Chapter XXIII

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 endeavoured 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.

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.

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 favourable 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

Edmond gazed very earnestly at the mass of rocks which gave out all the variety of twilight colours, 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 endeavouring 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.'

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.

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. 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 shallops came off

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 fondest hopes. Might it not have been the cardinal himself who had first traced them, in order that they might serve as a guide for his nephew in the event of a catastrophe, which he could not foresee would have been so complete. This solitary place was precisely suited to the requirements of a man desirous of burying treasure. Only, might not these betraying marks have attracted other eyes than those for whom they were made? and had the dark and wondrous island indeed faithfully guarded its precious secret? It seemed, however, to Edmond, who was hidden from his comrades by the inequalities of the ground, that at sixty paces from the harbour 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

and from their depths occasionally sparkled gloomy fires of misanthropy and hatred; his complexion, so long kept from the sun, had now that pale colour 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 vigour which a frame possesses which has so long concentrated all its force within itself. 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

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 favour his mild demeanour, 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,

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 favour.

'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 harbour, 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 XXII

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