'Yes,—I fear.'

'You fear to acknowledge that your correspondent has deceived you? Oh, no self-love, Beauchamp. Acknowledge it, Beauchamp; your courage cannot be doubted.'

'Not so,' murmured the journalist; 'on the contrary— '

Albert turned frightfully pale; he endeavoured to speak, but the words died on his lips.

'My friend,' said Beauchamp, in the most affectionate tone, 'I should gladly make an apology; but, alas!— '

'But what?'

'The paragraph was correct, my friend.'

'What? That French officer— '

'Yes.'

'Fernand?'

'Yes.'

'The traitor who surrendered the castle of the man in whose service he was— '

'Pardon me, my friend, that man was your father!'

Albert advanced furiously towards Beauchamp, but the latter restrained him more by a mild look than by his extended hand.

'My friend,' said he, 'here is a proof of it.' Albert opened the paper, it was an attestation of four notable inhabitants of Yanina, proving that Colonel Fernand Mondego, in the service of Ali Tepelini, had surrendered the castle for two million crowns. The signatures were perfectly legal. Albert tottered and fell overpowered in a chair. It could no longer be doubted; the family name was fully given. After a moment's mournful silence, his heart overflowed, and he gave way to a flood of tears. Beauchamp, who had watched with sincere pity the young man's paroxysm of grief, approached him.

'Now, Albert,' said he, 'you understand me—do you not? I wished to see all, and to judge of everything for myself, hoping the explanation would be in your father's favour, and that I might do him justice. But, on the contrary, the particulars which are given prove that Fernand Mondego, raised by Ali Pasha to the rank of governor-general, is no other than Count Fernand of Morcerf; then, recollecting the honour you had done me, in admitting me to your friendship, I hastened to you.'

Albert, still extended on the chair, covered his face with both hands, as if to prevent the light from reaching him.

'I hastened to you,' continued Beauchamp, 'to tell you, Albert, that in this changing age, the faults of a father cannot revert upon his children. Few have passed through this revolutionary period, in the midst of which we were born, without some stain of infamy or blood to soil the uniform of the soldier, or the gown of the magistrate. Now I have these proofs, Albert, and I am in your confidence, no human power can force me to a duel which your own conscience would reproach you with as criminal, but I come to offer you what you can no longer demand of me. Do you wish these proofs, these attestations, which I alone possess, to be destroyed? Do you wish this frightful secret to remain with us? Confided to me, it shall never escape my lips; say, Albert, my friend, do you wish it?'

Albert threw himself on Beauchamp's neck.

'Ah, noble fellow!' cried he.

'Take these,' said Beauchamp, presenting the papers to Albert.

Albert seized them with a convulsive hand, tore them in pieces, and trembling lest the least vestige should escape and one day appear to confront him, he approached the wax-light, always kept burning for cigars, and burned every fragment.

'Dear, excellent friend,' murmured Albert, still burning the papers.

'Let all be forgotten as a sorrowful dream,' said Beauchamp; 'let it vanish as the last sparks from the blackened paper, and disappear as the smoke from those silent ashes.'

'Yes, yes,' said Albert, 'and may there remain only the eternal friendship which I promised to my deliverer, which shall be transmitted to our children's children, and shall always remind me that I owe my life and the honour of my name to you,—for had this been known, oh, Beauchamp, I should have destroyed myself; or,—no, my poor mother! I could not have killed her by the same blow,—I should have fled from my country.'

'Dear Albert,' said Beauchamp. But this sudden and factitious joy soon forsook the young man, and was succeeded by a still greater grief.

'Well,' said Beauchamp, 'what still oppresses you, my friend?' 'I am broken-hearted,' said Albert. 'Listen, Beauchamp! I cannot thus, in a moment relinquish the respect, the confidence, and pride with which a father's untarnished

name inspires a son. Oh, Beauchamp, Beauchamp, how shall I now approach mine? Shall I draw back my forehead from his embrace, or withhold my hand from his? I am the most wretched of men. Ah, my mother, my poor mother!' said Albert, gazing through his tears at his mother's portrait; 'if you know this, how much must you suffer!'

'Come,' said Beauchamp, taking both his hands, 'take courage, my friend.'

'But how came that first note to be inserted in your journal? Some unknown enemy—an invisible foe—has done this.'

'The more must you fortify yourself, Albert. Let no trace of emotion be visible on your countenance, bear your grief as the cloud bears within it ruin and death—a fatal secret, known only when the storm bursts. Go, my friend, reserve your strength for the moment when the crash shall come.' 'You think, then, all is not over yet?' said Albert, horror-stricken.

'I think nothing, my friend; but all things are possible. By the way— '

'What?' said Albert, seeing that Beauchamp hesitated.

'Are you going to marry Mademoiselle Danglars?'

'Why do you ask me now?'

'Because the rupture or fulfilment of this engagement is connected with the person of whom we were speaking.'

'How?' said Albert, whose brow reddened; 'you think M. Danglars— '

'I ask you only how your engagement stands? Pray put no construction on my words I do not mean they should convey, and give them no undue weight.'

'No.' said Albert, 'the engagement is broken off.'

'Well,' said Beauchamp. Then, seeing the young man was about to relapse into melancholy, 'Let us go out, Albert,' said he; 'a ride in the wood in the phaeton, or on horseback, will refresh you; we will then return to breakfast, and you shall attend to your affairs, and I to mine.'

'Willingly,' said Albert; 'but let us walk. I think a little exertion would do me good.'

The two friends walked out on the fortress. When they arrived at the Madeleine:

'Since we are out,' said Beauchamp, 'let us call on M. de Monte Cristo; he is admirably adapted to revive one's spirits, because he never interrogates, and in my opinion those who ask no questions are the best comforters.'

'Gladly,' said Albert; 'let us call—I love him.'

'Albert,' said the journalist, 'these are questions which it is difficult to answer.'

'I will facilitate it by repeating the question, "Will you, or will you not, retract?"'

'Morcerf, it is not enough to answer "yes" or "no" to questions which concern the honour, the social interest, and the life of such a man as Lieutenant-général the Count of Morcerf, peer of France.'

'What must then be done?' 'What I have done, Albert. I reasoned thus—money, time, and fatigue are nothing compared with the reputation and interests of a whole family; probabilities will not suffice, only facts will justify a deadly combat with a friend. If I strike with the sword, or discharge the contents of a pistol at man with whom, for three years, I have been on terms of intimacy, I must, at least, know why I do so; I must meet him with a heart at ease, and that quiet conscience which a man needs when his own arm must save his life.'

'Well,' said Morcerf, impatiently, 'what does all this mean?'

'It means that I have just returned from Yanina.'

'From Yanina?'

'Yes.'

'Impossible!'

'Here is my passport; examine the visa—Geneva, Milan, Venice, Trieste, Delvino, Yanina. Will you believe the government of a republic, a kingdom, and an empire?' Albert cast his eyes on the passport, then raised them in astonishment to Beauchamp.

'You have been to Yanina?' said he.

'Albert, had you been a stranger, a foreigner, a simple lord, like that Englishman who came to demand satisfaction three or four months since, and whom I killed to get rid of, I should not have taken this trouble; but I thought this mark of consideration due to you. I took a week to go, another to return, four days of quarantine, and forty-eight hours to stay there; that makes three weeks. I returned last night, and here I am.'

'What circumlocution! How long you are before you tell me what I most wish to know?'

'Because, in truth, Albert— '

'You hesitate?'

some persons had warned the young man of the circumstances of his future father-in-law, who had of late sustained repeated losses; but with sublime disinterestedness and confidence the young man refused to listen, or to express a single doubt to the baron.

The baron adored Count Andrea Cavalcanti; not so Mademoiselle Eugénie Danglars. With an instinctive hatred of matrimony, she suffered Andrea's attentions in order to get rid of Morcerf; but when Andrea urged his suit, she betrayed an entire dislike to him. The baron might possibly have perceived it, but, attributing it to a caprice, feigned ignorance.

The delay demanded by Beauchamp had nearly expired. Morcerf appreciated the advice of Monte Cristo to let things die away of their own accord. No one had taken up the remark about the general, and no one had recognized in the officer who betrayed the castle of Yanina the noble count in the House of Peers.

Albert, however, felt no less insulted; the few lines which had irritated him were certainly intended as an insult. Besides, the manner in which Beauchamp had closed the conference left a bitter recollection in his heart. He cherished the thought of the duel, hoping to conceal its true cause even from his seconds. Beauchamp had not been seen since the day he visited Albert, and those of whom the latter inquired always told him he was out on a journey which would detain him some days. Where he was no one knew.

One morning Albert was awakened by his valet de chambre, who announced Beauchamp. Albert rubbed his eyes, ordered his servant to introduce him into the small smoking-room on the ground floor, dressed himself quickly, and went down.

He found Beauchamp pacing the room; on perceiving him Beauchamp stopped.

'Your arrival here, without waiting my visit at your house today, looks well, sir,' said Albert. 'Tell me, may I shake hands with you, saying, "Beauchamp, acknowledge you have injured me, and retain my friendship," or must I simply propose to you a choice of arms?'

'Albert,' said Beauchamp, with a look of sorrow which stupefied the young man, 'let us first sit down and talk.'

'Rather, sir, before we sit down, I must demand your answer.'

Chapter LXXXV

The Journey

MONTE Cristo uttered a joyful exclamation on seeing the young men together. 'Ah, ha!' said he, 'I hope all is over, explained and settled.'

'Yes,' said Beauchamp; 'the absurd reports have died away, and should they be renewed, I would be the first to oppose them; so let us speak no more of it.'

'Albert will tell you,' replied the count 'that I gave him the same advice. Look,' added he. 'I am finishing the most execrable morning's work.'

'What is it?' said Albert; 'arranging your papers, apparently.'

'My papers, thank God, no,—my papers are all in capital order, because I have none; but M. Cavalcanti's.'

'M. Cavalcanti's?' asked Beauchamp.

'Yes; do you not know that this is a young man whom the count is introducing?' said Morcerf.

'Let us not misunderstand each other,' replied Monte Cristo; 'I introduce no one, and certainly not M. Cavalcanti.'

'And who,' said Albert with a forced smile, 'is to marry Mademoiselle Danglars instead of me, which grieves me cruelly.'

'What? Cavalcanti is going to marry Mademoiselle Danglars?' asked Beauchamp.

'Certainly! do you come from the end of the world?' said Monte Cristo; 'you, a journalist, the husband of renown? It is the talk of all Paris.'

'And you, count, have made this match?' asked Beauchamp.

'I? Silence, purveyor of gossip, do not spread that report. I make a match? No, you do not know me; I have done all in my power to oppose it.'

'Ah, I understand,' said Beauchamp, 'on our friend Albert's account.'

'On my account?' said the young man; 'oh, no, indeed, the count will do me the justice to assert that I have, on the contrary, always entreated him to break off my engagement, and happily it is ended. The count pretends I have not him to thank;—so be it—I will erect an altar *Deo ignoto*.'

'Listen,' said Monte Cristo; 'I have had little to do with it, for I am at variance both with the father-in-law and the young man; there is only Mademoiselle Eugénie, who appears but little charmed with the thoughts of matrimony, and who, seeing how little I was disposed to persuade her to renounce her dear liberty, retains any affection for me.'

'And do you say this wedding is at hand?'

'Oh, yes, in spite of all I could say. I do not know the young man; he is said to be of good family and rich, but I never trust to vague assertions. I have warned M. Danglars of it till I am tired, but he is fascinated with his Luccanese. I have even informed him of a circumstance I consider very serious; the young man was either charmed by his nurse, stolen by gypsies, or lost by his tutor, I scarcely know which. But I do know his father lost sight of him for more than ten years; what he did during these ten years, God only knows. Well, all that was useless. They have commissioned me to write to the major to demand papers, and here they are. I send them, but like Pilate—washing my hands.'

'And what does Mademoiselle d'Armilly say to you for robbing her of her pupil?'

'Oh, well, I don't know; but I understand that she is going to Italy. Madame Danglars asked me for letters of recommendation for the *impresari*; I gave her a few lines for the director of the Valle Theatre, who is under some obligation to me. But what is the matter, Albert? you look dull; are you, after all, unconsciously in love with Mademoiselle Eugénie?'

'I am not aware of it,' said Albert, smiling sorrowfully. Beauchamp turned to look at some paintings.

'But,' continued Monte Cristo, 'you are not in your usual spirits?'

'I have a dreadful headache,' said Albert.

'Well, my dear viscount,' said Monte Cristo, 'I have an infallible remedy to propose to you.'

'What is that?' asked the young man.

'A change.'

'Indeed?' said Albert.

Chapter LXXXIV

Beauchamp

THE daring attempt to rob the count was the topic of conversation throughout Paris for the next fortnight. The dying man had signed a deposition declaring Benedetto to be the assassin. The police had orders to make the strictest search for the murderer. Caderousse's knife, dark lantern, bunch of keys, and clothing, excepting the waistcoat, which could not be found, were deposited at the registry; the corpse was conveyed to the morgue. The count told everyone that this adventure had happened during his absence at Auteuil, and that he only knew what was related by the Abbé Busoni, who that evening, by mere chance, had requested to pass the night in his house, to examine some valuable books in his library.

Bertuccio alone turned pale whenever Benedetto's name was mentioned in his presence, but there was no reason why anyone should notice his doing so.

Villefort, being called on to prove the crime, was preparing his brief with the same ardour that he was accustomed to exercise when required to speak in criminal cases.

But three weeks had already passed, and the most diligent search had been unsuccessful; the attempted robbery and the murder of the robber by his comrade were almost forgotten in anticipation of the approaching marriage of Mademoiselle Danglars to the Count Andrea Cavalcanti. It was expected that this wedding would shortly take place, as the young man was received at the banker's as the betrothed.

Letters had been despatched to M. Cavalcanti, as the count's father, who highly approved of the union, regretted his inability to leave Parma at that time, and promised a wedding gift of a hundred and fifty thousand livres. It was agreed that the three millions should be intrusted to Danglars to invest;

'Who, then, are you? and why, if you knew me, do you let me die?'

'Because nothing can save you; your wounds are mortal. Had it been possible to save you, I should have considered it another proof of God's mercy, and I would again have endeavoured to restore you, I swear by my father's tomb.'

'By your father's tomb!' said Caderousse, supported by a supernatural power, and half-raising himself to see more distinctly the man who had just taken the oath which all men hold sacred; 'who, then, are you?'

The count had watched the approach of death. He knew this was the last struggle. He approached the dying man, and, leaning over him with a calm and melancholy look, he whispered, 'I am—I am— '

And his almost closed lips uttered a name so low that the count himself appeared afraid to hear it. Caderousse, who had raised himself on his knees, and stretched out his arm, tried to draw back, then clasping his hands, and raising them with a desperate effort, 'Oh, my God, my God!' said he, 'pardon me for having denied thee; thou dost exist, thou art indeed man's father in heaven, and his judge on earth. My God, my Lord, I have long despised thee! Pardon me, my God; receive me, Oh, my Lord!'

Caderousse sighed deeply, and fell back with a groan. The blood no longer flowed from his wounds. He was dead.

'*One!*' said the count mysteriously, his eyes fixed on the corpse, disfigured by so awful a death.

Ten minutes afterwards the surgeon and the procureur arrived, the one accompanied by the porter, the other by Ali, and were received by the Abbé Busoni, who was praying by the side of the corpse.

'Yes; and as I am just now excessively annoyed, I shall go from home. Shall we go together?'

'You annoyed, count?' said Beauchamp; 'and by what?'

'Ah, you think very lightly of it; I should like to see you with a brief preparing in your house.'

'What brief?'

'The one M. de Villefort is preparing against my amiable assassin—some brigand escaped from the gallows apparently.'

'True,' said Beauchamp; 'I saw it in the paper. Who is this Caderousse?'

'Some Provençal, it appears. M. de Villefort heard of him at Marseilles, and M. Danglars recollects having seen him. Consequently, the procureur is very active in the affair, and the prefect of police very much interested; and, thanks to that interest, for which I am very grateful, they send me all the robbers of Paris and the neighbourhood, under pretence of their being Caderousse's murderers, so that in three months, if this continues, every robber and assassin in France will have the plan of my house at his fingers' ends. I am resolved to desert them and go to some remote corner of the earth, and shall be happy if you will accompany me, viscount.'

'Willingly.'

'Then it is settled?'

'Yes, but where?'

'I have told you, where the air is pure, where every sound soothes, where one is sure to be humbled, however proud may be his nature. I love that humiliation, I, who am master of the universe, as was Augustus.'

'But where are you really going?'

'To sea, viscount; you know I am a sailor. I was rocked when an infant in the arms of old Ocean, and on the bosom of the beautiful Amphitrite; I have sported with the green mantle of the one and the azure robe of the other; I love the sea as a mistress, and pine if I do not often see her.'

'Let us go, count.'

'To sea?'

'Yes.'

'You accept my proposal?'

'I do.'

'Well, viscount, there will be in my courtyard this evening a good travelling britzka, with four post-horses, in which one may rest as in a bed. M. Beauchamp, it holds four very well, will you accompany us?'

'Thank you, I have just returned from sea.'

'What? you have been to sea?'

'Yes; I have just made a little excursion to the Borromean Islands[1].'

'What of that? come with us,' said Albert.

'No, dear Morcerf; you know I only refuse when the thing is impossible. Besides, it is important,' added he in a low tone, 'that I should remain in Paris just now to watch the paper.'

'Ah, you are a good and an excellent friend,' said Albert; 'yes, you are right; watch, watch, Beauchamp, and try to discover the enemy who made this disclosure.'

Albert and Beauchamp parted, the last pressure of their hands expressing what their tongues could not before a stranger.

'Beauchamp is a worthy fellow,' said Monte Cristo, when the journalist was gone; 'is he not, Albert?'

'Yes, and a sincere friend; I love him devotedly. But now we are alone,—although it is immaterial to me,—where are we going?'

'Into Normandy, if you like.'

'Delightful; shall we be quite retired? have no society, no neighbours?'

'Our companions will be riding-horses, dogs to hunt with, and a fishing-boat.'

'Exactly what I wish for; I will apprise my mother of my intention, and return to you.'

'But shall you be allowed to go into Normandy?'

'I may go where I please.'

'Yes, I am aware you may go alone, since I once met you in Italy—but to accompany the mysterious Monte Cristo?'

'You forget, count, that I have often told you of the deep interest my mother takes in you.'

[1]Lake Maggiore.

'Then, you, too, will be punished, for you did not do your duty as a priest—you should have prevented Benedetto from killing me.'

'I?' said the count, with a smile which petrified the dying man, 'when you had just broken your knife against the coat of mail which protected my breast! Yet perhaps if I had found you humble and penitent, I might have prevented Benedetto from killing you; but I found you proud and blood-thirsty, and I left you in the hands of God.'

'I do not believe there is a God,' howled Caderousse; 'you do not believe it; you lie—you lie!'

'Silence,' said the abbé; 'you will force the last drop of blood from your veins. What! you do not believe in God when he is striking you dead? you will not believe in him, who requires but a prayer, a word, a tear, and he will forgive? God, who might have directed the assassin's dagger so as to end your career in a moment, has given you this quarter of an hour for repentance. Reflect, then, wretched man, and repent.'

'No,' said Caderousse, 'no; I will not repent. There is no God; there is no Providence—all comes by chance.'

'There is a Providence; there is a God,' said Monte Cristo, 'of whom you are a striking proof, as you lie in utter despair, denying him, while I stand before you, rich, happy, safe and entreating that God in whom you endeavour not to believe, while in your heart you still believe in him.'

'But who are you, then?' asked Caderousse, fixing his dying eyes on the count.

'Look well at me!' said Monte Cristo, putting the light near his face.

'Well, the abbé—the Abbé Busoni.' Monte Cristo took off the wig which disfigured him, and let fall his black hair, which added so much to the beauty of his pallid features.

'Oh?' said Caderousse, thunderstruck, 'but for that black hair, I should say you were the Englishman, Lord Wilmore.'

'I am neither the Abbé Busoni nor Lord Wilmore,' said Monte Cristo; 'think again,—do you not recollect me?'

There was a magic effect in the count's words, which once more revived the exhausted powers of the miserable man.

'Yes, indeed,' said he; 'I think I have seen you and known you formerly.'

'Yes, Caderousse, you have seen me; you knew me once.'

'Help!' cried Caderousse; 'I require a surgeon, not a priest; perhaps I am not mortally wounded—I may not die; perhaps they can yet save my life.'

'Your wounds are so far mortal that, without the three drops I gave you, you would now be dead. Listen, then.'

'Ah,' murmured Caderousse, 'what a strange priest you are; you drive the dying to despair, instead of consoling them.'

'Listen,' continued the abbé. 'When you had betrayed your friend, God began not to strike, but to warn you. Poverty overtook you. You had already passed half your life in coveting that which you might have honorably acquired; and already you contemplated crime under the excuse of want, when God worked a miracle in your behalf, sending you, by my hands, a fortune—brilliant, indeed, for you, who had never possessed any. But this unexpected, unhoped-for, unheard-of fortune sufficed you no longer when you once possessed it; you wished to double it, and how?—by a murder! You succeeded, and then God snatched it from you, and brought you to justice.'

'It was not I who wished to kill the Jew,' said Caderousse; 'it was La Carconte.'

'Yes,' said Monte Cristo, 'and God,—I cannot say in justice, for his justice would have slain you,—but God, in his mercy, spared your life.'

'*Pardieu!* to transport me for life, how merciful!'

'You thought it a mercy then, miserable wretch! The coward who feared death rejoiced at perpetual disgrace; for like all galley-slaves, you said, "I may escape from prison, I cannot from the grave.' And you said truly; the way was opened for you unexpectedly. An Englishman visited Toulon, who had vowed to rescue two men from infamy, and his choice fell on you and your companion. You received a second fortune, money and tranquillity were restored to you, and you, who had been condemned to a felon"s life, might live as other men. Then, wretched creature, then you tempted God a third time. "I have not enough," you said, when you had more than you before possessed, and you committed a third crime, without reason, without excuse. God is wearied; he has punished you.'

Caderousse was fast sinking. 'Give me drink,' said he: 'I thirst—I burn!' Monte Cristo gave him a glass of water. 'And yet that villain, Benedetto, will escape!'

'No one, I tell you, will escape; Benedetto will be punished.'

'"Woman is fickle." said Francis I.; "woman is like a wave of the sea,' said Shakespeare; both the great king and the great poet ought to have known woman"s nature well.'

'Woman's, yes; my mother is not woman, but *a* woman.'

'As I am only a humble foreigner, you must pardon me if I do not understand all the subtle refinements of your language.'

'What I mean to say is, that my mother is not quick to give her confidence, but when she does she never changes.'

'Ah, yes, indeed,' said Monte Cristo with a sigh; 'and do you think she is in the least interested in me?'

'I repeat it, you must really be a very strange and superior man, for my mother is so absorbed by the interest you have excited, that when I am with her she speaks of no one else.'

'And does she try to make you dislike me?'

'On the contrary, she often says, "Morcerf, I believe the count has a noble nature; try to gain his esteem."'

'Indeed?' said Monte Cristo, sighing.

'You see, then,' said Albert, 'that instead of opposing, she will encourage me.'

'Adieu, then, until five o'clock; be punctual, and we shall arrive at twelve or one.'

'At Tréport?'

'Yes; or in the neighbourhood.'

'But can we travel forty-eight leagues in eight hours?'

'Easily,' said Monte Cristo.

'You are certainly a prodigy; you will soon not only surpass the railway, which would not be very difficult in France, but even the telegraph.'

'But, viscount, since we cannot perform the journey in less than seven or eight hours, do not keep me waiting.'

'Do not fear, I have little to prepare.'

Monte Cristo smiled as he nodded to Albert, then remained a moment absorbed in deep meditation. But passing his hand across his forehead as if to dispel his reverie, he rang the bell twice and Bertuccio entered.

'Bertuccio,' said he, 'I intend going this evening to Normandy, instead of tomorrow or the next day. You will have sufficient time before five o'clock;

despatch a messenger to apprise the grooms at the first station. M. de Morcerf will accompany me.'

Bertuccio obeyed and despatched a courier to Pontoise to say the travelling-carriage would arrive at six o'clock. From Pontoise another express was sent to the next stage, and in six hours all the horses stationed on the road were ready.

Before his departure, the count went to Haydée's apartments, told her his intention, and resigned everything to her care.

Albert was punctual. The journey soon became interesting from its rapidity, of which Morcerf had formed no previous idea.

'Truly,' said Monte Cristo, 'with your post-horses going at the rate of two leagues an hour, and that absurd law that one traveller shall not pass another without permission, so that an invalid or ill-tempered traveller may detain those who are well and active, it is impossible to move; I escape this annoyance by travelling with my own postilion and horses; do I not, Ali?'

The count put his head out of the window and whistled, and the horses appeared to fly. The carriage rolled with a thundering noise over the pavement, and everyone turned to notice the dazzling meteor. Ali, smiling, repeated the sound, grasped the reins with a firm hand, and spurred his horses, whose beautiful manes floated in the breeze. This child of the desert was in his element, and with his black face and sparkling eyes appeared, in the cloud of dust he raised, like the genius of the simoom and the god of the hurricane.

'I never knew till now the delight of speed,' said Morcerf, and the last cloud disappeared from his brow; 'but where the devil do you get such horses? Are they made to order?'

'Precisely,' said the count; 'six years since I bought a horse in Hungary remarkable for its swiftness. The thirty-two that we shall use tonight are its progeny; they are all entirely black, with the exception of a star upon the forehead.'

'That is perfectly admirable; but what do you do, count, with all these horses?'

'You see, I travel with them.'

'But you are not always travelling.'

'When I no longer require them, Bertuccio will sell them, and he expects to realize thirty or forty thousand francs by the sale.'

'But no monarch in Europe will be wealthy enough to purchase them.'

'I will say he had doubtless given you the plan of this house, in the hope the count would kill you. I will say, likewise, he had apprised the count, by a note, of your intention, and, the count being absent, I read the note and sat up to await you.'

'And he will be guillotined, will he not?' said Caderousse. 'Promise me that, and I will die with that hope.'

'I will say,' continued the count, 'that he followed and watched you the whole time, and when he saw you leave the house, ran to the angle of the wall to conceal himself.'

'Did you see all that?'

'Remember my words: "If you return home safely, I shall believe God has forgiven you, and I will forgive you also."'

'And you did not warn me!' cried Caderousse, raising himself on his elbows. 'You knew I should be killed on leaving this house, and did not warn me!'

'No; for I saw God's justice placed in the hands of Benedetto, and should have thought it sacrilege to oppose the designs of Providence.'

'God's justice! Speak not of it, reverend sir. If God were just, you know how many would be punished who now escape.'

'Patience,' said the abbé, in a tone which made the dying man shudder; 'have patience!'

Caderousse looked at him with amazement.

'Besides,' said the abbé, 'God is merciful to all, as he has been to you; he is first a father, then a judge.'

'Do you then believe in God?' said Caderousse.

'Had I been so unhappy as not to believe in him until now,' said Monte Cristo, 'I must believe on seeing you.'

Caderousse raised his clenched hands towards heaven.

'Listen,' said the abbé, extending his hand over the wounded man, as if to command him to believe; 'this is what the God in whom, on your death-bed, you refuse to believe, has done for you—he gave you health, strength, regular employment, even friends—a life, in fact, which a man might enjoy with a calm conscience. Instead of improving these gifts, rarely granted so abundantly, this has been your course—you have given yourself up to sloth and drunkenness, and in a fit of intoxication have ruined your best friend.'