

to go through. There was still wall in front of him, but it seemed thinner. Suddenly, Dantes heard a voice from the other side.

'Who are you?' said the voice.

'An unhappy prisoner: number 34,' Dantes replied.

'Where are you from and what is your profession?'

'I am a Frenchman and I am a sailor.'

'How long have you been here and what is your crime?'

'I have been here since the 28th of February, 1815, and I am innocent. They accused me of conspiracy against the king,' said Dantes.

'I am prisoner 27,' said the man from the other side. 'I have been here four years longer than you. How do you hide the hole on the wall?'

'I have moved the bed close to it, and I throw the broken stone out of the window of my cell, that looks out over the sea,' said Dantes.

'To the sea?' the man said in an enthusiastic voice. 'And there is a window? That is how we will escape!'

'But how? The iron bars on the window are strong,' Dantes said. 'And I cannot work on them without the guard seeing me.'

Just then, a mass of stones and earth were pushed towards him, opening up a hole in front of him. Dantes saw two hands coming through the wall. On his knees, Dantes moved back inside the narrow passage. And then he saw a head and two thin shoulders coming through the hole. A thin old man with a white beard had entered Dantes' passage. The two prisoners stared at each other. 'Move back - I am coming into your cell,' the old man said. Soon they were standing together in Dantes' damp cell.

'We will plan our escape together,' the old man said.

Prisoner 27 was the Abbe Faria, an Italian man in his sixties, who was in prison for his political beliefs. On every encounter Dantes had with the man his heart was filled with joy. They talked endlessly. The man's education was unbelievable: there was nothing he did not know. As time went by, the two men became great friends.

'Nothing is more powerful than education,' the Abbe would say. 'I will teach you everything you need to know to stand among the very best.'

During daytime, the two men worked on opening up a tunnel

