'No; and your excellencies will do well not to think of that any longer; at Rome things can or cannot be done; when you are told anything cannot be done, there is an end of it.'

'It is much more convenient at Paris,—when anything cannot be done, you pay double, and it is done directly.'

'That is what all the French say,' returned Signor Pastrini, somewhat piqued; 'for that reason, I do not understand why they travel.'

'But,' said Albert, emitting a volume of smoke and balancing his chair on its hind legs, 'only madmen, or blockheads like us, ever do travel. Men in their senses do not quit their hotel in the Rue du Helder, their walk on the Boulevard de Gand, and the Café de Paris.'

It is of course understood that Albert resided in the aforesaid street, appeared every day on the fashionable walk, and dined frequently at the only restaurant where you can really dine, that is, if you are on good terms with its waiters.

Signor Pastrini remained silent a short time; it was evident that he was musing over this answer, which did not seem very clear.

'But,' said Franz, in his turn interrupting his host's meditations, 'you had some motive for coming here, may I beg to know what it was?' 'Ah, yes; you have ordered your carriage at eight o'clock precisely?'

'I have.'

'You intend visiting *Il Colosseo*.'

'You mean the Colosseum?'

'It is the same thing. You have told your coachman to leave the city by the Porta del Popolo, to drive round the walls, and re-enter by the Porta San Giovanni?'

'These are my words exactly.'

'Well, this route is impossible.'

'Impossible!'

'Very dangerous, to say the least.'

'Dangerous!—and why?'

'On account of the famous Luigi Vampa.'

'Pray, who may this famous Luigi Vampa be?' inquired Albert; 'he may be very famous at Rome, but I can assure you he is quite unknown at Paris.'

'What! do you not know him?'

'I have not that honour.'

'You have never heard his name?'

'Never.'

'Well, then, he is a bandit, compared to whom the Decesaris and the Gasparones were mere children.'

'Now then, Albert,' cried Franz, 'here is a bandit for you at last.'

'I forewarn you, Signor Pastrini, that I shall not believe one word of what you are going to tell us; having told you this, begin. "Once upon a time— " Well, go on.'

Signor Pastrini turned toward Franz, who seemed to him the more reasonable of the two; we must do him justice,—he had had a great many Frenchmen in his house, but had never been able to comprehend them.

'Excellency,' said he gravely, addressing Franz, 'if you look upon me as a liar, it is useless for me to say anything; it was for your interest I— '

'Albert does not say you are a liar, Signor Pastrini,' said Franz, 'but that he will not believe what you are going to tell us,—but I will believe all you say; so proceed.'

'But if your excellency doubt my veracity— '

'Signor Pastrini,' returned Franz, 'you are more susceptible than Cassandra, who was a prophetess, and yet no one believed her; while you, at least, are sure of the credence of half your audience. Come, sit down, and tell us all about this Signor Vampa.'

'I had told your excellency he is the most famous bandit we have had since the days of Mastrilla.'

'Well, what has this bandit to do with the order I have given the coachman to leave the city by the Porta del Popolo, and to re-enter by the Porta San Giovanni?' 'This,' replied Signor Pastrini, 'that you will go out by one, but I very much doubt your returning by the other.'

'Why?' asked Franz.

'Because, after nightfall, you are not safe fifty yards from the gates.'

'On your honour, is that true?' cried Albert.

'Count,' returned Signor Pastrini, hurt at Albert's repeated doubts of the truth of his assertions, 'I do not say this to you, but to your companion, who knows Rome, and knows, too, that these things are not to be laughed at.'

'My dear fellow,' said Albert, turning to Franz, 'here is an admirable adventure; we will fill our carriage with pistols, blunderbusses, and double-barrelled guns. Luigi Vampa comes to take us, and we take him—we bring him back to Rome, and present him to his holiness the Pope, who asks how he can repay so great a service; then we merely ask for a carriage and a pair of horses, and we see the Carnival in the carriage, and doubtless the Roman people will crown us at the Capitol, and proclaim us, like Curtius and Horatius Cocles, the preservers of their country.'

Whilst Albert proposed this scheme, Signor Pastrini's face assumed an expression impossible to describe.

'And pray,' asked Franz, 'where are these pistols, blunderbusses, and other deadly weapons with which you intend filling the carriage?'

'Not out of my armory, for at Terracina I was plundered even of my hunting-knife. And you?'

'I shared the same fate at Aquapendente.'

'Do you know, Signor Pastrini,' said Albert, lighting a second cigar at the first, 'that this practice is very convenient for bandits, and that it seems to be due to an arrangement of their own.'

Doubtless Signor Pastrini found this pleasantry compromising, for he only answered half the question, and then he spoke to Franz, as the only one likely to listen with attention. 'Your excellency knows that it is not customary to defend yourself when attacked by bandits.'

'What!' cried Albert, whose courage revolted at the idea of being plundered tamely, 'not make any resistance!'

'No, for it would be useless. What could you do against a dozen bandits who spring out of some pit, ruin, or aqueduct, and level their pieces at you?'

'Eh, *parbleu!*—they should kill me.'

The innkeeper turned to Franz with an air that seemed to say, 'Your friend is decidedly mad.'

'My dear Albert,' returned Franz, 'your answer is sublime, and worthy the "*Let him die*," of Corneille, only, when Horace made that answer, the safety of Rome was concerned; but, as for us, it is only to gratify a whim, and it would be ridiculous to risk our lives for so foolish a motive.'

Albert poured himself out a glass of *lacryma Christi*, which he sipped at intervals, muttering some unintelligible words.

spite of its humble exterior, the young men would have thought themselves happy to have secured it for the last three days of the Carnival.

'Excellency,' cried the *cicerone*, seeing Franz approach the window, 'shall I bring the carriage nearer to the palace?'

Accustomed as Franz was to the Italian phraseology, his first impulse was to look round him, but these words were addressed to him. Franz was the 'excellency,' the vehicle was the 'carriage,' and the Hôtel de Londres was the 'palace.' The genius for laudation characteristic of the race was in that phrase.

Franz and Albert descended, the carriage approached the palace; their excellencies stretched their legs along the seats; the *cicerone* sprang into the seat behind.

'Where do your excellencies wish to go?' asked he.

'To Saint Peter's first, and then to the Colosseum,' returned Albert. But Albert did not know that it takes a day to see Saint Peter's, and a month to study it. The day was passed at Saint Peter's alone.

Suddenly the daylight began to fade away; Franz took out his watch—it was half-past four. They returned to the hotel; at the door Franz ordered the coachman to be ready at eight. He wished to show Albert the Colosseum by moonlight, as he had shown him Saint Peter's by daylight. When we show a friend a city one has already visited, we feel the same pride as when we point out a woman whose lover we have been.

He was to leave the city by the Porta del Popolo, skirt the outer wall, and re-enter by the Porta San Giovanni; thus they would behold the Colosseum without finding their impressions dulled by first looking on the Capitol, the Forum, the Arch of Septimus Severus, the Temple of Antoninus and Faustina, and the Via Sacra.

They sat down to dinner. Signor Pastrini had promised them a banquet; he gave them a tolerable repast. At the end of the dinner he entered in person. Franz thought that he came to hear his dinner praised, and began accordingly, but at the first words he was interrupted.

'Excellency,' said Pastrini, 'I am delighted to have your approbation, but it was not for that I came.'

'Did you come to tell us you have procured a carriage?' asked Albert, lighting his cigar.

'Ah, a window!' exclaimed Signor Pastrini,—'utterly impossible; there was only one left on the fifth floor of the Doria Palace, and that has been let to a Russian prince for twenty sequins a day.'

The two young men looked at each other with an air of stupefaction.

'Well,' said Franz to Albert, 'do you know what is the best thing we can do? It is to pass the Carnival at Venice; there we are sure of obtaining gondolas if we cannot have carriages.'

'Ah, the devil, no,' cried Albert; 'I came to Rome to see the Carnival, and I will, though I see it on stilts.'

'Bravo! an excellent idea. We will disguise ourselves as monster pulchinellos or shepherds of the Landes, and we shall have complete success.'

'Do your excellencies still wish for a carriage from now to Sunday morning?'

'*Parbleu!*' said Albert, 'do you think we are going to run about on foot in the streets of Rome, like lawyers' clerks?'

'I hasten to comply with your excellencies' wishes; only, I tell you beforehand, the carriage will cost you six piastres a day.'

'And, as I am not a millionaire, like the gentleman in the next apartments,' said Franz, 'I warn you, that as I have been four times before at Rome, I know the prices of all the carriages; we will give you twelve piastres for today, tomorrow, and the day after, and then you will make a good profit.'

'But, excellency'—said Pastrini, still striving to gain his point.

'Now go,' returned Franz, 'or I shall go myself and bargain with your *affettatore*, who is mine also; he is an old friend of mine, who has plundered me pretty well already, and, in the hope of making more out of me, he will take a less price than the one I offer you; you will lose the preference, and that will be your fault.'

'Do not give yourselves the trouble, excellency,' returned Signor Pastrini, with the smile peculiar to the Italian speculator when he confesses defeat; 'I will do all I can, and I hope you will be satisfied.'

'And now we understand each other.'

'When do you wish the carriage to be here?'

'In an hour.'

'In an hour it will be at the door.'

An hour after the vehicle was at the door; it was a hack conveyance which was elevated to the rank of a private carriage in honour of the occasion, but, in

'Well, Signor Pastrini,' said Franz, 'now that my companion is quieted, and you have seen how peaceful my intentions are, tell me who is this Luigi Vampa. Is he a shepherd or a nobleman?—young or old?—tall or short? Describe him, in order that, if we meet him by chance, like Jean Sbogar or Lara, we may recognize him.'

'You could not apply to anyone better able to inform you on all these points, for I knew him when he was a child, and one day that I fell into his hands, going from Ferentino to Alatri, he, fortunately for me, recollected me, and set me free, not only without ransom, but made me a present of a very splendid watch, and related his history to me.'

'Let us see the watch,' said Albert.

Signor Pastrini drew from his fob a magnificent Bréguet, bearing the name of its maker, of Parisian manufacture, and a count's coronet.

'Here it is,' said he.

'*Peste!*' returned Albert, 'I compliment you on it; I have its fellow'—he took his watch from his waistcoat pocket—'and it cost me 3,000 francs.'

'Let us hear the history,' said Franz, motioning Signor Pastrini to seat himself.

'Your excellencies permit it?' asked the host.

'*Pardieu!*' cried Albert, 'you are not a preacher, to remain standing!'

The host sat down, after having made each of them a respectful bow, which meant that he was ready to tell them all they wished to know concerning Luigi Vampa.

'You tell me,' said Franz, at the moment Signor Pastrini was about to open his mouth, 'that you knew Luigi Vampa when he was a child—he is still a young man, then?'

'A young man? he is only two-and-twenty;—he will gain himself a reputation.'

'What do you think of that, Albert?—at two-and-twenty to be thus famous?'

'Yes, and at his age, Alexander, Cæsar, and Napoleon, who have all made some noise in the world, were quite behind him.'

'So,' continued Franz, 'the hero of this history is only two-and-twenty?'

'Scarcely so much.'

'Is he tall or short?'

'Of the middle height—about the same stature as his excellency,' returned the host, pointing to Albert.

'Thanks for the comparison,' said Albert, with a bow.

'Go on, Signor Pastrini,' continued Franz, smiling at his friend's susceptibility. 'To what class of society does he belong?'

'He was a shepherd-boy attached to the farm of the Count of San-Felice, situated between Palestrina and the Lake of Gabri; he was born at Pampinara, and entered the count's service when he was five years old; his father was also a shepherd, who owned a small flock, and lived by the wool and the milk, which he sold at Rome. When quite a child, the little Vampa displayed a most extraordinary precocity. One day, when he was seven years old, he came to the curate of Palestrina, and asked to be taught to read; it was somewhat difficult, for he could not quit his flock; but the good curate went every day to say mass at a little hamlet too poor to pay a priest and which, having no other name, was called Borgo; he told Luigi that he might meet him on his return, and that then he would give him a lesson, warning him that it would be short, and that he must profit as much as possible by it. The child accepted joyfully. Every day Luigi led his flock to graze on the road that leads from Palestrina to Borgo; every day, at nine o'clock in the morning, the priest and the boy sat down on a bank by the wayside, and the little shepherd took his lesson out of the priest's breviary. At the end of three months he had learned to read. This was not enough—he must now learn to write. The priest had a writing teacher at Rome make three alphabets—one large, one middling, and one small; and pointed out to him that by the help of a sharp instrument he could trace the letters on a slate, and thus learn to write. The same evening, when the flock was safe at the farm, the little Luigi hastened to the smith at Palestrina, took a large nail, heated and sharpened it, and formed a sort of stylus. The next morning he gathered an armful of pieces of slate and began. At the end of three months he had learned to write. The curate, astonished at his quickness and intelligence, made him a present of pens, paper, and a penknife. This demanded new effort, but nothing compared to the first; at the end of a week he wrote as well with this pen as with the stylus. The curate related the incident to the Count of San-Felice, who sent for the little shepherd, made him read and write before him, ordered his attendant to let him eat with the domestics, and to give him two piastres a month. With this, Luigi purchased books and

Chapter XXXIII

Roman Bandits

The next morning Franz woke first, and instantly rang the bell. The sound had not yet died away when Signor Pastrini himself entered.

'Your excellency,' said the landlord triumphantly, and without waiting for Franz to question him, 'I feared yesterday, when I would not promise you anything, that you were too late—there is not a single carriage to be had—that is, for the three last days'

'Yes,' returned Franz, 'for the very three days it is most needed.'

'What is the matter?' said Albert, entering; 'no carriage to be had?'

'Just so,' returned Franz, 'you have guessed it.'

'Well, your Eternal City is a nice sort of place.'

'That is to say, excellency,' replied Pastrini, who was desirous of keeping up the dignity of the capital of the Christian world in the eyes of his guest, 'that there are no carriages to be had from Sunday to Tuesday evening, but from now till Sunday you can have fifty if you please.'

'Ah, that is something,' said Albert; 'today is Thursday, and who knows what may arrive between this and Sunday?'

'Ten or twelve thousand travellers will arrive,' replied Franz, 'which will make it still more difficult.'

'My friend,' said Morcerf, 'let us enjoy the present without gloomy forebodings for the future.'

'At least we can have a window?'

'Where?'

'In the Corso.'

or thirty-five lire a day more for Sundays and feast days; add five lire a day more for extras, that will make forty, and there's an end of it.'

'I am afraid if we offer them double that we shall not procure a carriage.'

'Then they must put horses to mine. It is a little worse for the journey, but that's no matter.'

'There are no horses.'

Albert looked at Franz like a man who hears a reply he does not understand.

'Do you understand that, my dear Franz—no horses?' he said, 'but can't we have post-horses?'

'They have been all hired this fortnight, and there are none left but those absolutely requisite for posting.'

'What are we to say to this?' asked Franz.

'I say, that when a thing completely surpasses my comprehension, I am accustomed not to dwell on that thing, but to pass to another. Is supper ready, Signor Pastrini?'

'Yes, your excellency.'

'Well, then, let us sup.'

'But the carriage and horses?' said Franz.

'Be easy, my dear boy; they will come in due season; it is only a question of how much shall be charged for them.' Morcerf then, with that delighted philosophy which believes that nothing is impossible to a full purse or well-lined pocketbook, supped, went to bed, slept soundly, and dreamed he was racing all over Rome at Carnival time in a coach with six horses.

pencils. He applied his imitative powers to everything, and, like Giotto, when young, he drew on his slate sheep, houses, and trees. Then, with his knife, he began to carve all sorts of objects in wood; it was thus that Pinelli, the famous sculptor, had commenced.

A girl of six or seven—that is, a little younger than Vampa—tended sheep on a farm near Palestrina; she was an orphan, born at Valmontone and was named Teresa. The two children met, sat down near each other, let their flocks mingle together, played, laughed, and conversed together; in the evening they separated the Count of San-Felice's flock from those of Baron Cervetri, and the children returned to their respective farms, promising to meet the next morning. The next day they kept their word, and thus they grew up together. Vampa was twelve, and Teresa eleven. And yet their natural disposition revealed itself. Beside his taste for the fine arts, which Luigi had carried as far as he could in his solitude, he was given to alternating fits of sadness and enthusiasm, was often angry and capricious, and always sarcastic. None of the lads of Pampinara, Palestrina, or Valmontone had been able to gain any influence over him or even to become his companion. His disposition (always inclined to exact concessions rather than to make them) kept him aloof from all friendships. Teresa alone ruled by a look, a word, a gesture, this impetuous character, which yielded beneath the hand of a woman, and which beneath the hand of a man might have broken, but could never have been bended. Teresa was lively and gay, but coquettish to excess. The two piastres that Luigi received every month from the Count of San-Felice's steward, and the price of all the little carvings in wood he sold at Rome, were expended in ear-rings, necklaces, and gold hairpins. So that, thanks to her friend's generosity, Teresa was the most beautiful and the best-attired peasant near Rome.

The two children grew up together, passing all their time with each other, and giving themselves up to the wild ideas of their different characters. Thus, in all their dreams, their wishes, and their conversations, Vampa saw himself the captain of a vessel, general of an army, or governor of a province. Teresa saw herself rich, superbly attired, and attended by a train of liveried domestics. Then, when they had thus passed the day in building castles in the air, they separated their flocks, and descended from the elevation of their dreams to the reality of their humble position.

One day the young shepherd told the count's steward that he had seen a wolf come out of the Sabine mountains, and prowl around his flock. The steward gave him a gun; this was what Vampa longed for. This gun had an excellent barrel, made at Brescia, and carrying a ball with the precision of an English rifle; but one day the count broke the stock, and had then cast the gun aside. This, however, was nothing to a sculptor like Vampa; he examined the broken stock, calculated what change it would require to adapt the gun to his shoulder, and made a fresh stock, so beautifully carved that it would have fetched fifteen or twenty piastres, had he chosen to sell it. But nothing could be farther from his thoughts.

For a long time a gun had been the young man's greatest ambition. In every country where independence has taken the place of liberty, the first desire of a manly heart is to possess a weapon, which at once renders him capable of defence or attack, and, by rendering its owner terrible, often makes him feared. From this moment Vampa devoted all his leisure time to perfecting himself in the use of his precious weapon; he purchased powder and ball, and everything served him for a mark—the trunk of some old and moss-grown olive-tree, that grew on the Sabine mountains; the fox, as he quitted his earth on some marauding excursion; the eagle that soared above their heads: and thus he soon became so expert, that Teresa overcame the terror she at first felt at the report, and amused herself by watching him direct the ball wherever he pleased, with as much accuracy as if he placed it by hand.

One evening a wolf emerged from a pine-wood near which they were usually stationed, but the wolf had scarcely advanced ten yards ere he was dead. Proud of this exploit, Vampa took the dead animal on his shoulders, and carried him to the farm. These exploits had gained Luigi considerable reputation. The man of superior abilities always finds admirers, go where he will. He was spoken of as the most adroit, the strongest, and the most courageous *contadino* for ten leagues around; and although Teresa was universally allowed to be the most beautiful girl of the Sabines, no one had ever spoken to her of love, because it was known that she was beloved by Vampa. And yet the two young people had never declared their affection; they had grown together like two trees whose roots are mingled, whose branches intertwined, and whose intermingled perfume rises to the heavens. Only their wish to see each

a prey to that low and feverish murmur which precedes all great events; and at Rome there are four great events in every year,—the Carnival, Holy Week, Corpus Christi, and the Feast of St. Peter.

All the rest of the year the city is in that state of dull apathy, between life and death, which renders it similar to a kind of station between this world and the next—a sublime spot, a resting-place full of poetry and character, and at which Franz had already halted five or six times, and at each time found it more marvellous and striking.

At last he made his way through the mob, which was continually increasing and getting more and more turbulent, and reached the hotel. On his first inquiry he was told, with the impertinence peculiar to hired hackney-coachmen and innkeepers with their houses full, that there was no room for him at the Hôtel de Londres. Then he sent his card to Signor Pastrini, and asked for Albert de Morcerf. This plan succeeded; and Signor Pastrini himself ran to him, excusing himself for having made his excellency wait, scolding the waiters, taking the candlestick from the porter, who was ready to pounce on the traveller and was about to lead him to Albert, when Morcerf himself appeared.

The apartment consisted of two small rooms and a parlour. The two rooms looked on to the street—a fact which Signor Pastrini commented upon as an inappreciable advantage. The rest of the floor was hired by a very rich gentleman who was supposed to be a Sicilian or Maltese; but the host was unable to decide to which of the two nations the traveller belonged.

'Very good, signor Pastrini,' said Franz; 'but we must have some supper instantly, and a carriage for tomorrow and the following days.'

'As to supper,' replied the landlord, 'you shall be served immediately; but as for the carriage— '

'What as to the carriage?' exclaimed Albert. 'Come, come, Signor Pastrini, no joking; we must have a carriage.'

'Sir,' replied the host, 'we will do all in our power to procure you one—this is all I can say.'

'And when shall we know?' inquired Franz.

'Tomorrow morning,' answered the innkeeper.

'Oh, the deuce! then we shall pay the more, that's all, I see plainly enough. At Drake's or Aaron's one pays twenty-five lire for common days, and thirty

'Why,' he remarked to Gaetano, 'you told me that Signor Sinbad was going to Malaga, while it seems he is in the direction of Porto-Vecchio.'

'Don't you remember,' said the patron, 'I told you that among the crew there were two Corsican brigands?'

'True; and he is going to land them,' added Franz.

'Precisely so,' replied Gaetano. 'Ah, he is one who fears neither God nor Satan, they say, and would at any time run fifty leagues out of his course to do a poor devil a service.' 'But such services as these might involve him with the authorities of the country in which he practices this kind of philanthropy,' said Franz.

'And what cares he for that,' replied Gaetano with a laugh, 'or any authorities? He smiles at them. Let them try to pursue him! Why, in the first place, his yacht is not a ship, but a bird, and he would beat any frigate three knots in every nine; and if he were to throw himself on the coast, why, is he not certain of finding friends everywhere?'

It was perfectly clear that the Signor Sinbad, Franz's host, had the honour of being on excellent terms with the smugglers and bandits along the whole coast of the Mediterranean, and so enjoyed exceptional privileges. As to Franz, he had no longer any inducement to remain at Monte Cristo. He had lost all hope of detecting the secret of the grotto; he consequently despatched his breakfast, and, his boat being ready, he hastened on board, and they were soon under way. At the moment the boat began her course they lost sight of the yacht, as it disappeared in the gulf of Porto-Vecchio. With it was effaced the last trace of the preceding night; and then supper, Sinbad, hashish, statues,—all became a dream for Franz.

The boat sailed on all day and all night, and next morning, when the sun rose, they had lost sight of Monte Cristo.

When Franz had once again set foot on shore, he forgot, for the moment at least, the events which had just passed, while he finished his affairs of pleasure at Florence, and then thought of nothing but how he should rejoin his companion, who was awaiting him at Rome.

He set out, and on the Saturday evening reached the Place de la Douane by the mail-coach. An apartment, as we have said, had been retained beforehand, and thus he had but to go to Signor Pastrini's hotel. But this was not so easy a matter, for the streets were thronged with people, and Rome was already

other had become a necessity, and they would have preferred death to a day's separation.

Teresa was sixteen, and Vampa seventeen. About this time, a band of brigands that had established itself in the Lepini mountains began to be much spoken of. The brigands have never been really extirpated from the neighbourhood of Rome. Sometimes a chief is wanted, but when a chief presents himself he rarely has to wait long for a band of followers.

The celebrated Cucumetto, pursued in the Abruzzo, driven out of the kingdom of Naples, where he had carried on a regular war, had crossed the Garigliano, like Manfred, and had taken refuge on the banks of the Amasine between Sonnino and Juperno. He strove to collect a band of followers, and followed the footsteps of Decesaris and Gasparone, whom he hoped to surpass. Many young men of Palestrina, Frascati, and Pampinara had disappeared. Their disappearance at first caused much disquietude; but it was soon known that they had joined Cucumetto. After some time Cucumetto became the object of universal attention; the most extraordinary traits of ferocious daring and brutality were related of him.

One day he carried off a young girl, the daughter of a surveyor of Frosinone. The bandit's laws are positive; a young girl belongs first to him who carries her off, then the rest draw lots for her, and she is abandoned to their brutality until death relieves her sufferings. When their parents are sufficiently rich to pay a ransom, a messenger is sent to negotiate; the prisoner is hostage for the security of the messenger; should the ransom be refused, the prisoner is irrevocably lost. The young girl's lover was in Cucumetto's troop; his name was Carlini. When she recognized her lover, the poor girl extended her arms to him, and believed herself safe; but Carlini felt his heart sink, for he but too well knew the fate that awaited her. However, as he was a favourite with Cucumetto, as he had for three years faithfully served him, and as he had saved his life by shooting a dragoon who was about to cut him down, he hoped the chief would have pity on him. He took Cucumetto one side, while the young girl, seated at the foot of a huge pine that stood in the centre of the forest, made a veil of her picturesque head-dress to hide her face from the lascivious gaze of the bandits. There he told the chief all—his affection for the prisoner, their promises of mutual fidelity, and how every night, since he had been near, they had met in some neighboring ruins.

It so happened that night that Cucumetto had sent Carlini to a village, so that he had been unable to go to the place of meeting. Cucumetto had been there, however, by accident, as he said, and had carried the maiden off. Carlini besought his chief to make an exception in Rita's favour, as her father was rich, and could pay a large ransom. Cucumetto seemed to yield to his friend's entreaties, and bade him find a shepherd to send to Rita's father at Frosinone.

Carlini flew joyfully to Rita, telling her she was saved, and bidding her write to her father, to inform him what had occurred, and that her ransom was fixed at three hundred piastres. Twelve hours' delay was all that was granted—that is, until nine the next morning. The instant the letter was written, Carlini seized it, and hastened to the plain to find a messenger. He found a young shepherd watching his flock. The natural messengers of the bandits are the shepherds who live between the city and the mountains, between civilized and savage life. The boy undertook the commission, promising to be in Frosinone in less than an hour. Carlini returned, anxious to see his mistress, and announce the joyful intelligence. He found the troop in the glade, supping off the provisions exacted as contributions from the peasants; but his eye vainly sought Rita and Cucumetto among them.

He inquired where they were, and was answered by a burst of laughter. A cold perspiration burst from every pore, and his hair stood on end. He repeated his question. One of the bandits rose, and offered him a glass filled with Orvietto, saying, "To the health of the brave Cucumetto and the fair Rita." At this moment Carlini heard a woman's cry; he divined the truth, seized the glass, broke it across the face of him who presented it, and rushed towards the spot whence the cry came. After a hundred yards he turned the corner of the thicket; he found Rita senseless in the arms of Cucumetto. At the sight of Carlini, Cucumetto rose, a pistol in each hand. The two brigands looked at each other for a moment—the one with a smile of lasciviousness on his lips, the other with the pallor of death on his brow. A terrible battle between the two men seemed imminent; but by degrees Carlini's features relaxed, his hand, which had grasped one of the pistols in his belt, fell to his side. Rita lay between them. The moon lighted the group.

"Well," said Cucumetto, "have you executed your commission?"

"Yes, captain," returned Carlini. "At nine o'clock tomorrow Rita's father will be here with the money."

'Ah, yes, I understand,' replied the patron, 'to find the entrance to the enchanted apartment. With much pleasure, your excellency, if it would amuse you; and I will get you the torch you ask for. But I too have had the idea you have, and two or three times the same fancy has come over me; but I have always given it up. Giovanni, light a torch,' he added, 'and give it to his excellency.'

Giovanni obeyed. Franz took the lamp, and entered the subterranean grotto, followed by Gaetano. He recognized the place where he had awaked by the bed of heather that was there; but it was in vain that he carried his torch all round the exterior surface of the grotto. He saw nothing, unless that, by traces of smoke, others had before him attempted the same thing, and, like him, in vain. Yet he did not leave a foot of this granite wall, as impenetrable as futurity, without strict scrutiny; he did not see a fissure without introducing the blade of his hunting sword into it, or a projecting point on which he did not lean and press in the hopes it would give way. All was vain; and he lost two hours in his attempts, which were at last utterly useless. At the end of this time he gave up his search, and Gaetano smiled.

When Franz appeared again on the shore, the yacht only seemed like a small white speck on the horizon. He looked again through his glass, but even then he could not distinguish anything.

Gaetano reminded him that he had come for the purpose of shooting goats, which he had utterly forgotten. He took his fowling-piece, and began to hunt over the island with the air of a man who is fulfilling a duty, rather than enjoying a pleasure; and at the end of a quarter of an hour he had killed a goat and two kids. These animals, though wild and agile as chamois, were too much like domestic goats, and Franz could not consider them as game. Moreover, other ideas, much more enthralling, occupied his mind. Since, the evening before, he had really been the hero of one of the tales of the *Thousand and One Nights*, and he was irresistibly attracted towards the grotto.

Then, in spite of the failure of his first search, he began a second, after having told Gaetano to roast one of the two kids. The second visit was a long one, and when he returned the kid was roasted and the repast ready. Franz was sitting on the spot where he was on the previous evening when his mysterious host had invited him to supper; and he saw the little yacht, now like a sea-gull on the wave, continuing her flight towards Corsica.