want to make any reply, and he again turned towards the veiled woman, who soon disappeared at the corner of the street. Turning to his friend:

“Dear Maximilian,” said the count, “have you nothing to do in this land?”

“I have to weep over the grave of my father,” replied Morrel in a broken voice.

“Well, then, go,—wait for me there, and I will soon join you.”

“You leave me, then?”

“Yes; I also have a pious visit to pay.”

Morrel allowed his hand to fall into that which the count extended to him; then with an inexpressibly sorrowful inclination of the head he quitted the count and bent his steps to the east of the city. Monte Cristo remained on the same spot until Maximilian was out of sight; he then walked slowly towards the Allées de Meilhan to seek out a small house with which our readers were made familiar at the beginning of this story.

It yet stood, under the shade of the fine avenue of lime-trees, which forms one of the most frequent walks of the idlers of Marseilles, covered by an immense vine, which spreads its aged and blackened branches over the stone front, burnt yellow by the ardent sun of the south. Two stone steps worn away by the friction of many feet led to the door, which was made of three planks; the door had never been painted or varnished, so great cracks yawned in it during the dry season to close again when the rains came on. The house, with all its crumbling antiquity and apparent misery, was yet cheerful and picturesque, and was the same that old Dantès formerly inhabited—the only difference being that the old man occupied

merely the garret, while the whole house was now placed at the command of Mercédès by the count.

The woman whom the count had seen leave the ship with so much regret entered this house; she had scarcely closed the door after her when Monte Cristo appeared at the corner of a street, so that he found and lost her again almost at the same instant. The worn out steps were old acquaintances of his; he knew better than anyone else how to open that weather-beaten door with the large headed nail which served to raise the latch within. He entered without knocking, or giving any other intimation of his presence, as if he had been a friend or the master of the place. At the end of a passage paved with bricks, was a little garden, bathed in sunshine, and rich in warmth and light. In this garden Mercédès had found, at the place indicated by the count, the sum of money which he, through a sense of delicacy, had described as having been placed there twenty-four years previously. The trees of the garden were easily seen from the steps of the street-door.

Monte Cristo, on stepping into the house, heard a sigh that was almost a deep sob; he looked in the direction whence it came, and there under an arbor of Virginia jessamine,²⁹ with its thick foliage and beautiful long purple flowers, he saw Mercédès seated, with her head bowed, and weeping bitterly. She had raised her veil, and with her face hidden by her hands was giving free scope to the sighs and tears which had been so long restrained by the presence of her son.

Monte Cristo advanced a few steps, which were heard on the gravel. Mercédès raised her head, and uttered a cry of terror on beholding a man before her.

50211m

“Madame,” said the count, “it is no longer in my power to restore you to happiness, but I offer you consolation; will you deign to accept it as coming from a friend?”

“I am, indeed, most wretched,” replied Mercédès. “Alone in the world, I had but my son, and he has left me!”

“He possesses a noble heart, madame,” replied the count, “and he has acted rightly. He feels that every man owes a tribute to his country; some contribute their talents, others their industry; these devote their blood, those their nightly labors, to the same cause. Had he remained with you, his life must have become a hateful burden, nor would he have participated in your griefs. He will increase in strength and honor by struggling with adversity, which he will convert into prosperity. Leave him to build up the future for you, and I venture to say you will confide it to safe hands.”

"Oh," replied the wretched woman, mournfully shaking her head, "the prosperity of which you speak, and which, from the bottom of my heart, I pray God in his mercy to grant him, I can never enjoy. The bitter cup of adversity has been drained by me to the very dregs, and I feel that the grave is not far distant. You have acted kindly, count, in bringing me back to the place where I have enjoyed so much bliss. I ought to meet death on the same spot where happiness was once all my own."

"Alas," said Monte Cristo, "your words sear and embitter my heart, the more so as you have every reason to hate me. I have been the cause of all your misfortunes; but why do you pity, instead of blaming me? You render me still more unhappy——"

"Hate you, blame you—you, Edmond! Hate, reproach, the man that has spared my son's life! For was it not your fatal and sanguinary intention to destroy that son of whom M. de Morcerf was so proud? Oh, look at me closely, and discover, if you can, even the semblance of a reproach in me."

The count looked up and fixed his eyes on Mercédès, who arose partly from her seat and extended both her hands towards him.

"Oh, look at me," continued she, with a feeling of profound melancholy, "my eyes no longer dazzle by their brilliancy, for the time has long fled since I used to smile on Edmond Dantès, who anxiously looked out for me from the window of yonder garret, then inhabited by his old father. Years of grief have created an abyss between those days and the present. I neither reproach you nor hate you, my friend. Oh, no, Edmond, it is myself that I blame, myself that I hate! Oh, miserable creature that I am!" cried she, clasping her hands, and raising her eyes to heaven. "I once possessed piety, innocence, and love, the three ingredients of the happiness of angels, and now what am I?"

Monte Cristo approached her, and silently took her hand.

"No," said she, withdrawing it gently—"no, my friend, touch me not. You have spared me, yet of all those who have fallen under your vengeance I was the most guilty. They were influenced by hatred, by avarice, and by self-love; but I was base, and for want of courage acted against my judgment. Nay, do not press my hand, Edmond; you are thinking, I am sure, of some kind speech to console me, but do not utter it to me, reserve it for others more worthy of your kindness. See" (and she exposed her face completely to view)—"see, misfortune has silvered my hair, my eyes have shed so many tears that they are encircled by a rim of purple, and my brow is wrinkled. You, Edmond, on the contrary,—you are still young, handsome, dignified; it is because you have had faith; because you

have had strength, because you have had trust in God, and God has sustained you. But as for me, I have been a coward; I have denied God and he has abandoned me."

50213m

Mercédès burst into tears; her woman's heart was breaking under its load of memories. Monte Cristo took her hand and imprinted a kiss on it; but she herself felt that it was a kiss of no greater warmth than he would have bestowed on the hand of some marble statue of a saint.

"It often happens," continued she, "that a first fault destroys the prospects of a whole life. I believed you dead; why did I survive you? What good has it done me to mourn for you eternally in the secret recesses of my heart?—only to make a woman of thirty-nine look like a woman of fifty. Why, having recognized you, and I the only one to do so—why was I able to save my son alone? Ought I not also to have rescued the man that I had accepted for a husband, guilty though he were? Yet I let him die! What do I say? Oh, merciful heavens, was I not accessory to his death by my supine insensibility, by my contempt for him, not remembering, or not willing to remember, that it was for my sake he had become a traitor and a perjurer? In what am I benefited by accompanying my son so far, since I now abandon him, and allow him to depart alone to the baneful climate of Africa? Oh, I have been base, cowardly, I tell you; I have abjured my affections, and like all renegades I am of evil omen to those who surround me!"

"No, Mercédès," said Monte Cristo, "no; you judge yourself with too much severity. You are a noble-minded woman, and it was your grief that disarmed me. Still I was but an agent, led on by an invisible and offended Deity, who chose not to withhold the fatal blow that I was destined to hurl. I take that God to witness, at whose feet I have prostrated myself daily for the last ten years, that I would have sacrificed my life to you, and with my life the projects that were indissolubly linked with it. But—and I say it with some pride, Mercédès—God needed me, and I lived. Examine the past and the present, and endeavor to dive into futurity, and then say whether I am not a divine instrument. The most dreadful misfortunes, the most frightful sufferings, the abandonment of all those who loved me, the persecution of those who did not know me, formed the trials of my youth; when suddenly, from captivity, solitude, misery, I was restored to light and liberty, and became the possessor of a fortune so brilliant, so unbounded, so unheard-of, that I must have been blind not to be conscious that God had endowed me with it to work out his own great designs. From that time I looked upon this fortune as something confided to me for a particular purpose.

Not a thought was given to a life which you once, Mercédès, had the power to render blissful; not one hour of peaceful calm was mine; but I felt myself driven on like an exterminating angel. Like adventurous captains about to embark on some enterprise full of danger, I laid in my provisions, I loaded my weapons, I collected every means of attack and defence; I inured my body to the most violent exercises, my soul to the bitterest trials; I taught my arm to slay, my eyes to behold excruciating sufferings, and my mouth to smile at the most horrid spectacles. Good-natured, confiding, and forgiving as I had been, I became revengeful, cunning, and wicked, or rather, immovable as fate. Then I launched out into the path that was opened to me. I overcame every obstacle, and reached the goal; but woe to those who stood in my pathway!"

50215m

"Enough," said Mercédès; "enough, Edmond! Believe me, that she who alone recognized you has been the only one to comprehend you; and had she crossed your path, and you had crushed her like glass, still, Edmond, still she must have admired you! Like the gulf between me and the past, there is an abyss between you, Edmond, and the rest of mankind; and I tell you freely that the comparison I draw between you and other men will ever be one of my greatest tortures. No, there is nothing in the world to resemble you in worth and goodness! But we must say farewell, Edmond, and let us part."

"Before I leave you, Mercédès, have you no request to make?" said the count.

"I desire but one thing in this world, Edmond,—the happiness of my son."

"Pray to the Almighty to spare his life, and I will take upon myself to promote his happiness."

"Thank you, Edmond."

"But have you no request to make for yourself, Mercédès?"

"For myself I want nothing. I live, as it were, between two graves. One is that of Edmond Dantès, lost to me long, long since. He had my love! That word ill becomes my faded lip now, but it is a memory dear to my heart, and one that I would not lose for all that the world contains. The other grave is that of the man who met his death from the hand of Edmond Dantès. I approve of the deed, but I must pray for the dead."

"Your son shall be happy, Mercédès," repeated the count.

"Then I shall enjoy as much happiness as this world can possibly confer."

"But what are your intentions?"

Mercédès smiled sadly.

“To say that I shall live here, like the Mercédès of other times, gaining my bread by labor, would not be true, nor would you believe me. I have no longer the strength to do anything but to spend my days in prayer. However, I shall have no occasion to work, for the little sum of money buried by you, and which I found in the place you mentioned, will be sufficient to maintain me. Rumor will probably be busy respecting me, my occupations, my manner of living—that will signify but little, that concerns God, you, and myself.”

“Mercédès,” said the count, “I do not say it to blame you, but you made an unnecessary sacrifice in relinquishing the whole of the fortune amassed by M. de Morcerf; half of it at least by right belonged to you, in virtue of your vigilance and economy.”

“I perceive what you are intending to propose to me; but I cannot accept it, Edmond—my son would not permit it.”

“Nothing shall be done without the full approbation of Albert de Morcerf. I will make myself acquainted with his intentions and will submit to them. But if he be willing to accept my offers, will you oppose them?”

“You well know, Edmond, that I am no longer a reasoning creature; I have no will, unless it be the will never to decide. I have been so overwhelmed by the many storms that have broken over my head, that I am become passive in the hands of the Almighty, like a sparrow in the talons of an eagle. I live, because it is not ordained for me to die. If succor be sent to me, I will accept it.”

“Ah, madame,” said Monte Cristo, “you should not talk thus! It is not so we should evince our resignation to the will of heaven; on the contrary, we are all free agents.”

“Alas!” exclaimed Mercédès, “if it were so, if I possessed free-will, but without the power to render that will efficacious, it would drive me to despair.”

Monte Cristo dropped his head and shrank from the vehemence of her grief.

“Will you not even say you will see me again?” he asked.

“On the contrary, we shall meet again,” said Mercédès, pointing to heaven with solemnity. “I tell you so to prove to you that I still hope.”

And after pressing her own trembling hand upon that of the count, Mercédès rushed up the stairs and disappeared. Monte Cristo slowly left the house and turned towards the quay. But Mercédès did not witness his departure, although she was seated at the little window of the room which had been occupied by old Dantès. Her eyes were straining to see the ship which was carrying her son over the vast sea; but still her voice involuntarily murmured softly:

“Edmond, Edmond, Edmond!”

Chapter 113. The Past

The count departed with a sad heart from the house in which he had left Mercédès, probably never to behold her again. Since the death of little Edward a great change had taken place in Monte Cristo. Having reached the summit of his vengeance by a long and tortuous path, he saw an abyss of doubt yawning before him. More than this, the conversation which had just taken place between Mercédès and himself had awakened so many recollections in his heart that he felt it necessary to combat with them. A man of the count's temperament could not long indulge in that melancholy which can exist in common minds, but which destroys superior ones. He thought he must have made an error in his calculations if he now found cause to blame himself.

"I cannot have deceived myself," he said; "I must look upon the past in a false light. What!" he continued, "can I have been following a false path?—can the end which I proposed be a mistaken end?—can one hour have sufficed to prove to an architect that the work upon which he founded all his hopes was an impossible, if not a sacrilegious, undertaking? I cannot reconcile myself to this idea—it would madden me. The reason why I am now dissatisfied is that I have not a clear appreciation of the past. The past, like the country through which we walk, becomes indistinct as we advance. My position is like that of a person wounded in a dream; he feels the wound, though he cannot recollect when he received it.

"Come, then, thou regenerate man, thou extravagant prodigal, thou awakened sleeper, thou all-powerful visionary, thou invincible millionaire,—once again review thy past life of starvation and wretchedness, revisit the scenes where fate and misfortune conducted, and where despair received thee. Too many diamonds, too much gold and splendor, are now reflected by the mirror in which Monte Cristo seeks to behold Dantès. Hide thy diamonds, bury thy gold, shroud thy splendor, exchange riches for poverty, liberty for a prison, a living body for a corpse!"

As he thus reasoned, Monte Cristo walked down the Rue de la Caisserie. It was the same through which, twenty-four years ago, he had been conducted by a silent and nocturnal guard; the houses, today so smiling and animated, were on that night dark, mute, and closed.

"And yet they were the same," murmured Monte Cristo, "only now it is broad daylight instead of night; it is the sun which brightens the place, and makes it appear so cheerful."

He proceeded towards the quay by the Rue Saint-Laurent, and advanced to the Consigne; it was the point where he had embarked. A pleasure-boat with striped awning was going by. Monte Cristo called the owner, who immediately rowed up to him with the eagerness of a boatman hoping for a good fare.

The weather was magnificent, and the excursion a treat. The sun, red and flaming, was sinking into the embrace of the welcoming ocean. The sea, smooth as crystal, was now and then disturbed by the leaping of fish, which were pursued by some unseen enemy and sought for safety in another element; while on the extreme verge of the horizon might be seen the fishermen's boats, white and graceful as the sea-gull, or the merchant vessels bound for Corsica or Spain.

But notwithstanding the serene sky, the gracefully formed boats, and the golden light in which the whole scene was bathed, the Count of Monte Cristo, wrapped in his cloak, could think only of this terrible voyage, the details of which were one by one recalled to his memory. The solitary light burning at the Catalans; that first sight of the Château d'If, which told him whither they were leading him; the struggle with the gendarmes when he wished to throw himself overboard; his despair when he found himself vanquished, and the sensation when the muzzle of the carbine touched his forehead—all these were brought before him in vivid and frightful reality.

Like the streams which the heat of the summer has dried up, and which after the autumnal storms gradually begin oozing drop by drop, so did the count feel his heart gradually fill with the bitterness which formerly nearly overwhelmed Edmond Dantès. Clear sky, swift-flitting boats, and brilliant sunshine disappeared; the heavens were hung with black, and the gigantic structure of the Château d'If seemed like the phantom of a mortal enemy. As they reached the shore, the count instinctively shrunk to the extreme end of the boat, and the owner was obliged to call out, in his sweetest tone of voice:

"Sir, we are at the landing."

Monte Cristo remembered that on that very spot, on the same rock, he had been violently dragged by the guards, who forced him to ascend the slope at the points of their bayonets. The journey had seemed very long to Dantès, but Monte Cristo found it equally short. Each stroke of the oar seemed to awaken a new throng of ideas, which sprang up with the flying spray of the sea.

There had been no prisoners confined in the Château d'If since the revolution of July; it was only inhabited by a guard, kept there for the prevention of smuggling. A concierge waited at the door to exhibit to visitors this monument of curiosity, once a scene of terror.

The count inquired whether any of the ancient jailers were still there; but they had all been pensioned, or had passed on to some other employment. The concierge who attended him had only been there since 1830. He visited his own dungeon. He again beheld the dull light vainly endeavoring to penetrate the narrow opening. His eyes rested upon the spot where had stood his bed, since then removed, and behind the bed the new stones indicated where the breach made by the Abbé Faria had been. Monte Cristo felt his limbs tremble; he seated himself upon a log of wood.

"Are there any stories connected with this prison besides the one relating to the poisoning of Mirabeau?" asked the count; "are there any traditions respecting these dismal abodes,—in which it is difficult to believe men can ever have imprisoned their fellow-creatures?"

"Yes, sir; indeed, the jailer Antoine told me one connected with this very dungeon."

Monte Cristo shuddered; Antoine had been his jailer. He had almost forgotten his name and face, but at the mention of the name he recalled his person as he used to see it, the face encircled by a beard, wearing the brown jacket, the bunch of keys, the jingling of which he still seemed to hear. The count turned around, and fancied he saw him in the corridor, rendered still darker by the torch carried by the concierge.

"Would you like to hear the story, sir?"

"Yes; relate it," said Monte Cristo, pressing his hand to his heart to still its violent beatings; he felt afraid of hearing his own history.

"This dungeon," said the concierge, "was, it appears, some time ago occupied by a very dangerous prisoner, the more so since he was full of industry. Another person was confined in the Château at the same time, but he was not wicked, he was only a poor mad priest."

"Ah, indeed?—mad!" repeated Monte Cristo; "and what was his mania?"

"He offered millions to anyone who would set him at liberty."

Monte Cristo raised his eyes, but he could not see the heavens; there was a stone veil between him and the firmament. He thought that there had been no less thick a veil before the eyes of those to whom Faria offered the treasures.

“Could the prisoners see each other?” he asked.

“Oh, no, sir, it was expressly forbidden; but they eluded the vigilance of the guards, and made a passage from one dungeon to the other.”

“And which of them made this passage?”

“Oh, it must have been the young man, certainly, for he was strong and industrious, while the abbé was aged and weak; besides, his mind was too vacillating to allow him to carry out an idea.”

“Blind fools!” murmured the count.

“However, be that as it may, the young man made a tunnel, how or by what means no one knows; but he made it, and there is the evidence yet remaining of his work. Do you see it?” and the man held the torch to the wall.

50223m

“Ah, yes; I see,” said the count, in a voice hoarse from emotion.

“The result was that the two men communicated with one another; how long they did so, nobody knows. One day the old man fell ill and died. Now guess what the young one did?”

“Tell me.”

“He carried off the corpse, which he placed in his own bed with its face to the wall; then he entered the empty dungeon, closed the entrance, and slipped into the sack which had contained the dead body. Did you ever hear of such an idea?”

Monte Cristo closed his eyes, and seemed again to experience all the sensations he had felt when the coarse canvas, yet moist with the cold dews of death, had touched his face.

The jailer continued:

“Now this was his project. He fancied that they buried the dead at the Château d’If, and imagining they would not expend much labor on the grave of a prisoner, he calculated on raising the earth with his shoulders, but unfortunately their arrangements at the Château frustrated his projects. They never buried the dead; they merely attached a heavy cannon-ball to the feet, and then threw them into the sea. This is what was done. The young man was thrown from the top of the rock; the corpse was found on the bed next day, and the whole truth was guessed, for the men who performed the office then mentioned what they had not dared to speak of before, that at the moment the corpse was thrown into the deep, they heard a shriek, which was almost immediately stifled by the water in which it disappeared.”

The count breathed with difficulty; the cold drops ran down his forehead, and his heart was full of anguish.

"No," he muttered, "the doubt I felt was but the commencement of forgetfulness; but here the wound reopens, and the heart again thirsts for vengeance. And the prisoner," he continued aloud, "was he ever heard of afterwards?"

"Oh, no; of course not. You can understand that one of two things must have happened; he must either have fallen flat, in which case the blow, from a height of ninety feet, must have killed him instantly, or he must have fallen upright, and then the weight would have dragged him to the bottom, where he remained—poor fellow!"

"Then you pity him?" said the count.

"*Ma foi*, yes; though he was in his own element."

"What do you mean?"

"The report was that he had been a naval officer, who had been confined for plotting with the Bonapartists."

"Great is truth," muttered the count, "fire cannot burn, nor water drown it! Thus the poor sailor lives in the recollection of those who narrate his history; his terrible story is recited in the chimney-corner, and a shudder is felt at the description of his transit through the air to be swallowed by the deep." Then, the count added aloud, "Was his name ever known?"

"Oh, yes; but only as No. 34."

"Oh, Villefort, Villefort," murmured the count, "this scene must often have haunted thy sleepless hours!"

"Do you wish to see anything more, sir?" said the concierge.

"Yes, especially if you will show me the poor abbé's room."

"Ah! No. 27."

"Yes; No. 27." repeated the count, who seemed to hear the voice of the abbé answering him in those very words through the wall when asked his name.

"Come, sir."

"Wait," said Monte Cristo, "I wish to take one final glance around this room."

"This is fortunate," said the guide; "I have forgotten the other key."

"Go and fetch it."

"I will leave you the torch, sir."

"No, take it away; I can see in the dark."

"Why, you are like No. 34. They said he was so accustomed to darkness that he could see a pin in the darkest corner of his dungeon."

"He spent fourteen years to arrive at that," muttered the count.

The guide carried away the torch. The count had spoken correctly. Scarcely had a few seconds elapsed, ere he saw everything as distinctly as by daylight. Then he looked around him, and really recognized his dungeon.

"Yes," he said, "there is the stone upon which I used to sit; there is the impression made by my shoulders on the wall; there is the mark of my blood made when one day I dashed my head against the wall. Oh, those figures, how well I remember them! I made them one day to calculate the age of my father, that I might know whether I should find him still living, and that of Mercédès, to know if I should find her still free. After finishing that calculation, I had a minute's hope. I did not reckon upon hunger and infidelity!" and a bitter laugh escaped the count.

He saw in fancy the burial of his father, and the marriage of Mercédès. On the other side of the dungeon he perceived an inscription, the white letters of which were still visible on the green wall:

"*Oh, God!*" he read, "*preserve my memory!*"

"Oh, yes," he cried, "that was my only prayer at last; I no longer begged for liberty, but memory; I dreaded to become mad and forgetful. Oh, God, thou hast preserved my memory; I thank thee, I thank thee!"

At this moment the light of the torch was reflected on the wall; the guide was coming; Monte Cristo went to meet him.

"Follow me, sir;" and without ascending the stairs the guide conducted him by a subterraneous passage to another entrance. There, again, Monte Cristo was assailed by a multitude of thoughts. The first thing that met his eye was the meridian, drawn by the abbé on the wall, by which he calculated the time; then he saw the remains of the bed on which the poor prisoner had died. The sight of this, instead of exciting the anguish experienced by the count in the dungeon, filled his heart with a soft and grateful sentiment, and tears fell from his eyes.

"This is where the mad abbé was kept, sir, and that is where the young man entered;" and the guide pointed to the opening, which had remained unclosed. "From the appearance of the stone," he continued, "a learned gentleman discovered that the prisoners might have communicated together for ten years. Poor things! Those must have been ten weary years."

Dantès took some louis from his pocket, and gave them to the man who had

twice unconsciously pitied him. The guide took them, thinking them merely a few pieces of little value; but the light of the torch revealed their true worth.

“Sir,” he said, “you have made a mistake; you have given me gold.”

“I know it.”

The concierge looked upon the count with surprise.

“Sir,” he cried, scarcely able to believe his good fortune—“sir, I cannot understand your generosity!”

“Oh, it is very simple, my good fellow; I have been a sailor, and your story touched me more than it would others.”

“Then, sir, since you are so liberal, I ought to offer you something.”

50227m

“What have you to offer to me, my friend? Shells? Straw-work? Thank you!”

“No, sir, neither of those; something connected with this story.”

“Really? What is it?”

“Listen,” said the guide; “I said to myself, ‘Something is always left in a cell inhabited by one prisoner for fifteen years,’ so I began to sound the wall.”

“Ah,” cried Monte Cristo, remembering the abbé’s two hiding-places.

“After some search, I found that the floor gave a hollow sound near the head of the bed, and at the hearth.”

“Yes,” said the count, “yes.”

“I raised the stones, and found——”

“A rope-ladder and some tools?”

“How do you know that?” asked the guide in astonishment.

“I do not know—I only guess it, because that sort of thing is generally found in prisoners’ cells.”

“Yes, sir, a rope-ladder and tools.”

“And have you them yet?”

“No, sir; I sold them to visitors, who considered them great curiosities; but I have still something left.”

“What is it?” asked the count, impatiently.

“A sort of book, written upon strips of cloth.”

“Go and fetch it, my good fellow; and if it be what I hope, you will do well.”

“I will run for it, sir;” and the guide went out.

Then the count knelt down by the side of the bed, which death had converted into an altar.

"Oh, second father," he exclaimed, "thou who hast given me liberty, knowledge, riches; thou who, like beings of a superior order to ourselves, couldst understand the science of good and evil; if in the depths of the tomb there still remain something within us which can respond to the voice of those who are left on earth; if after death the soul ever revisit the places where we have lived and suffered,—then, noble heart, sublime soul, then I conjure thee by the paternal love thou didst bear me, by the filial obedience I vowed to thee, grant me some sign, some revelation! Remove from me the remains of doubt, which, if it change not to conviction, must become remorse!" The count bowed his head, and clasped his hands together.

"Here, sir," said a voice behind him.

Monte Cristo shuddered, and arose. The concierge held out the strips of cloth upon which the Abbé Faria had spread the riches of his mind. The manuscript was the great work by the Abbé Faria upon the kingdoms of Italy. The count seized it hastily, his eyes immediately fell upon the epigraph, and he read:

"Thou shalt tear out the dragons' teeth, and shall trample the lions under foot, saith the Lord."

"Ah," he exclaimed, "here is my answer. Thanks, father, thanks." And feeling in his pocket, he took thence a small pocket-book, which contained ten bank-notes, each of 1,000 francs.

"Here," he said, "take this pocket-book."

"Do you give it to me?"

"Yes; but only on condition that you will not open it till I am gone;" and placing in his breast the treasure he had just found, which was more valuable to him than the richest jewel, he rushed out of the corridor, and reaching his boat, cried, "To Marseilles!"

Then, as he departed, he fixed his eyes upon the gloomy prison.

"Woe," he cried, "to those who confined me in that wretched prison; and woe to those who forgot that I was there!"

50229m

As he repassed the Catalans, the count turned around and burying his head in his cloak murmured the name of a woman. The victory was complete; twice he had overcome his doubts. The name he pronounced, in a voice of tenderness, amounting almost to love, was that of Haydée.

On landing, the count turned towards the cemetery, where he felt sure of finding Morrel. He, too, ten years ago, had piously sought out a tomb, and sought it vainly. He, who returned to France with millions, had been unable to find the grave of his father, who had perished from hunger. Morrel had indeed placed a cross over the spot, but it had fallen down and the grave-digger had burnt it, as he did all the old wood in the churchyard.

The worthy merchant had been more fortunate. Dying in the arms of his children, he had been by them laid by the side of his wife, who had preceded him in eternity by two years. Two large slabs of marble, on which were inscribed their names, were placed on either side of a little enclosure, railed in, and shaded by four cypress-trees. Morrel was leaning against one of these, mechanically fixing his eyes on the graves. His grief was so profound that he was nearly unconscious.

50231m

“Maximilian,” said the count, “you should not look on the graves, but there;” and he pointed upwards.

“The dead are everywhere,” said Morrel; “did you not yourself tell me so as we left Paris?”

“Maximilian,” said the count, “you asked me during the journey to allow you to remain some days at Marseilles. Do you still wish to do so?”

“I have no wishes, count; only I fancy I could pass the time less painfully here than anywhere else.”

“So much the better, for I must leave you; but I carry your word with me, do I not?”

“Ah, count, I shall forget it.”

“No, you will not forget it, because you are a man of honor, Morrel, because you have taken an oath, and are about to do so again.”

“Oh, count, have pity upon me. I am so unhappy.”

“I have known a man much more unfortunate than you, Morrel.”

“Impossible!”

“Alas,” said Monte Cristo, “it is the infirmity of our nature always to believe ourselves much more unhappy than those who groan by our sides!”

“What can be more wretched than the man who has lost all he loved and desired in the world?”

“Listen, Morrel, and pay attention to what I am about to tell you. I knew a

man who like you had fixed all his hopes of happiness upon a woman. He was young, he had an old father whom he loved, a betrothed bride whom he adored. He was about to marry her, when one of the caprices of fate,—which would almost make us doubt the goodness of Providence, if that Providence did not afterwards reveal itself by proving that all is but a means of conducting to an end,—one of those caprices deprived him of his mistress, of the future of which he had dreamed (for in his blindness he forgot he could only read the present), and cast him into a dungeon.”

“Ah,” said Morrel, “one quits a dungeon in a week, a month, or a year.”

“He remained there fourteen years, Morrel,” said the count, placing his hand on the young man’s shoulder. Maximilian shuddered.

“Fourteen years!” he muttered.

“Fourteen years!” repeated the count. “During that time he had many moments of despair. He also, Morrel, like you, considered himself the unhappiest of men.”

“Well?” asked Morrel.

“Well, at the height of his despair God assisted him through human means. At first, perhaps, he did not recognize the infinite mercy of the Lord, but at last he took patience and waited. One day he miraculously left the prison, transformed, rich, powerful. His first cry was for his father; but that father was dead.”

“My father, too, is dead,” said Morrel.

“Yes; but your father died in your arms, happy, respected, rich, and full of years; his father died poor, despairing, almost doubtful of Providence; and when his son sought his grave ten years afterwards, his tomb had disappeared, and no one could say, ‘There sleeps the father you so well loved.’”

“Oh!” exclaimed Morrel.

“He was, then, a more unhappy son than you, Morrel, for he could not even find his father’s grave.”

“But then he had the woman he loved still remaining?”

“You are deceived, Morrel, that woman——”

“She was dead?”

“Worse than that, she was faithless, and had married one of the persecutors of her betrothed. You see, then, Morrel, that he was a more unhappy lover than you.”

“And has he found consolation?”

“He has at least found peace.”

“And does he ever expect to be happy?”

“He hopes so, Maximilian.”

The young man’s head fell on his breast.

“You have my promise,” he said, after a minute’s pause, extending his hand to Monte Cristo. “Only remember——”

“On the 5th of October, Morrel, I shall expect you at the Island of Monte Cristo. On the 4th a yacht will wait for you in the port of Bastia, it will be called the *Eurus*. You will give your name to the captain, who will bring you to me. It is understood—is it not?”

“But, count, do you remember that the 5th of October——”

“Child,” replied the count, “not to know the value of a man’s word! I have told you twenty times that if you wish to die on that day, I will assist you. Morrel, farewell!”

“Do you leave me?”

“Yes; I have business in Italy. I leave you alone in your struggle with misfortune—alone with that strong-winged eagle which God sends to bear aloft the elect to his feet. The story of Ganymede, Maximilian, is not a fable, but an allegory.”

“When do you leave?”

“Immediately; the steamer waits, and in an hour I shall be far from you. Will you accompany me to the harbor, Maximilian?”

50233m

“I am entirely yours, count.”

Morrel accompanied the count to the harbor. The white steam was ascending like a plume of feathers from the black chimney. The steamer soon disappeared, and in an hour afterwards, as the count had said, was scarcely distinguishable in the horizon amidst the fogs of the night.

Chapter 114. Peppino

At the same time that the steamer disappeared behind Cape Morgiou, a man travelling post on the road from Florence to Rome had just passed the little town of Aquapendente. He was travelling fast enough to cover a great deal of ground without exciting suspicion. This man was dressed in a greatcoat, or rather a surtout, a little worse for the journey, but which exhibited the ribbon of the Legion of Honor still fresh and brilliant, a decoration which also ornamented the under coat. He might be recognized, not only by these signs, but also from the accent with which he spoke to the postilion, as a Frenchman.

Another proof that he was a native of the universal country was apparent in the fact of his knowing no other Italian words than the terms used in music, and which like the “goddam” of Figaro, served all possible linguistic requirements. “*Allegro!*” he called out to the postilions at every ascent. “*Moderato!*” he cried as they descended. And heaven knows there are hills enough between Rome and Florence by the way of Aquapendente! These two words greatly amused the men to whom they were addressed. On reaching La Storta, the point from whence Rome is first visible, the traveller evinced none of the enthusiastic curiosity which usually leads strangers to stand up and endeavor to catch sight of the dome of Saint Peter’s, which may be seen long before any other object is distinguishable. No, he merely drew a pocketbook from his pocket, and took from it a paper folded in four, and after having examined it in a manner almost reverential, he said:

“Good! I have it still!”

50235m

The carriage entered by the Porta del Popolo, turned to the left, and stopped at the Hôtel d’Espagne. Old Pastrini, our former acquaintance, received the traveller at the door, hat in hand. The traveller alighted, ordered a good dinner, and inquired the address of the house of Thomson & French, which was immediately given to him, as it was one of the most celebrated in Rome. It was situated in the Via dei Banchi, near St. Peter’s.

In Rome, as everywhere else, the arrival of a post-chaise is an event. Ten young descendants of Marius and the Gracchi, barefooted and out at elbows,

with one hand resting on the hip and the other gracefully curved above the head, stared at the traveller, the post-chaise, and the horses; to these were added about fifty little vagabonds from the Papal States, who earned a pittance by diving into the Tiber at high water from the bridge of St. Angelo. Now, as these street Arabs of Rome, more fortunate than those of Paris, understand every language, more especially the French, they heard the traveller order an apartment, a dinner, and finally inquire the way to the house of Thomson & French.

The result was that when the new-comer left the hotel with the *cicerone*, a man detached himself from the rest of the idlers, and without having been seen by the traveller, and appearing to excite no attention from the guide, followed the stranger with as much skill as a Parisian police agent would have used.

The Frenchman had been so impatient to reach the house of Thomson & French that he would not wait for the horses to be harnessed, but left word for the carriage to overtake him on the road, or to wait for him at the bankers' door. He reached it before the carriage arrived. The Frenchman entered, leaving in the anteroom his guide, who immediately entered into conversation with two or three of the industrious idlers who are always to be found in Rome at the doors of banking-houses, churches, museums, or theatres. With the Frenchman, the man who had followed him entered too; the Frenchman knocked at the inner door, and entered the first room; his shadow did the same.

"Messrs. Thomson & French?" inquired the stranger.

An attendant arose at a sign from a confidential clerk at the first desk.

"Whom shall I announce?" said the attendant.

"Baron Danglars."

"Follow me," said the man.

A door opened, through which the attendant and the baron disappeared. The man who had followed Danglars sat down on a bench. The clerk continued to write for the next five minutes; the man preserved profound silence, and remained perfectly motionless. Then the pen of the clerk ceased to move over the paper; he raised his head, and appearing to be perfectly sure of privacy:

"Ah, ha," he said, "here you are, Peppino!"

"Yes," was the laconic reply. "You have found out that there is something worth having about this large gentleman?"

"There is no great merit due to me, for we were informed of it."

"You know his business here, then."

"*Pardieu*, he has come to draw, but I don't know how much!"

“You will know presently, my friend.”

“Very well, only do not give me false information as you did the other day.”

“What do you mean?—of whom do you speak? Was it the Englishman who carried off 3,000 crowns from here the other day?”

50237m

“No; he really had 3,000 crowns, and we found them. I mean the Russian prince, who you said had 30,000 livres, and we only found 22,000.”

“You must have searched badly.”

“Luigi Vampa himself searched.”

“In that case he must either have paid his debts——”

“A Russian do that?”

“Or spent the money?”

“Possibly, after all.”

“Certainly. But you must let me make my observations, or the Frenchman will transact his business without my knowing the sum.”

Peppino nodded, and taking a rosary from his pocket began to mutter a few prayers while the clerk disappeared through the same door by which Danglars and the attendant had gone out. At the expiration of ten minutes the clerk returned with a beaming countenance.

“Well?” asked Peppino of his friend.

“Joy, joy—the sum is large!”

“Five or six millions, is it not?”

“Yes, you know the amount.”

“On the receipt of the Count of Monte Cristo?”

“Why, how came you to be so well acquainted with all this?”

“I told you we were informed beforehand.”

“Then why do you apply to me?”

“That I may be sure I have the right man.”

“Yes, it is indeed he. Five millions—a pretty sum, eh, Peppino?”

“Hush—here is our man!” The clerk seized his pen, and Peppino his beads; one was writing and the other praying when the door opened. Danglars looked radiant with joy; the banker accompanied him to the door. Peppino followed Danglars.

According to the arrangements, the carriage was waiting at the door. The guide held the door open. Guides are useful people, who will turn their hands to anything. Danglars leaped into the carriage like a young man of twenty. The *cicerone* reclosed the door, and sprang up by the side of the coachman. Peppino mounted the seat behind.

"Will your excellency visit Saint Peter's?" asked the *cicerone*.

"I did not come to Rome to see," said Danglars aloud; then he added softly, with an avaricious smile, "I came to touch!" and he rapped his pocket-book, in which he had just placed a letter.

"Then your excellency is going——"

"To the hotel."

"Casa Pastrini!" said the *cicerone* to the coachman, and the carriage drove rapidly on.

50239m

Ten minutes afterwards the baron entered his apartment, and Peppino stationed himself on the bench outside the door of the hotel, after having whispered something in the ear of one of the descendants of Marius and the Gracchi whom we noticed at the beginning of the chapter, who immediately ran down the road leading to the Capitol at his fullest speed. Danglars was tired and sleepy; he therefore went to bed, placing his pocketbook under his pillow. Peppino had a little spare time, so he had a game of *morra* with the facchini, lost three crowns, and then to console himself drank a bottle of Orvieto.

The next morning Danglars awoke late, though he went to bed so early; he had not slept well for five or six nights, even if he had slept at all. He breakfasted heartily, and caring little, as he said, for the beauties of the Eternal City, ordered post-horses at noon. But Danglars had not reckoned upon the formalities of the police and the idleness of the posting-master. The horses only arrived at two o'clock, and the *cicerone* did not bring the passport till three.

All these preparations had collected a number of idlers round the door of Signor Pastrini's; the descendants of Marius and the Gracchi were also not wanting. The baron walked triumphantly through the crowd, who for the sake of gain styled him "your excellency." As Danglars had hitherto contented himself with being called a baron, he felt rather flattered at the title of excellency, and distributed a dozen silver coins among the beggars, who were ready, for twelve more, to call him "your highness."

"Which road?" asked the postilion in Italian.

"The Ancona road," replied the baron. Signor Pastrini interpreted the question and answer, and the horses galloped off.

Danglars intended travelling to Venice, where he would receive one part of his fortune, and then proceeding to Vienna, where he would find the rest, he meant to take up his residence in the latter town, which he had been told was a city of pleasure.

He had scarcely advanced three leagues out of Rome when daylight began to disappear. Danglars had not intended starting so late, or he would have remained; he put his head out and asked the postilion how long it would be before they reached the next town. "*Non capisco*" (do not understand), was the reply. Danglars bent his head, which he meant to imply, "Very well." The carriage again moved on.

"I will stop at the first posting-house," said Danglars to himself.

He still felt the same self-satisfaction which he had experienced the previous evening, and which had procured him so good a night's rest. He was luxuriously stretched in a good English calash, with double springs; he was drawn by four good horses, at full gallop; he knew the relay to be at a distance of seven leagues. What subject of meditation could present itself to the banker, so fortunately become bankrupt?

Danglars thought for ten minutes about his wife in Paris; another ten minutes about his daughter travelling with Mademoiselle d'Armilly; the same period was given to his creditors, and the manner in which he intended spending their money; and then, having no subject left for contemplation, he shut his eyes, and fell asleep. Now and then a jolt more violent than the rest caused him to open his eyes; then he felt that he was still being carried with great rapidity over the same country, thickly strewn with broken aqueducts, which looked like granite giants petrified while running a race. But the night was cold, dull, and rainy, and it was much more pleasant for a traveller to remain in the warm carriage than to put his head out of the window to make inquiries of a postilion whose only answer was "*Non capisco*."

50241m

Danglars therefore continued to sleep, saying to himself that he would be sure to awake at the posting-house. The carriage stopped. Danglars fancied that they had reached the long-desired point; he opened his eyes and looked through the window, expecting to find himself in the midst of some town, or at least village; but he saw nothing except what seemed like a ruin, where three or four men went and came like shadows.

Danglars waited a moment, expecting the postilion to come and demand payment with the termination of his stage. He intended taking advantage of the opportunity to make fresh inquiries of the new conductor; but the horses were unharnessed, and others put in their places, without anyone claiming money from the traveller. Danglars, astonished, opened the door; but a strong hand pushed him back, and the carriage rolled on. The baron was completely roused.

“Eh?” he said to the postilion, “eh, *mio caro*?”

This was another little piece of Italian the baron had learned from hearing his daughter sing Italian duets with Cavalcanti. But *mio caro* did not reply. Danglars then opened the window.

“Come, my friend,” he said, thrusting his hand through the opening, “where are we going?”

“*Dentro la testa!*” answered a solemn and imperious voice, accompanied by a menacing gesture.

Danglars thought *dentro la testa* meant, “Put in your head!” He was making rapid progress in Italian. He obeyed, not without some uneasiness, which, momentarily increasing, caused his mind, instead of being as unoccupied as it was when he began his journey, to fill with ideas which were very likely to keep a traveller awake, more especially one in such a situation as Danglars. His eyes acquired that quality which in the first moment of strong emotion enables them to see distinctly, and which afterwards fails from being too much taxed. Before we are alarmed, we see correctly; when we are alarmed, we see double; and when we have been alarmed, we see nothing but trouble. Danglars observed a man in a cloak galloping at the right hand of the carriage.

“Some gendarme!” he exclaimed. “Can I have been intercepted by French telegrams to the pontifical authorities?”

He resolved to end his anxiety. “Where are you taking me?” he asked.

“*Dentro la testa,*” replied the same voice, with the same menacing accent.

Danglars turned to the left; another man on horseback was galloping on that side.

“Decidedly,” said Danglars, with the perspiration on his forehead, “I must be under arrest.” And he threw himself back in the calash, not this time to sleep, but to think.

Directly afterwards the moon rose. He then saw the great aqueducts, those stone phantoms which he had before remarked, only then they were on the right hand, now they were on the left. He understood that they had described a circle,

and were bringing him back to Rome.

“Oh, unfortunate!” he cried, “they must have obtained my arrest.”

The carriage continued to roll on with frightful speed. An hour of terror elapsed, for every spot they passed showed that they were on the road back. At length he saw a dark mass, against which it seemed as if the carriage was about to dash; but the vehicle turned to one side, leaving the barrier behind and Danglars saw that it was one of the ramparts encircling Rome.

50243m

“*Mon dieu!*” cried Danglars, “we are not returning to Rome; then it is not justice which is pursuing me! Gracious heavens; another idea presents itself—what if they should be——”

His hair stood on end. He remembered those interesting stories, so little believed in Paris, respecting Roman bandits; he remembered the adventures that Albert de Morcerf had related when it was intended that he should marry Mademoiselle Eugénie. “They are robbers, perhaps,” he muttered.

Just then the carriage rolled on something harder than gravel road. Danglars hazarded a look on both sides of the road, and perceived monuments of a singular form, and his mind now recalled all the details Morcerf had related, and comparing them with his own situation, he felt sure that he must be on the Appian Way. On the left, in a sort of valley, he perceived a circular excavation. It was Caracalla’s circus. On a word from the man who rode at the side of the carriage, it stopped. At the same time the door was opened. “*Scendi!*” exclaimed a commanding voice.

Danglars instantly descended; although he did not yet speak Italian, he understood it very well. More dead than alive, he looked around him. Four men surrounded him, besides the postilion.

“*Di quà,*” said one of the men, descending a little path leading out of the Appian Way. Danglars followed his guide without opposition, and had no occasion to turn around to see whether the three others were following him. Still it appeared as though they were stationed at equal distances from one another, like sentinels. After walking for about ten minutes, during which Danglars did not exchange a single word with his guide, he found himself between a hillock and a clump of high weeds; three men, standing silent, formed a triangle, of which he was the centre. He wished to speak, but his tongue refused to move.

“*Avanti!*” said the same sharp and imperative voice.

This time Danglars had double reason to understand, for if the word and

gesture had not explained the speaker's meaning, it was clearly expressed by the man walking behind him, who pushed him so rudely that he struck against the guide. This guide was our friend Peppino, who dashed into the thicket of high weeds, through a path which none but lizards or polecats could have imagined to be an open road.

Peppino stopped before a rock overhung by thick hedges; the rock, half open, afforded a passage to the young man, who disappeared like the evil spirits in the fairy tales. The voice and gesture of the man who followed Danglars ordered him to do the same. There was no longer any doubt, the bankrupt was in the hands of Roman banditti. Danglars acquitted himself like a man placed between two dangerous positions, and who is rendered brave by fear. Notwithstanding his large stomach, certainly not intended to penetrate the fissures of the Campagna, he slid down like Peppino, and closing his eyes fell upon his feet. As he touched the ground, he opened his eyes.

50245m

The path was wide, but dark. Peppino, who cared little for being recognized now that he was in his own territories, struck a light and lit a torch. Two other men descended after Danglars forming the rearguard, and pushing Danglars whenever he happened to stop, they came by a gentle declivity to the intersection of two corridors. The walls were hollowed out in sepulchres, one above the other, and which seemed in contrast with the white stones to open their large dark eyes, like those which we see on the faces of the dead. A sentinel struck the rings of his carbine against his left hand.

"Who comes there?" he cried.

"A friend, a friend!" said Peppino; "but where is the captain?"

"There," said the sentinel, pointing over his shoulder to a spacious crypt, hollowed out of the rock, the lights from which shone into the passage through the large arched openings.

"Fine spoil, captain, fine spoil!" said Peppino in Italian, and taking Danglars by the collar of his coat he dragged him to an opening resembling a door, through which they entered the apartment which the captain appeared to have made his dwelling-place.

"Is this the man?" asked the captain, who was attentively reading Plutarch's *Life of Alexander*.

"Himself, captain—himself."

"Very well, show him to me."

At this rather impudent order, Peppino raised his torch to the face of Danglars, who hastily withdrew that he might not have his eyelashes burnt. His agitated features presented the appearance of pale and hideous terror.

"The man is tired," said the captain, "conduct him to his bed."

"Oh," murmured Danglars, "that bed is probably one of the coffins hollowed in the wall, and the sleep I shall enjoy will be death from one of the poniards I see glistening in the darkness."

From their beds of dried leaves or wolf-skins at the back of the chamber now arose the companions of the man who had been found by Albert de Morcerf reading *Cæsar's Commentaries*, and by Danglars studying the *Life of Alexander*. The banker uttered a groan and followed his guide; he neither supplicated nor exclaimed. He no longer possessed strength, will, power, or feeling; he followed where they led him. At length he found himself at the foot of a staircase, and he mechanically lifted his foot five or six times. Then a low door was opened before him, and bending his head to avoid striking his forehead he entered a small room cut out of the rock. The cell was clean, though empty, and dry, though situated at an immeasurable distance under the earth. A bed of dried grass covered with goat-skins was placed in one corner. Danglars brightened up on beholding it, fancying that it gave some promise of safety.

"Oh, God be praised," he said; "it is a real bed!"

This was the second time within the hour that he had invoked the name of God. He had not done so for ten years before.

"*Ecco!*" said the guide, and pushing Danglars into the cell, he closed the door upon him.

A bolt grated and Danglars was a prisoner. If there had been no bolt, it would have been impossible for him to pass through the midst of the garrison who held the catacombs of St. Sebastian, encamped round a master whom our readers must have recognized as the famous Luigi Vampa.

Danglars, too, had recognized the bandit, whose existence he would not believe when Albert de Morcerf mentioned him in Paris; and not only did he recognize him, but the cell in which Albert had been confined, and which was probably kept for the accommodation of strangers. These recollections were dwelt upon with some pleasure by Danglars, and restored him to some degree of tranquillity. Since the bandits had not despatched him at once, he felt that they would not kill him at all. They had arrested him for the purpose of robbery, and as he had only a few louis about him, he doubted not he would be ransomed.

He remembered that Morcerf had been taxed at 4,000 crowns, and as he

considered himself of much greater importance than Morcerf he fixed his own price at 8,000 crowns. Eight thousand crowns amounted to 48,000 livres; he would then have about 5,050,000 francs left. With this sum he could manage to keep out of difficulties. Therefore, tolerably secure in being able to extricate himself from his position, provided he were not rated at the unreasonable 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 Vampa's Bill of Fare

We awoke 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 Breguet's 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 bandit's 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 Villetti 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,—that’s pretty good, when I haven’t 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 Café 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 banker’s 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, I’ll 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 baron’s 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 won’t get them at all. Go to the devil! You do not know with whom you have to deal!”

5025m

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.”

"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 master's 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 Dantès!”

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 count’s 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 o'clock 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 Cristo's 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 count’s 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 count’s 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 o’clock,—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 Valentine's 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. Morrel's 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 Château d'If.

"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 count's 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 count’s 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 count’s 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?"

Haydée 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? Haydée, would it please you not to leave me?"

"I am young," gently replied Haydée; "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, Haydée——"

"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 Haydée, 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, Haydée! 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, Haydée; through you I again take hold on life, through you I shall suffer, through you rejoice."

"Do you hear him, Valentine?" exclaimed Haydée; "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, Haydée, come!" and throwing his arm around the young girl's 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 man's 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.]

7 ([return](#))

[Dr. Guillotin got the idea of his famous machine from witnessing an execution in Italy.]

8 ([return](#))

[Brucea ferruginea.]

9 ([return](#))

[‘Money and sanctity, Each in a moiety.’]

10 ([return](#))

[Elisabeth de Rossan, Marquise de Ganges, was one of the famous women of the court of Louis XIV. where she was known as “La Belle Provençale.” She was the widow of the Marquis de Castellane when she married de Ganges, and having the misfortune to excite the enmity of her new brothers-in-law, was

forced by them to take poison; and they finished her off with pistol and dagger.—Ed.]

11 ([return](#))

[Magistrate and orator of great eloquence—chancellor of France under Louis XV.]

12 ([return](#))

[Jacques-Louis David, a famous French painter (1748-1825).]

13 ([return](#))

[Ali Pasha, “The Lion,” was born at Tepelini, an Albanian village at the foot of the Klissoura Mountains, in 1741. By diplomacy and success in arms he became almost supreme ruler of Albania, Epirus, and adjacent territory. Having aroused the enmity of the Sultan, he was proscribed and put to death by treachery in 1822, at the age of eighty.—Ed.]

14 ([return](#))

[Greek militiamen in the war for independence.—Ed.]

15 ([return](#))

[A Turkish pasha in command of the troops of a province.—Ed.]

16 ([return](#))

[The god of fruitfulness in Grecian mythology. In Crete he was supposed to be slain in winter with the decay of vegetation and to revive in the spring. Haydée’s learned reference is to the behavior of an actor in the Dionysian festivals.—Ed.]

17 ([return](#))

[The Genoese conspirator.]

18 ([return](#))

[Lake Maggiore.]

19 ([return](#))

[In the old Greek legend the Atreidae, or children of Atreus, were doomed to punishment because of the abominable crime of their father. The *Agamemnon* of Aeschylus is based on this legend.]

20 ([return](#))

[The performance of the civil marriage.]

21 ([return](#))

[In Molière’s comedy, *Le Misanthrope*.]

22 ([return](#))

[Literally, “the basket,” because wedding gifts were originally brought in such a receptacle.]

23 ([return](#))

[Germain Pillon was a famous French sculptor (1535-1598). His best known work is “The Three Graces,” now in the Louvre.]

24 ([return](#))

[Frédéric Lemaître—French actor (1800-1876). Robert Macaire is the hero of two favorite melodramas—“Chien de Montargis” and “Chien d’Aubry”—and the name is applied to

bold criminals as a term of derision.]

25 ([return](#))

[The Spahis are French cavalry reserved for service in Africa.]

26 ([return](#))

[*Savate*: an old shoe.]

27 ([return](#))

[*Guilbert de Pixérécourt*, French dramatist (1773-1844).]

28 ([return](#))

[Gaspard Puget, the sculptor-architect, was born at Marseilles in 1615.]

29 ([return](#))

[The Carolina—not Virginia—jessamine, *gelsemium sempervirens* (properly speaking not a jessamine at all) has yellow blossoms. The reference is no doubt to the *Wistaria frutescens*.—Ed.]

30 ([return](#))

[The miser in Molière's comedy of *L'Avare*.—Ed.]

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