him to the road, and pointed to the post-chaise, left him leaning against a tree. He remained there all night, not knowing where he was. When daylight dawned he saw that he was near a stream; he was thirsty, and dragged himself towards it. As he stooped down to drink, he saw that his hair had become entirely white.

Chapter CXVII

The Fifth of October

It was about six o'clock in the evening; an opal-coloured light, through which an autumnal sun shed its golden rays, descended on the blue ocean. The heat of the day had gradually decreased, and a light breeze arose, seeming like the respiration of nature on awakening from the burning siesta of the south. A delicious zephyr played along the coasts of the Mediterranean, and wafted from shore to shore the sweet perfume of plants, mingled with the fresh smell of the sea.

A light yacht, chaste and elegant in its form, was gliding amidst the first dews of night over the immense lake, extending from Gibraltar to the Dardanelles, and from Tunis to Venice. The vessel resembled a swan with its wings opened towards the wind, gliding on the water. It advanced swiftly and gracefully, leaving behind it a glittering stretch of foam. By degrees the sun disappeared behind the western horizon; but as though to prove the truth of the fanciful ideas in heathen mythology, its indiscreet rays reappeared on the summit of every wave, as if the god of fire had just sunk upon the bosom of Amphitrite, who in vain endeavoured to hide her lover beneath her azure mantle.

The yacht moved rapidly on, though there did not appear to be sufficient wind to ruffle the curls on the head of a young girl. Standing on the prow was a tall man, of a dark complexion, who saw with dilating eyes that they were approaching a dark mass of land in the shape of a cone, which rose from the midst of the waves like the hat of a Catalan.

'Is that Monte Cristo?' asked the traveller, to whose orders the yacht was for the time submitted, in a melancholy voice.

'Yes, your excellency,' said the captain, 'we have reached it.'

'We have reached it!' repeated the traveller in an accent of indescribable sadness.

Then he added, in a low tone, 'Yes; that is the haven.'

And then he again plunged into a train of thought, the character of which was better revealed by a sad smile, than it would have been by tears. A few minutes afterwards a flash of light, which was extinguished instantly, was seen on the land, and the sound of firearms reached the yacht.

'Your excellency,' said the captain, 'that was the land signal, will you answer yourself?'

'What signal?'

The captain pointed towards the island, up the side of which ascended a volume of smoke, increasing as it rose.

'Ah, yes,' he said, as if awaking from a dream. 'Give it to me.'

The captain gave him a loaded carbine; the traveller slowly raised it, and fired in the air. Ten minutes afterwards, the sails were furled, and they cast anchor about a hundred fathoms from the little harbour. The gig was already lowered, and in it were four oarsmen and a coxswain. The traveller descended, and instead of sitting down at the stern of the boat, which had been decorated with a blue carpet for his accommodation, stood up with his arms crossed. The rowers waited, their oars half lifted out of the water, like birds drying their wings. 'Give way,' said the traveller. The eight oars fell into the sea simultaneously without splashing a drop of water, and the boat, yielding to the impulsion, glided forward. In an instant they found themselves in a little harbour, formed in a natural creek; the boat grounded on the fine sand.

'Will your excellency be so good as to mount the shoulders of two of our men, they will carry you ashore?' The young man answered this invitation with a gesture of indifference, and stepped out of the boat; the sea immediately rose to his waist.

'Ah, your excellency,' murmured the pilot, 'you should not have done so; our master will scold us for it.'

The young man continued to advance, following the sailors, who chose a firm footing. Thirty strides brought them to dry land; the young man stamped on the ground to shake off the wet, and looked around for someone to show him his road, for it was quite dark. Just as he turned,

'Yes; those who have died of hunger.'

Danglars thought of the old man whom, in his hours of delirium, he had seen groaning on his bed. He struck his forehead on the ground and groaned. 'Yes,' he said, 'there have been some who have suffered more than I have, but then they must have been martyrs at least.'

'Do you repent?' asked a deep, solemn voice, which caused Danglars' hair to stand on end. His feeble eyes endeavoured to distinguish objects, and behind the bandit he saw a man enveloped in a cloak, half lost in the shadow of a stone column.

'Of what must I repent?' stammered Danglars.

'Of the evil you have done,' said the voice.

'Oh, yes; oh, yes, I do indeed repent.' And he struck his breast with his emaciated fist.

'Then I forgive you,' said the man, dropping his cloak, and advancing to the light.

'The Count of Monte Cristo!' said Danglars, more pale from terror than he had been just before from hunger and misery.

'You are mistaken—I am not the Count of Monte Cristo.'

'Then who are you?' 'I am he whom you sold and dishonored—I am he whose betrothed you prostituted—I am he upon whom you trampled that you might raise yourself to fortune—I am he whose father you condemned to die of hunger—I am he whom you also condemned to starvation, and who yet forgives you, because he hopes to be forgiven—I am Edmond Dantès!'

Danglars uttered a cry, and fell prostrate.

'Rise,' said the count, 'your life is safe; the same good fortune has not happened to your accomplices—one is mad, the other dead. Keep the 50,000 francs you have left—I give them to you. The 5,000,000 you stole from the hospitals has been restored to them by an unknown hand. And now eat and drink; I will entertain you tonight. Vampa, when this man is satisfied, let him be free.'

Danglars remained prostrate while the count withdrew; when he raised his head he saw disappearing down the passage nothing but a shadow, before which the bandits bowed.

According to the count's directions, Danglars was waited on by Vampa, who brought him the best wine and fruits of Italy; then, having conducted

His resolution not to sign lasted two days, after which he offered a million for some food. They sent him a magnificent supper, and took his million.

From this time the prisoner resolved to suffer no longer, but to have everything he wanted. At the end of twelve days, after having made a splendid dinner, he reckoned his accounts, and found that he had only 50,000 francs left. Then a strange reaction took place; he who had just abandoned 5,000,000 endeavoured to save the 50,000 francs he had left, and sooner than give them up he resolved to enter again upon a life of privation—he was deluded by the hopefulness that is a premonition of madness.

He, who for so long a time had forgotten God, began to think that miracles were possible—that the accursed cavern might be discovered by the officers of the Papal States, who would release him; that then he would have 50,000 remaining, which would be sufficient to save him from starvation; and finally he prayed that this sum might be preserved to him, and as he prayed he wept. Three days passed thus, during which his prayers were frequent, if not heartfelt. Sometimes he was delirious, and fancied he saw an old man stretched on a pallet; he, also, was dying of hunger.

On the fourth, he was no longer a man, but a living corpse. He had picked up every crumb that had been left from his former meals, and was beginning to eat the matting which covered the floor of his cell. Then he entreated Peppino, as he would a guardian angel, to give him food; he offered him 1,000 francs for a mouthful of bread. But Peppino did not answer. On the fifth day he dragged himself to the door of the cell.

'Are you not a Christian?' he said, falling on his knees. 'Do you wish to assassinate a man who, in the eyes of Heaven, is a brother? Oh, my former friends, my former friends!' he murmured, and fell with his face to the ground. Then rising in despair, he exclaimed, 'The chief, the chief!'

'Here I am,' said Vampa, instantly appearing; 'what do you want?'

'Take my last gold,' muttered Danglars, holding out his pocket-book, 'and let me live here; I ask no more for liberty—I only ask to live!'

'Then you suffer a great deal?'

'Oh, yes, yes, cruelly!'

'Still, there have been men who suffered more than you.'

'I do not think so.'

a hand rested on his shoulder, and a voice which made him shudder exclaimed:

'Good-evening, Maximilian; you are punctual, thank you!'

'Ah, is it you, count?' said the young man, in an almost joyful accent, pressing Monte Cristo's hand with both his own.

'Yes; you see I am as exact as you are. But you are dripping, my dear fellow; you must change your clothes, as Calypso said to Telemachus. Come, I have a habitation prepared for you in which you will soon forget fatigue and cold.'

Monte Cristo perceived that the young man had turned around; indeed, Morrel saw with surprise that the men who had brought him had left without being paid, or uttering a word. Already the sound of their oars might be heard as they returned to the yacht.

'Oh, yes,' said the count, 'you are looking for the sailors.'

'Yes, I paid them nothing, and yet they are gone.'

'Never mind that, Maximilian,' said Monte Cristo, smiling. 'I have made an agreement with the navy, that the access to my island shall be free of all charge. I have made a bargain.'

Morrel looked at the count with surprise. 'Count,' he said, 'you are not the same here as in Paris.'

'How so?'

'Here you laugh.' The count's brow became clouded.

'You are right to recall me to myself, Maximilian,' he said; 'I was delighted to see you again, and forgot for the moment that all happiness is fleeting.'

'Oh, no, no, count,' cried Maximilian, seizing the count's hands, 'pray laugh; be happy, and prove to me, by your indifference, that life is endurable to sufferers. Oh, how charitable, kind, and good you are; you affect this gayety to inspire me with courage.'

'You are wrong, Morrel; I was really happy.'

'Then you forget me, so much the better.'

'How so?'

'Yes; for as the gladiator said to the emperor, when he entered the arena, "He who is about to die salutes you."'

'Then you are not consoled?' asked the count, surprised.

'Oh,' exclaimed Morrel, with a glance full of bitter reproach, 'do you think it possible that I could be?'

'Listen,' said the count. 'Do you understand the meaning of my words? You cannot take me for a commonplace man, a mere rattle, emitting a vague and senseless noise. When I ask you if you are consoled, I speak to you as a man for whom the human heart has no secrets. Well, Morrel, let us both examine the depths of your heart. Do you still feel the same feverish impatience of grief which made you start like a wounded lion? Have you still that devouring thirst which can only be appeased in the grave? Are you still actuated by the regret which drags the living to the pursuit of death; or are you only suffering from the prostration of fatigue and the weariness of hope deferred? Has the loss of memory rendered it impossible for you to weep? Oh, my dear friend, if this be the case,—if you can no longer weep, if your frozen heart be dead, if you put all your trust in God, then, Maximilian, you are consoled—do not complain.'

'Count,' said Morrel, in a firm and at the same time soft voice, 'listen to me, as to a man whose thoughts are raised to heaven, though he remains on earth; I come to die in the arms of a friend. Certainly, there are people whom I love. I love my sister Julie,—I love her husband Emmanuel; but I require a strong mind to smile on my last moments. My sister would be bathed in tears and fainting; I could not bear to see her suffer. Emmanuel would tear the weapon from my hand, and alarm the house with his cries. You, count, who are more than mortal, will, I am sure, lead me to death by a pleasant path, will you not?' 'My friend,' said the count, 'I have still one doubt,—are you weak enough to pride yourself upon your sufferings?'

'No, indeed,—I am calm,' said Morrel, giving his hand to the count; 'my pulse does not beat slower or faster than usual. No, I feel that I have reached the goal, and I will go no farther. You told me to wait and hope; do you know what you did, unfortunate adviser? I waited a month, or rather I suffered for a month! I did hope (man is a poor wretched creature), I did hope. What I cannot tell,—something wonderful, an absurdity, a miracle,—of what nature he alone can tell who has mingled with our reason that folly we call hope. Yes, I did wait—yes, I did hope, count, and during this quarter of an hour we have been talking together, you have unconsciously wounded, tortured my heart, for every word you have

'Two millions?—three?—four? Come, four? I will give them to you on condition that you let me go.'

'Why do you offer me 4,000,000 for what is worth 5,000,000? This is a kind of usury, banker, that I do not understand.'

'Take all, then—take all, I tell you, and kill me!'

'Come, come, calm yourself. You will excite your blood, and that would produce an appetite it would require a million a day to satisfy. Be more economical.'

'But when I have no more money left to pay you?' asked the infuriated Danglars.

'Then you must suffer hunger.'

'Suffer hunger?' said Danglars, becoming pale.

'Most likely,' replied Vampa coolly.

'But you say you do not wish to kill me?'

'No.'

'And yet you will let me perish with hunger?'

'Ah, that is a different thing.'

'Well, then, wretches,' cried Danglars, 'I will defy your infamous calculations—I would rather die at once! You may torture, torment, kill me, but you shall not have my signature again!'

'As your excellency pleases,' said Vampa, as he left the cell.

Danglars, raving, threw himself on the goat-skin. Who could these men be? Who was the invisible chief? What could be his intentions towards him? And why, when everyone else was allowed to be ransomed, might he not also be? Oh, yes; certainly a speedy, violent death would be a fine means of deceiving these remorseless enemies, who appeared to pursue him with such incomprehensible vengeance. But to die? For the first time in his life, Danglars contemplated death with a mixture of dread and desire; the time had come when the implacable spectre, which exists in the mind of every human creature, arrested his attention and called out with every pulsation of his heart, 'Thou shalt die!'

Danglars resembled a timid animal excited in the chase; first it flies, then despairs, and at last, by the very force of desperation, sometimes succeeds in eluding its pursuers. Danglars meditated an escape; but the walls were solid rock, a man was sitting reading at the only outlet to the cell, and behind that man shapes armed with guns continually passed.

'Twenty-five thousand francs a bottle.'

'Tell me,' cried Danglars, in a tone whose bitterness Harpagon[1] alone has been capable of revealing—'tell me that you wish to despoil me of all; it will be sooner over than devouring me piecemeal.'

'It is possible such may be the master's intention.'

'The master?—who is he?'

'The person to whom you were conducted yesterday.'

'Where is he?'

'Here.'

'Let me see him.'

'Certainly.'

And the next moment Luigi Vampa appeared before Danglars.

'You sent for me?' he said to the prisoner.

'Are you, sir, the chief of the people who brought me here?'

'Yes, your excellency. What then?'

'How much do you require for my ransom?'

'Merely the 5,000,000 you have about you.' Danglars felt a dreadful spasm dart through his heart.

'But this is all I have left in the world,' he said, 'out of an immense fortune. If you deprive me of that, take away my life also.'

'We are forbidden to shed your blood.'

'And by whom are you forbidden?'

'By him we obey.'

'You do, then, obey someone?'

'Yes, a chief.'

'I thought you said you were the chief?'

'So I am of these men; but there is another over me.'

'And did your superior order you to treat me in this way?'

'Yes.'

'But my purse will be exhausted.'

'Probably.'

'Come,' said Danglars, 'will you take a million?'

'No.'

[1]The miser in Molière's comedy of *L'Avare*.—Ed.

uttered proved that there was no hope for me. Oh, count, I shall sleep calmly, deliciously in the arms of death.'

Morrel uttered these words with an energy which made the count shudder.

'My friend,' continued Morrel, 'you named the fifth of October as the end of the period of waiting,—today is the fifth of October,' he took out his watch, 'it is now nine o'clock,—I have yet three hours to live.'

'Be it so,' said the count, 'come.' Morrel mechanically followed the count, and they had entered the grotto before he perceived it. He felt a carpet under his feet, a door opened, perfumes surrounded him, and a brilliant light dazzled his eyes. Morrel hesitated to advance; he dreaded the enervating effect of all that he saw. Monte Cristo drew him in gently.

'Why should we not spend the last three hours remaining to us of life, like those ancient Romans, who when condemned by Nero, their emperor and heir, sat down at a table covered with flowers, and gently glided into death, amid the perfume of heliotropes and roses?'

Morrel smiled. 'As you please,' he said; 'death is always death,—that is forgetfulness, repose, exclusion from life, and therefore from grief.'

He sat down, and Monte Cristo placed himself opposite to him. They were in the marvellous dining-room before described, where the statues had baskets on their heads always filled with fruits and flowers. Morrel had looked carelessly around, and had probably noticed nothing.

'Let us talk like men,' he said, looking at the count.

'Go on!'

'Count,' said Morrel, 'you are the epitome of all human knowledge, and you seem like a being descended from a wiser and more advanced world than ours.'

'There is something true in what you say,' said the count, with that smile which made him so handsome; 'I have descended from a planet called grief.' 'I believe all you tell me without questioning its meaning; for instance, you told me to live, and I did live; you told me to hope, and I almost did so. I am almost inclined to ask you, as though you had experienced death, "is it painful to die?"'

Monte Cristo looked upon Morrel with indescribable tenderness. 'Yes,' he said, 'yes, doubtless it is painful, if you violently break the outer covering which obstinately begs for life. If you plunge a dagger into your flesh,

if you insinuate a bullet into your brain, which the least shock disorders,—then certainly, you will suffer pain, and you will repent quitting a life for a repose you have bought at so dear a price.'

'Yes; I know that there is a secret of luxury and pain in death, as well as in life; the only thing is to understand it.'

'You have spoken truly, Maximilian; according to the care we bestow upon it, death is either a friend who rocks us gently as a nurse, or an enemy who violently drags the soul from the body. Some day, when the world is much older, and when mankind will be masters of all the destructive powers in nature, to serve for the general good of humanity; when mankind, as you were just saying, have discovered the secrets of death, then that death will become as sweet and voluptuous as a slumber in the arms of your beloved.'

'And if you wished to die, you would choose this death, count?'

'Yes.'

Morrel extended his hand. 'Now I understand,' he said, 'why you had me brought here to this desolate spot, in the midst of the ocean, to this subterranean palace; it was because you loved me, was it not, count? It was because you loved me well enough to give me one of those sweet means of death of which we were speaking; a death without agony, a death which allows me to fade away while pronouncing Valentine's name and pressing your hand.'

'Yes, you have guessed rightly, Morrel,' said the count, 'that is what I intended.'

'Thanks; the idea that tomorrow I shall no longer suffer, is sweet to my heart.'

'Do you then regret nothing?'

'No,' replied Morrel.

'Not even me?' asked the count with deep emotion. Morrel's clear eye was for the moment clouded, then it shone with unusual lustre, and a large tear rolled down his cheek.

'What,' said the count, 'do you still regret anything in the world, and yet die?'

'Oh, I entreat you,' exclaimed Morrel in a low voice, 'do not speak another word, count; do not prolong my punishment.'

Chapter CXVI

The Pardon

The next day Danglars was again hungry; certainly the air of that dungeon was very provocative of appetite. The prisoner expected that he would be at no expense that day, for like an economical man he had concealed half of his fowl and a piece of the bread in the corner of his cell. But he had no sooner eaten than he felt thirsty; he had forgotten that. He struggled against his thirst till his tongue clave to the roof of his mouth; then, no longer able to resist, he called out. The sentinel opened the door; it was a new face. He thought it would be better to transact business with his old acquaintance, so he sent for Peppino.

'Here I am, your excellency,' said Peppino, with an eagerness which Danglars thought favourable to him. 'What do you want?'

'Something to drink.'

'Your excellency knows that wine is beyond all price near Rome.'

'Then give me water,' cried Danglars, endeavouring to parry the blow.

'Oh, water is even more scarce than wine, your excellency,—there has been such a drought.'

'Come,' thought Danglars, 'it is the same old story.' And while he smiled as he attempted to regard the affair as a joke, he felt his temples get moist with perspiration.

'Come, my friend,' said Danglars, seeing that he made no impression on Peppino, 'you will not refuse me a glass of wine?'

'I have already told you that we do not sell at retail.'

'Well, then, let me have a bottle of the least expensive.'

'They are all the same price.'

'And what is that?'