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 CXV

Luigi Vampa's Bill of Fare

We awake from every sleep except the one dreaded by Danglars. He awoke. To a Parisian accustomed to silken curtains, walls hung with velvet drapery, and the soft perfume of burning wood, the white smoke of which diffuses itself in graceful curves around the room, the appearance of the whitewashed cell which greeted his eyes on awakening seemed like the continuation of some disagreeable dream. But in such a situation a single moment suffices to change the strongest doubt into certainty.

'Yes, yes,' he murmured, 'I am in the hands of the brigands of whom Albert de Morcerf spoke.' His first idea was to breathe, that he might know whether he was wounded. He borrowed this from *Don Quixote*, the only book he had ever read, but which he still slightly remembered.

'No,' he cried, 'they have not wounded, but perhaps they have robbed me!' and he thrust his hands into his pockets. They were untouched; the hundred louis he had reserved for his journey from Rome to Venice were in his trousers pocket, and in that of his greatcoat he found the little note-case containing his letter of credit for 5,050,000 francs.

'Singular bandits!' he exclaimed; 'they have left me my purse and pocket-book. As I was saying last night, they intend me to be ransomed. Hello, here is my watch! Let me see what time it is.'

Danglars' watch, one of 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. 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!'

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 impertinent 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

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. 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

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 Villetri 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.'

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. '*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

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*.' 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

'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!' 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

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