Chapter CXIII

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 splendour, are now reflected by the mirror in which Monte Cristo seeks to behold Dantès. Hide thy diamonds, bury thy gold, shroud thy splendour, 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

'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!'

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 labour, 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. rumour 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.'

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 endeavouring 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. '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:

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 endeavour 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!' '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,

'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.' 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

'Now this was his project. He fancied that they buried the dead at the Château d'If, and imagining they would not expend much labour 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 № 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! № 27.'

'Yes; № 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 № 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

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. '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 honour 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.

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 arbour of Virginia jessamine,[2] with its thick foliage and beautiful long purple flowers, he saw Mercédès seated, with her head bowed, and weeping bitterly.

[2]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.

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.' '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?'

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.' 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