Chapter XXXI

Italy: Sinbad the Sailor

TOWARDS the beginning of the year 1838, two young men belonging to the first society of Paris, the Viscount Albert de Morcerf and the Baron Franz d'Épinay, were at Florence. They had agreed to see the Carnival at Rome that year, and that Franz, who for the last three or four years had inhabited Italy, should act as *cicerone* to Albert.

As it is no inconsiderable affair to spend the Carnival at Rome, especially when you have no great desire to sleep on the Piazza del Popolo, or the Campo Vaccino, they wrote to Signor Pastrini, the proprietor of the Hôtel de Londres, Piazza di Spagna, to reserve comfortable apartments for them. Signor Pastrini replied that he had only two rooms and a parlour on the third floor, which he offered at the low charge of a louis per diem. They accepted his offer; but wishing to make the best use of the time that was left, Albert started for Naples. As for Franz, he remained at Florence, and after having passed a few days in exploring the paradise of the Cascine, and spending two or three evenings at the houses of the Florentine nobility, he took a fancy into his head (having already visited Corsica, the cradle of Bonaparte) to visit Elba, the waiting-place of Napoleon.

One evening he cast off the painter of a sailboat from the iron ring that secured it to the dock at Leghorn, wrapped himself in his coat and lay down, and said to the crew,—'To the Island of Elba!'

The boat shot out of the harbour like a bird and the next morning Franz disembarked at Porto-Ferrajo. He traversed the island, after having followed the traces which the footsteps of the giant have left, and re-embarked for Marciana.

Two hours after he again landed at Pianosa, where he was assured that red partridges abounded. The sport was bad; Franz only succeeded in killing a few partridges, and, like every unsuccessful sportsman, he returned to the boat very much out of temper.

'Ah, if your excellency chose,' said the captain, 'you might have capital sport.'

'Where?'

'Do you see that island?' continued the captain, pointing to a conical pile rising from the indigo sea.

'Well, what is this island?'

'The Island of Monte Cristo.'

'But I have no permission to shoot over this island.'

'Your excellency does not require a permit, for the island is uninhabited.'

'Ah, indeed!' said the young man. 'A desert island in the midst of the Mediterranean must be a curiosity.'

'It is very natural; this island is a mass of rocks, and does not contain an acre of land capable of cultivation.'

'To whom does this island belong?'

'To Tuscany.'

'What game shall I find there!'

'Thousands of wild goats.'

'Who live upon the stones, I suppose,' said Franz with an incredulous smile.

'No, but by browsing the shrubs and trees that grow out of the crevices of the rocks.'

'Where can I sleep?'

'On shore in the grottos, or on board in your cloak; besides, if your excellency pleases, we can leave as soon as you like—we can sail as well by night as by day, and if the wind drops we can use our oars.'

As Franz had sufficient time, and his apartments at Rome were not yet available, he accepted the proposition. Upon his answer in the affirmative, the sailors exchanged a few words together in a low tone. 'Well,' asked he, 'what now? Is there any difficulty in the way?'

'No.' replied the captain, 'but we must warn your excellency that the island is an infected port.'

'What do you mean?'

sailor; thence he once again looked towards Morrel, who, weeping with joy, was shaking hands most cordially with all the crowd around him, and thanking with a look the unknown benefactor whom he seemed to be seeking in the skies.

'And now,' said the unknown, 'farewell kindness, humanity, and gratitude! Farewell to all the feelings that expand the heart! I have been Heaven's substitute to recompense the good—now the god of vengeance yields to me his power to punish the wicked!'

At these words he gave a signal, and, as if only awaiting this signal, the yacht instantly put out to sea.

Morrel fell back in his chair, his strength was failing him; his understanding weakened by such events, refused to comprehend such incredible, unheard-of, fabulous facts. But his son came in.

'Father,' cried Maximilian, 'how could you say the *Pharaon* was lost? The lookout has signalled her, and they say she is now coming into port.' 'My dear friends,' said Morrel, 'if this be so, it must be a miracle of heaven! Impossible, impossible!'

But what was real and not less incredible was the purse he held in his hand, the acceptance receipted—the splendid diamond.

'Ah, sir,' exclaimed Cocles, 'what can it mean?—the *Pharaon*?'

'Come, dear ones,' said Morrel, rising from his seat, 'let us go and see, and Heaven have pity upon us if it be false intelligence!'

They all went out, and on the stairs met Madame Morrel, who had been afraid to go up into the study. In a moment they were at the Canebière. There was a crowd on the pier. All the crowd gave way before Morrel. 'The *Pharaon*! the *Pharaon*!' said every voice.

And, wonderful to see, in front of the tower of Saint-Jean, was a ship bearing on her stern these words, printed in white letters, 'The *Pharaon*, Morrel & Son, of Marseilles.' She was the exact duplicate of the other *Pharaon*, and loaded, as that had been, with cochineal and indigo. She cast anchor, clued up sails, and on the deck was Captain Gaumard giving orders, and good old Penelon making signals to M. Morrel. To doubt any longer was impossible; there was the evidence of the senses, and ten thousand persons who came to corroborate the testimony.

As Morrel and his son embraced on the pier-head, in the presence and amid the applause of the whole city witnessing this event, a man, with his face half-covered by a black beard, and who, concealed behind the sentry-box, watched the scene with delight, uttered these words in a low tone:

'Be happy, noble heart, be blessed for all the good thou hast done and wilt do hereafter, and let my gratitude remain in obscurity like your good deeds.' And with a smile expressive of supreme content, he left his hiding-place, and without being observed, descended one of the flights of steps provided for debarkation, and hailing three times, shouted 'Jacopo, Jacopo, Jacopo!'

Then a launch came to shore, took him on board, and conveyed him to a yacht splendidly fitted up, on whose deck he sprung with the activity of a

'Monte Cristo although uninhabited, yet serves occasionally as a refuge for the smugglers and pirates who come from Corsica, Sardinia, and Africa, and if it becomes known that we have been there, we shall have to perform quarantine for six days on our return to Leghorn.'

'The deuce! That puts a different face on the matter. Six days! Why, that's as long as the Almighty took to make the world! Too long a wait—too long.'

'But who will say your excellency has been to Monte Cristo?'

'Oh, I shall not,' cried Franz.

'Nor I, nor I,' chorused the sailors.

'Then steer for Monte Cristo.'

The captain gave his orders, the helm was put up, and the boat was soon sailing in the direction of the island. Franz waited until all was in order, and when the sail was filled, and the four sailors had taken their places—three forward, and one at the helm—he resumed the conversation. 'Gaetano,' said he to the captain, 'you tell me Monte Cristo serves as a refuge for pirates, who are, it seems to me, a very different kind of game from the goats.'

'Yes, your excellency, and it is true.'

'I knew there were smugglers, but I thought that since the capture of Algiers, and the destruction of the regency, pirates existed only in the romances of Cooper and Captain Marryat.'

'Your excellency is mistaken; there are pirates, like the bandits who were believed to have been exterminated by Pope Leo XII., and who yet, every day, rob travellers at the gates of Rome. Has not your excellency heard that the French *chargé d'affaires* was robbed six months ago within five hundred paces of Velletri?'

'Oh, yes, I heard that.'

'Well, then, if, like us, your excellency lived at Leghorn, you would hear, from time to time, that a little merchant vessel, or an English yacht that was expected at Bastia, at Porto-Ferrajo, or at Civita Vecchia, has not arrived; no one knows what has become of it, but, doubtless, it has struck on a rock and foundered. Now this rock it has met has been a long and narrow boat, manned by six or eight men, who have surprised and plundered it, some dark and stormy night, near some desert and gloomy island, as bandits plunder a carriage in the recesses of a forest.'

'But,' asked Franz, who lay wrapped in his cloak at the bottom of the boat, 'why do not those who have been plundered complain to the French, Sardinian, or Tuscan governments?'

'Why?' said Gaetano with a smile.

'Yes, why?'

'Because, in the first place, they transfer from the vessel to their own boat whatever they think worth taking, then they bind the crew hand and foot, they attach to everyone's neck a four-and-twenty-pound ball, a large hole is chopped in the vessel's bottom, and then they leave her. At the end of ten minutes the vessel begins to roll heavily and settle down. First one gun'l goes under, then the other. Then they lift and sink again, and both go under at once. All at once there's a noise like a cannon—that's the air blowing up the deck. Soon the water rushes out of the scupper-holes like a whale spouting, the vessel gives a last groan, spins round and round, and disappears, forming a vast whirlpool in the ocean, and then all is over, so that in five minutes nothing but the eye of God can see the vessel where she lies at the bottom of the sea. Do you understand now,' said the captain, 'why no complaints are made to the government, and why the vessel never reaches port?'

It is probable that if Gaetano had related this previous to proposing the expedition, Franz would have hesitated, but now that they had started, he thought it would be cowardly to draw back. He was one of those men who do not rashly court danger, but if danger presents itself, combat it with the most unalterable coolness. Calm and resolute, he treated any peril as he would an adversary in a duel,—calculated its probable method of approach; retreated, if at all, as a point of strategy and not from cowardice; was quick to see an opening for attack, and won victory at a single thrust.

'Bah!' said he, 'I have travelled through Sicily and Calabria—I have sailed two months in the Archipelago, and yet I never saw even the shadow of a bandit or a pirate.'

'I did not tell your excellency this to deter you from your project,' replied Gaetano, 'but you questioned me, and I have answered; that's all.'

'Yes, and your conversation is most interesting; and as I wish to enjoy it as long as possible, steer for Monte Cristo.'

The wind blew strongly, the boat made six or seven knots an hour, and they were rapidly reaching the end of their voyage. As they drew near the island

the door of his study opened. Morrel did not turn round—he expected these words of Cocles, 'The agent of Thomson & French.'

He placed the muzzle of the pistol between his teeth. Suddenly he heard a cry—it was his daughter's voice. He turned and saw Julie. The pistol fell from his hands.

'My father!' cried the young girl, out of breath, and half dead with joy—'saved, you are saved!' And she threw herself into his arms, holding in her extended hand a red, netted silk purse. 'Saved, my child!' said Morrel; 'what do you mean?'

'Yes, saved—saved! See, see!' said the young girl.

Morrel took the purse, and started as he did so, for a vague remembrance reminded him that it once belonged to himself. At one end was the receipted bill for the 287,000 francs, and at the other was a diamond as large as a hazel-nut, with these words on a small slip of parchment: *Julie's Dowry*.

Morrel passed his hand over his brow; it seemed to him a dream. At this moment the clock struck eleven. He felt as if each stroke of the hammer fell upon his heart.

'Explain, my child,' he said, 'Explain, my child,' he said, 'explain—where did you find this purse?'

'In a house in the Allées de Meilhan, № 15, on the corner of a mantelpiece in a small room on the fifth floor.'

'But,' cried Morrel, 'this purse is not yours!' Julie handed to her father the letter she had received in the morning.

'And did you go alone?' asked Morrel, after he had read it.

'Emmanuel accompanied me, father. He was to have waited for me at the corner of the Rue du Musée, but, strange to say, he was not there when I returned.'

'Monsieur Morrel!' exclaimed a voice on the stairs; 'Monsieur Morrel!'

'It is his voice!' said Julie. At this moment Emmanuel entered, his countenance full of animation and joy.

'The *Pharaon*!' he cried; 'the *Pharaon*!'

'What!—what!—the *Pharaon*! Are you mad, Emmanuel? You know the vessel is lost.'

'The *Pharaon*, sir—they signal the *Pharaon*! The *Pharaon* is entering the harbour!'

assault, would you not say to me, as you said just now, "Go, father; for you are dishonored by delay, and death is preferable to shame!"'

'Yes, yes,' said the young man, 'yes;' and once again embracing his father with convulsive pressure, he said, 'Be it so, my father.'

And he rushed out of the study. When his son had left him, Morrel remained an instant standing with his eyes fixed on the door; then putting forth his arm, he pulled the bell. After a moment's interval, Cocles appeared.

It was no longer the same man—the fearful revelations of the three last days had crushed him. This thought—the house of Morrel is about to stop payment—bent him to the earth more than twenty years would otherwise have done.

'My worthy Cocles,' said Morrel in a tone impossible to describe, 'do you remain in the antechamber. When the gentleman who came three months ago—the agent of Thomson & French—arrives, announce his arrival to me.'

Cocles made no reply; he made a sign with his head, went into the anteroom, and seated himself. Morrel fell back in his chair, his eyes fixed on the clock; there were seven minutes left, that was all. The hand moved on with incredible rapidity, he seemed to see its motion.

What passed in the mind of this man at the supreme moment of his agony cannot be told in words. He was still comparatively young, he was surrounded by the loving care of a devoted family, but he had convinced himself by a course of reasoning, illogical perhaps, yet certainly plausible, that he must separate himself from all he held dear in the world, even life itself. To form the slightest idea of his feelings, one must have seen his face with its expression of enforced resignation and its tear-moistened eyes raised to heaven. The minute hand moved on. The pistols were loaded; he stretched forth his hand, took one up, and murmured his daughter's name. Then he laid it down, seized his pen, and wrote a few words. It seemed to him as if he had not taken a sufficient farewell of his beloved daughter. Then he turned again to the clock, counting time now not by minutes, but by seconds.

He took up the deadly weapon again, his lips parted and his eyes fixed on the clock, and then shuddered at the click of the trigger as he cocked the pistol. At this moment of mortal anguish the cold sweat came forth upon his brow, a pang stronger than death clutched at his heart-strings. He heard the door of the staircase creak on its hinges—the clock gave its warning to strike eleven—

seemed to lift from the sea, and the air was so clear that they could already distinguish the rocks heaped on one another, like cannon balls in an arsenal, with green bushes and trees growing in the crevices. As for the sailors, although they appeared perfectly tranquil yet it was evident that they were on the alert, and that they carefully watched the glassy surface over which they were sailing, and on which a few fishing-boats, with their white sails, were alone visible.

They were within fifteen miles of Monte Cristo when the sun began to set behind Corsica, whose mountains appeared against the sky, showing their rugged peaks in bold relief; this mass of rock, like the giant Adamastor, rose dead ahead, a formidable barrier, and intercepting the light that gilded its massive peaks so that the voyagers were in shadow. Little by little the shadow rose higher and seemed to drive before it the last rays of the expiring day; at last the reflection rested on the summit of the mountain, where it paused an instant, like the fiery crest of a volcano, then gloom gradually covered the summit as it had covered the base, and the island now only appeared to be a gray mountain that grew continually darker; half an hour after, the night was quite dark.

Fortunately, the mariners were used to these latitudes, and knew every rock in the Tuscan Archipelago; for in the midst of this obscurity Franz was not without uneasiness—Corsica had long since disappeared, and Monte Cristo itself was invisible; but the sailors seemed, like the lynx, to see in the dark, and the pilot who steered did not evince the slightest hesitation.

An hour had passed since the sun had set, when Franz fancied he saw, at a quarter of a mile to the left, a dark mass, but he could not precisely make out what it was, and fearing to excite the mirth of the sailors by mistaking a floating cloud for land, he remained silent; suddenly a great light appeared on the strand; land might resemble a cloud, but the fire was not a meteor.

'What is this light?' asked he.

'Hush!' said the captain; 'it is a fire.'

'But you told me the island was uninhabited?'

'I said there were no fixed habitations on it, but I said also that it served sometimes as a harbour for smugglers.'

'And for pirates?'

'And for pirates,' returned Gaetano, repeating Franz's words. 'It is for that reason I have given orders to pass the island, for, as you see, the fire is behind us.'

'But this fire?' continued Franz. 'It seems to me rather reassuring than otherwise; men who did not wish to be seen would not light a fire.'

'Oh, that goes for nothing,' said Gaetano. 'If you can guess the position of the island in the darkness, you will see that the fire cannot be seen from the side or from Pianosa, but only from the sea.'

'You think, then, this fire indicates the presence of unpleasant neighbours?'

'That is what we must find out,' returned Gaetano, fixing his eyes on this terrestrial star.

'How can you find out?'

'You shall see.'

Gaetano consulted with his companions, and after five minutes' discussion a manœuvre was executed which caused the vessel to tack about, they returned the way they had come, and in a few minutes the fire disappeared, hidden by an elevation of the land. The pilot again changed the course of the boat, which rapidly approached the island, and was soon within fifty paces of it. Gaetano lowered the sail, and the boat came to rest. All this was done in silence, and from the moment that their course was changed not a word was spoken.

Gaetano, who had proposed the expedition, had taken all the responsibility on himself; the four sailors fixed their eyes on him, while they got out their oars and held themselves in readiness to row away, which, thanks to the darkness, would not be difficult. As for Franz, he examined his arms with the utmost coolness; he had two double-barrelled guns and a rifle; he loaded them, looked at the priming, and waited quietly.

During this time the captain had thrown off his vest and shirt, and secured his trousers round his waist; his feet were naked, so he had no shoes and stockings to take off; after these preparations he placed his finger on his lips, and lowering himself noiselessly into the sea, swam towards the shore with such precaution that it was impossible to hear the slightest sound; he could only be traced by the phosphorescent line in his wake. This track soon disappeared; it was evident that he had touched the shore.

Everyone on board remained motionless for half an hour, when the same luminous track was again observed, and the swimmer was soon on board.

in this very office, "My father died because he could not do what I have this day done; but he died calmly and peaceably, because in dying he knew what I should do."'

'My father, my father!' cried the young man, 'why should you not live?'

'If I live, all would be changed; if I live, interest would be converted into doubt, pity into hostility; if I live I am only a man who has broken his word, failed in his engagements—in fact, only a bankrupt. If, on the contrary, I die, remember, Maximilian, my corpse is that of an honest but unfortunate man. Living, my best friends would avoid my house; dead, all Marseilles will follow me in tears to my last home. Living, you would feel shame at my name; dead, you may raise your head and say, "I am the son of him you killed, because, for the first time, he has been compelled to break his word."'

The young man uttered a groan, but appeared resigned.

'And now,' said Morrel, 'leave me alone, and endeavour to keep your mother and sister away.'

'Will you not see my sister once more?' asked Maximilian. A last but final hope was concealed by the young man in the effect of this interview, and therefore he had suggested it. Morrel shook his head. 'I saw her this morning, and bade her adieu.'

'Have you no particular commands to leave with me, my father?' inquired Maximilian in a faltering voice.

'Yes; my son, and a sacred command.'

'Say it, my father.'

'The house of Thomson & French is the only one who, from humanity, or, it may be, selfishness—it is not for me to read men's hearts—has had any pity for me. Its agent, who will in ten minutes present himself to receive the amount of a bill of 287,500 francs, I will not say granted, but offered me three months. Let this house be the first repaid, my son, and respect this man.'

'Father, I will,' said Maximilian.

'And now, once more, adieu,' said Morrel. 'Go, leave me; I would be alone. You will find my will in the secretaire in my bedroom.'

The young man remained standing and motionless, having but the force of will and not the power of execution.

'Hear me, Maximilian,' said his father. 'Suppose I were a soldier like you, and ordered to carry a certain redoubt, and you knew I must be killed in the

'You are right, father; I understand you.' Then extending his hand towards one of the pistols, he said, 'There is one for you and one for me—thanks!'

Morrel caught his hand. 'Your mother—your sister! Who will support them?'

A shudder ran through the young man's frame. 'Father,' he said, 'do you reflect that you are bidding me to live?'

'Yes, I do so bid you,' answered Morrel, 'it is your duty. You have a calm, strong mind, Maximilian. Maximilian, you are no ordinary man. I make no requests or commands; I only ask you to examine my position as if it were your own, and then judge for yourself.'

The young man reflected for a moment, then an expression of sublime resignation appeared in his eyes, and with a slow and sad gesture he took off his two epaulets, the insignia of his rank.

'Be it so, then, my father,' he said, extending his hand to Morrel, 'die in peace, my father; I will live.'

Morrel was about to cast himself on his knees before his son, but Maximilian caught him in his arms, and those two noble hearts were pressed against each other for a moment.

'You know it is not my fault,' said Morrel. Maximilian smiled. 'I know, father, you are the most honourable man I have ever known.'

'Good, my son. And now there is no more to be said; go and rejoin your mother and sister.'

'My father,' said the young man, bending his knee, 'bless me!' Morrel took the head of his son between his two hands, drew him forward, and kissing his forehead several times said:

'Oh, yes, yes, I bless you in my own name, and in the name of three generations of irreproachable men, who say through me, "The edifice which misfortune has destroyed, Providence may build up again." On seeing me die such a death, the most inexorable will have pity on you. To you, perhaps, they will accord the time they have refused to me. Then do your best to keep our name free from dishonor. Go to work, labour, young man, struggle ardently and courageously; live, yourself, your mother and sister, with the most rigid economy, so that from day to day the property of those whom I leave in your hands may augment and fructify. Reflect how glorious a day it will be, how grand, how solemn, that day of complete restoration, on which you will say

'Well?' exclaimed Franz and the sailors in unison.

'They are Spanish smugglers,' said he; 'they have with them two Corsican bandits.'

'And what are these Corsican bandits doing here with Spanish smugglers?'

'Alas,' returned the captain with an accent of the most profound pity, 'we ought always to help one another. Very often the bandits are hard pressed by gendarmes or carbineers; well, they see a vessel, and good fellows like us on board, they come and demand hospitality of us; you can't refuse help to a poor hunted devil; we receive them, and for greater security we stand out to sea. This costs us nothing, and saves the life, or at least the liberty, of a fellow-creature, who on the first occasion returns the service by pointing out some safe spot where we can land our goods without interruption.'

'Ah!' said Franz, 'then you are a smuggler occasionally, Gaetano?'

'Your excellency, we must live somehow,' returned the other, smiling impenetrably.

'Then you know the men who are now on Monte Cristo?'

'Oh, yes, we sailors are like freemasons, and recognize each other by signs.'

'And do you think we have nothing to fear if we land?'

'Nothing at all; smugglers are not thieves.'

'But these two Corsican bandits?' said Franz, calculating the chances of peril.

'It is not their fault that they are bandits, but that of the authorities.'

'How so?'

'Because they are pursued for having made a stiff, as if it was not in a Corsican's nature to revenge himself.'

'What do you mean by having made a stiff?—having assassinated a man?' said Franz, continuing his investigation.

'I mean that they have killed an enemy, which is a very different thing,' returned the captain.

'Well,' said the young man, 'let us demand hospitality of these smugglers and bandits. Do you think they will grant it?'

'Without doubt.'

'How many are they?'

'Four, and the two bandits make six.'

'Just our number, so that if they prove troublesome, we shall be able to hold them in check; so, for the last time, steer to Monte Cristo.'

'Yes, but your excellency will permit us to take all due precautions.'

'By all means, be as wise as Nestor and as prudent as Ulysses; I do more than permit, I exhort you.'

'Silence, then!' said Gaetano.

Everyone obeyed. For a man who, like Franz, viewed his position in its true light, it was a grave one. He was alone in the darkness with sailors whom he did not know, and who had no reason to be devoted to him; who knew that he had several thousand francs in his belt, and who had often examined his weapons,—which were very beautiful,—if not with envy, at least with curiosity. On the other hand, he was about to land, without any other escort than these men, on an island which had, indeed, a very religious name, but which did not seem to Franz likely to afford him much hospitality, thanks to the smugglers and bandits. The history of the scuttled vessels, which had appeared improbable during the day, seemed very probable at night; placed as he was between two possible sources of danger, he kept his eye on the crew, and his gun in his hand.

The sailors had again hoisted sail, and the vessel was once more cleaving the waves. Through the darkness Franz, whose eyes were now more accustomed to it, could see the looming shore along which the boat was sailing, and then, as they rounded a rocky point, he saw the fire more brilliant than ever, and about it five or six persons seated. The blaze illumined the sea for a hundred paces around. Gaetano skirted the light, carefully keeping the boat in the shadow; then, when they were opposite the fire, he steered to the centre of the circle, singing a fishing song, of which his companions sung the chorus.

At the first words of the song the men seated round the fire arose and approached the landing-place, their eyes fixed on the boat, evidently seeking to know who the new-comers were and what were their intentions. They soon appeared satisfied and returned (with the exception of one, who remained at the shore) to their fire, at which the carcass of a goat was roasting. When the boat was within twenty paces of the shore, the man on the beach, who carried a carbine, presented arms after the manner of a sentinel, and cried, 'Who comes there?' in Sardinian.

While he was yet at the door of the study he heard the bedroom door open, turned, and saw his father. Instead of going direct to his study, M. Morrel had returned to his bedchamber, which he was only this moment quitting. Morrel uttered a cry of surprise at the sight of his son, of whose arrival he was ignorant. He remained motionless on the spot, pressing with his left hand something he had concealed under his coat. Maximilian sprang down the staircase, and threw his arms round his father's neck; but suddenly he recoiled, and placed his right hand on Morrel's breast.

'Father,' he exclaimed, turning pale as death, 'what are you going to do with that brace of pistols under your coat?'

'Oh, this is what I feared!' said Morrel.

'Father, father, in Heaven's name,' exclaimed the young man, 'what are these weapons for?'

'Maximilian,' replied Morrel, looking fixedly at his son, 'you are a man, and a man of honour. Come, and I will explain to you.'

And with a firm step Morrel went up to his study, while Maximilian followed him, trembling as he went. Morrel opened the door, and closed it behind his son; then, crossing the anteroom, went to his desk on which he placed the pistols, and pointed with his finger to an open ledger. In this ledger was made out an exact balance-sheet of his affairs. Morrel had to pay, within half an hour, 287,500 francs. All he possessed was 15,257 francs.

'Read!' said Morrel.

The young man was overwhelmed as he read. Morrel said not a word. What could he say? What need he add to such a desperate proof in figures?

'And have you done all that is possible, father, to meet this disastrous result?' asked the young man, after a moment's pause.

'I have,' replied Morrel.

'You have no money coming in on which you can rely?'

'None.'

'You have exhausted every resource?'

'All.'

'And in half an hour,' said Maximilian in a gloomy voice, 'our name is dishonored!'

'Blood washes out dishonor,' said Morrel.