

CHAPTER 26

Andrea Cavalcanti

ONE day a young man calling himself Andrea Cavalcanti arrived at the Count of Monte Cristo's house. He had come from Italy with a letter from Father Busoni. The letter told him to go to the Count of Monte Cristo in Paris. The Count would show him Paris and give him any money he needed. Bertuccio saw this young man when he arrived. Very excited, he pulled the Count aside.

'That young man's name is not Andrea Cavalcanti,' he whispered. 'It is Benedetto. I brought him up as my own son and, in the year 1829, he robbed me and ran away from home. I told Father Busoni all about him.'

'I know,' said Monte Cristo, 'but do not worry. I have my own reasons for wanting him to be here. Meanwhile, you had better not let him see you in this house.'

You can take a holiday and go away for some time.'

Monte Cristo went into the room where Andrea Cavalcanti was waiting to see him.

'Good morning,' said the Count. 'Father Busoni has written to me and told me that you are an Italian nobleman wishing to see Paris. As I owe Father Busoni some money, he has asked me to pay all your expenses here, out of the money I owe him.'

Benedetto could not understand why the priest had sent

him to Paris, nor why he had been asked to call himself Andrea Cavalcanti and pretend he was a nobleman. But as the Count gave him a thousand francs towards his expenses, with a promise to pay more later, Benedetto did not complain. He decided to act his part as Andrea Cavalcanti as long as he was paid to play it.

A few days later, when Baron Danglars met Andrea Cavalcanti, he showed a great interest in the young man. Cavalcanti seemed to be very wealthy. Danglars began to think that perhaps such a young nobleman might be a better match for his daughter, Eugénie, than Albert Morcerf. One day, he asked Monte Cristo about him.

‘I do not know much about Cavalcanti,’ said the Count.

‘I only know he was sent here by my friend Father Busoni.’

‘When young Italian noblemen like Cavalcanti marry, do they receive any fortune from their fathers?’ asked Danglars.

‘Oh, that depends on whether the son marries the girl of his father’s choice. In that case Andrea might get three million francs from his father, who is a very wealthy man. But his father would cut him off with nothing if Andrea married against his wishes.’

‘So, I expect that he will marry some princess or other.’

‘Oh no, I do not think so,’ replied Monte Cristo.

‘These Italian noble families often marry into plain families. But do you wish Andrea to marry your daughter, that you are asking so many questions?’

‘Upon my word! I think it might be a good idea,’ said Danglars.

‘But what would Albert Morcerf do about that?’ said the Count. ‘I thought he was engaged to be married to your daughter.’

'Albert would care very little about it, I think. And as Andrea Cavalcanti belongs to a more noble family than Morcerf, I would prefer him. He has plenty of money too, it seems.'

'But is not the Morcerf family also a noble one?' asked the Count, pretending to be surprised.

'It is not even as noble as my family. I am not a baron by birth, but at least my real name is Danglars.'

'And the Count Morcerf?'

'His real name is not Morcerf.'

'Oh, that is impossible!'

'Listen, my dear Count, I have known Morcerf for the past thirty years. When I was a clerk, he was just a simple fisherman, named Fernand Mondego.'

'Then why do you think of giving your daughter to his son?'

'Because Fernand and Danglars were both poor men who have become rich. We are both equal in worth, except that certain things have been said about him that were never said about me.'

'What are they?'

'Oh, nothing!'

'Ah, yes! What you have told me reminds me that I have heard something about the name of Fernand Mondego in the East.'

'In connection with Ali Tebelin Pacha?'

'Yes, that is right.'

'This is the mystery,' said Danglars. 'I would give anything to find out the truth about it.'

'Well, I suppose you can do that if you wish,' said the Count carelessly.

'How so?'

'You are a banker. You must have your agents everywhere.'

'Of course.'

'Well, why don't you write to your agent in Janina and ask about a French officer named Fernand Mondego? Ask him how this officer was concerned with the downfall of Ali Tebelin.'

'That is a good idea,' said Danglars. 'I will write today.'

CHAPTER 27

The Ball and the Beggar

A few days later, Monte Cristo was invited to a ball at the home of the Count and Countess Morcerf. Many people were there, including the Danglars family and also Andrea Cavalcanti. Cavalcanti danced with Eugénie Danglars almost the whole evening.

'Aren't you jealous?' Monte Cristo asked Albert Morcerf.

'You know very well that I don't want to marry Eugénie,' replied Albert. 'If she and Cavalcanti like one another, it suits me very well.'

'I think that Baron Danglars will be pleased about it too, now,' said Monte Cristo.

'Do you mean that he would prefer Andrea Cavalcanti to me for his son-in-law?' asked Albert, surprised.

'That's what he told me the other day,' replied the Count. Just then Mercédès came towards them.

'Good evening,' she said to Monte Cristo. 'Is it true that you have seen so much, travelled so far, and suffered so deeply, as my son has told me?'

'I have suffered deeply, madame,' answered Monte Cristo.

'Have you no sister, no son, no father?'

'I have no one.'

'How can you live without anyone to make your life worth living?'



Andrea saw an old man dressed in torn and filthy clothes.

'That is not my fault, madame. When I was young, in Malta, I loved a young girl. We were going to be married, but war came and I was taken away from her. I thought she loved me well enough to wait for me, but when I returned, she was married to someone else.'

'And did you ever see her again?'

'No, I never returned to the country where she lived.'

'Malta?'

'Yes, Malta.'

'Is she still in Malta?'

'I think so.'

'And have you forgiven her for all she has made you suffer?'

'Yes, I have pardoned *her*.'

'But only her; do you still hate those who separated you from her?'

'Hate them—not at all—why should I?' answered the Count. And his mouth moved in a wry smile.

* * *

When the ball was over, the guests left, one after the other in their carriages. Andrea Cavalcanti had bought his carriage only a few days ago, with some of the money given to him by Monte Cristo. It was new and shining and it was driven by a groom in a smart uniform. The carriage drove up to the door and, as Andrea was stepping into it, a hand touched his shoulder. The young man turned around to see who wanted to speak to him. He saw an old man dressed in torn and filthy clothes. A red handkerchief was tied round his head and his face was covered with a dirty grey beard.

Andrea's groom jumped down from the carriage to push this intruder away from his master.

'You have no right to beg here,' said the groom.

The unknown old man smiled cunningly.

'I am not begging, my fine fellow,' he said. 'I only wanted to speak to your master, who asked me to do something for him last week.'

'What do you want?' said Andrea, nervously.

'I'm very tired,' said the old man, 'and not having eaten as good a dinner as you have, I can hardly walk.'

'Yes, but tell me what you want,' said Andrea again.

'Well, because I am tired and cannot walk, I want you to give me a ride in your fine carriage. Do you understand, Benedetto?'

The young man took a step backwards when he heard this name and he looked surprised. Then he said to his groom, 'Yes, this man is right. I did ask him to do something for me. Let him get into the carriage, I will drive, and you can go home.'

The astonished groom went away, and Andrea drove off with the old man in his carriage. When they had gone some distance and he was sure that they could not be seen or heard, he stopped the carriage and turned to the stranger.

'Now, Caderousse, tell me why you have come to disturb me,' he said.

CHAPTER 28

Caderousse and Cavalcanti

'Why do you come to disturb me?' repeated Cavalcanti to the man in the carriage.

'And you, my boy,' said the man, who was none other then Caderousse, 'why have you deceived me?'

'How have I deceived you?'

'Why, when we escaped together from prison, you told me that you were going to work in Italy, but you have come to Paris.'

'Does that annoy you?'

'No, it doesn't annoy me. You seem to be rich. I think you can help me!'

'You are mistaken,' said Andrea.

'Oh, I don't think so,' replied Caderousse. 'Here you are, with your new carriage, a groom, and fine clothes. You must have discovered a gold mine.'

'It isn't my fault if I have had good luck.'

'So, you have had good luck, have you? This horse and carriage, the groom and the fine clothes, are not hired? Good!'

'You must have known that before you spoke to me,' said Andrea. 'If I had been wearing a red handkerchief like yours on my head, with torn and dirty clothes, you wouldn't have spoken to me.'

'Come, my boy, you wrong me; but at any rate, now that I

have found you, I can also be well dressed. I know how good and kind-hearted you are. If you have two coats, you can give me one. You know I used to divide my soup and beans with you when you were hungry!’

‘True,’ said Andrea.

‘What an appetite you used to have! Is it as good now?’

‘Oh, yes!’ replied Andrea, laughing uncertainly.

‘And you were a sly fellow,’ said Caderousse. ‘You always had little purses and money boxes which you tried to hide from your poor friend Caderousse. But luckily he had a sharp nose, that friend Caderousse.’

‘Oh, that’s all in the past,’ said Andrea. ‘Why are you bothering me with that?’

‘Ah! You are only twenty-three. You can forget the past. I am fifty. I cannot forget it. But tell me, Benedetto, where did you get all these fine things?’

‘I’ve been lucky. I have found my fortune.’

‘Your fortune! And how did you find that?’

‘My good friend, the Count of Monte Cristo, helped me to find it.’

‘A Count, and a rich one too, eh?’

‘Yes, but you had better not say anything to him. I don’t think he is very patient.’

‘Oh, I don’t want to speak to him,’ replied Caderousse, ‘but as you know him, you can help me to get rich without spending anything yourself.’

‘Come, Caderousse, no nonsense!’ said Andrea.

‘But you would not have to spend anything.’

‘Do you want me to rob the Count, to spoil all my good fortune, and to be sent to prison again?’

'Don't be alarmed, my little Benedetto, just show me how to get some money without your help, and I will manage it. What is the Count's house like?'

'It is a palace.'

'A palace, eh? You should take me to see it.'

'I can't do that.'

'You are right, but I would like to see it. I shall find a way.'

'No nonsense, Caderousse!'

'Well, I shall have to imagine what it looks like. Try to help me.'

Andrea suddenly had an idea.

'I should need a pen and ink and paper to make a plan,' he said.

'I have them all with me,' said Caderousse, pulling writing materials out of his dirty clothes. Andrea took the pen, with a little smile, and began to draw a plan of the Count of Monte Cristo's house. When it was finished, Caderousse said, 'Does the Count live in this house always?'

'Oh, no,' replied Andrea. 'He often goes to his country house outside Paris. When he goes there, he leaves this house empty. I am sure he will be robbed some day.'

'Where does he keep his money?' asked Caderousse.

'I don't know, but I think he keeps it in a desk in a room on the first floor.'

'Draw me a plan of the first floor, as you have drawn the one of the ground floor, my boy.'

'That's very easy,' said Andrea, taking the pen again.

'On the first floor there is a bedroom and a dressing-room here, and on that side we have a drawing-room, a library and a study. The desk is here, in the dressing-room.'

'Is there a window in the dressing-room?'

'Two, one here and one there.'

Andrea sketched two windows in the room. Caderousse became thoughtful.

'Does the Count often go to his country house?' he asked.

'Yes, tomorrow he is going there for two days.'

'Are you sure?'

'Quite sure. The Count tells me everything. He is very fond of me. I think he is going to leave all his fortune to me when he dies.'

'Ah, you lucky fellow!' said Caderousse.

'Yes,' replied Andrea, 'but when that happens, I shall remember all my old friends.'

'You will? Well then, until that time, you can at least give me a little present. Give me that diamond ring you have on your finger.'

Andrea took the ring off his finger and gave it to Caderousse. Caderousse took it and scraped it across the lamp glass of Andrea's carriage. He found that it cut the glass.

'It is a real diamond,' he said.

'Of course! What did you think?' said Andrea. 'Now what else do you want from me?'

'Nothing! I shall go home now. Goodbye, dear Benedetto!' And Caderousse slipped away as quietly as he had come.

CHAPTER 29

The Burglary

THE next day, Monte Cristo received a letter from an unknown person. This is what it said:—

You are informed that a man will break into your house tonight. He will try to steal some papers from your desk in the dressing-room. Do not call the police, as it might harm me. As you are brave, you need only hide yourself, wait for the burglar, and catch him. It will be better if there are no servants in the house. Send them to your country house! If the burglar sees servants in the house and is frightened away, I might not get a second chance to warn you.

The Count thought this must be a thieves' trick to keep him in his house in Paris and then to rob his country house. But then why should they ask him to send his servants to the country house?

'No,' he thought again, 'they want to get me alone in the house and then kill me. Well, we shall see who these enemies are.'

Monte Cristo ordered all the servants, except Ali, to go off to his country house. Haydée went there too.

He and Ali then hid themselves in the bedroom in the Paris house and waited for the burglar. There was a small spyhole in the wall. The Count could see through it into the dressing-

room. He looked and waited, with a gun and two pistols at his side.

The whole house was in darkness. Not a light burned anywhere. The Count had removed the staple of the bolt on the door in the dressing-room leading to his bedroom.

Now he got up and looked out of his bedroom window to see if he could see anyone in the street. He could see nothing. He went again to the little hole in the wall and looked through it into the dressing-room. He had nothing to do but wait.

About midnight, Monte Cristo thought he heard a scratching noise in the drawing-room. Then there was a second scratching noise, and a third, and a fourth. The Count knew that was happening. Somebody was cutting the four sides of a pane of glass with a diamond. Monte Cristo's heart began to beat more quickly for a few seconds. He wondered how many thieves were breaking into the house, and he signalled to Ali to come a little closer. He saw something white appearing at one of the windows in the dressing-room. It was a sheet of paper being stuck to the pane. Then the square of glass cracked without falling. A hand came through the opening and unfastened the window. It opened slowly. A man came through it into the room. He was alone.

'That's a daring rascal!' thought the Count.

Ali touched Monte Cristo's shoulder and pointed to the bedroom window. The Count went over to it and looked into the street. There was another man down there, looking at the house.

'Good!' said the Count to himself. 'Now I know there are two of them. One acts while the other watches.'

He made a sign to Ali to watch the man in the street and he

went to the hole in the wall to watch the man in the dressing-room.

The burglar was bolting all the doors in the dressing-room. Now he thought that no one could disturb him and he could safely break open the desk. He didn't know that the Count had removed a staple from one of the bolts. He lifted the cover of his lantern to look at the desk, to see how he could pick open the lock. As he did this, the light fell on his face. The Count was surprised.

'Why,' he whispered, 'it is...!'

Ali raised his hatchet.

'Put down your hatchet,' whispered the Count. Then he gave Ali some instructions. Ali went away quietly. He soon came back, carrying a priest's dress, a long black wig and a false beard. Quickly, Monte Cristo put these on and turned himself into Father Busoni. Then, going again to the window, he looked once more into the street. The other man was still there, standing under a street lamp with the light on his face. Now Monte Cristo recognised him also. He understood everything.

'Stay here,' he whispered to Ali, 'and don't come into the dressing-room unless I call you.'

He lighted a candle and walked straight into the dressing-room.

'Good evening, dear Monsieur Caderousse,' said Monte Cristo. 'What are you doing here at this time of night?'

CHAPTER 30

The Murder

'FATHER Busoni!' cried Caderousse in surprise. He couldn't understand how the priest had come into the room when he had so carefully bolted all the doors.

'I am glad you recognise me,' said Monte Cristo. 'I see you have not changed. Last time you were robbing a jeweller and now you are robbing the Count of Monte Cristo. Why aren't you still in prison?'

'I escaped.'

'So that you could rob people again? What a pity!'

'Mercy, Father Busoni! You saved my life once. Please save me again.'

'How have you escaped from prison?'

'We were working near Toulon. It was the hour of rest, between noon and one o'clock—'

'Prisoners having a nap after lunch!' interrupted Father Busoni, 'We may well pity the poor fellows.'

'We can't work all the time. We are not dogs,' said Caderousse.

'So much the better for the dogs,' said the priest. 'Go on, tell me what happened.'

'While the others were sleeping, my friend and I escaped.'

'And who was this friend of yours?'

'He called himself Benedetto. He didn't know his real name, because he never knew who his parents were.'

'Where is he now?'

'He is in Paris. The Count of Monte Cristo, who owns this house, has taken a fancy to him. He's going to leave all his money to Benedetto when he dies.'

'Oh, really?' said the priest. 'And by what name does this Benedetto call himself now?'

'Andrea Cavalcanti.'

'But that's the young man whom my friend the Count has been taking around Paris and who is also friendly with Baron Danglars and his family. I must warn them about him.'

'Oh no, don't do that, Father Busoni. You would spoil everything for Benedetto and for me.'

'What do I care about you?' said the priest. 'I must warn them.'

'Oh no, you won't,' said Caderousse, pulling out a long knife and raising it in the air to stab the priest.

Father Busoni quickly seized Caderousse and twisted his wrist with such force that the knife fell with a clatter to the floor. Caderousse cried out in pain and surprise as the priest twisted his arm still further.

'I ought to kill you,' said Busoni.

'Mercy!' cried Caderousse.

'Now you will write a letter to Baron Danglars,' said the priest. 'Take this pen and paper and write what I tell you!'

Caderousse sat down and wrote:—

'To Baron Danglars—The man who comes to your house, calling himself Andrea Cavalcanti, is really an escaped prisoner, named Benedetto, who ran away from the prison at Toulon with me.'

Signed—GASPARD CADEROUSSE

The priest took the letter. 'Now go!' he said.

Caderousse climbed out of the window and started to go down the ladder which he had placed there. Father Busoni held out his candle, so that anyone standing in the street could see that he was getting out of the window.

'Put the light out. Someone might see me,' cried Caderousse.

Monte Cristo went back to his bedroom and looked out of the window. He saw Caderousse take his ladder and put it against the garden wall. The man waiting outside in the street ran towards the place. Caderousse climbed slowly and looked over the top of the wall to see if all was quiet. Everything seemed to be safe.

Caderousse sat on the wall and pulled his ladder over, letting it down on the other side. He began to climb down to the street. Too late, he noticed a man spring from the shadows. A long dagger glinted in the light from a street lamp. Before Caderousse could defend himself the knife was struck into his back. He fell to the ground, crying, 'Help! murder!' The other man grabbed him by the hair and stabbed him a second and a third time in the chest. Then, seeing that he no longer called out and that his eyes were closed, the man ran quickly away.



He began to climb down to the street.

CHAPTER 31

Looking for the Murderer

AGAIN Caderousse called for help. This time, Father Busoni and Ali appeared with lights. The priest sent Ali away quickly to fetch the State Prosecutor and a doctor.

'Did you recognise who stabbed you?' said Father Busoni.

'Yes, it was Benedetto. It was he who gave me the plan of this house. I suppose he hoped I'd kill the Count and then he would get all his money, or that the Count would kill me, and then I'd be out of his way. When he saw me coming out of the house, he decided to kill me. I must report him.'

'I'd better write something down for you to sign, in case the State Prosecutor doesn't get here in time.'

'Yes, yes, quickly,' said Caderousse.

Father Busoni wrote:—

I die, murdered by my fellow prisoner, Benedetto.

He then gave the pen to Caderousse, who signed it.

'And now you've not long to live, it's time for you to repent,' said the priest.

'What do you mean?' asked Caderousse.

'I mean that you have lived a wicked life and God has punished you. Many years ago, you betrayed a friend and God began to warn you. You became poor. Later, I came to you with a fortune. I gave you a diamond. This was more than you had

ever had before. But you were not satisfied. You wanted to double it. So you murdered a man to get the money and the diamond. Once more, God spared your life, but you had a warning. You were sent to prison. Now you have escaped and committed another crime. But God will not spare your life again. Therefore I say to you, you must repent.'

'Who are you, that you know all about my past life?' said Caderousse.

The priest leaned over and whispered in his ear, 'I have known you for a long time, Caderousse; longer than you think.'

'But who are you?'

'I am Edmond Dantès. Do you remember?'

'Edmond Dantès!' repeated the dying man. 'Ah, my God! My God! Pardon me! Forgive me! I truly repent for all my sins.'

He sank to the ground and became quiet. As the priest looked at the man, now dead, on the ground, he said quietly, 'Number one!'

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Soon afterwards, the State Prosecutor and the police arrived. Father Busoni showed them Caderousse's body. He told them that the Count of Monte Cristo was away in his country home. He had asked his friend the Count for permission to look at some valuable books in the library while he was away. It was when he had been in the library, looking at the books, he had surprised the burglar, who ran away. Afterwards, he heard cries for help outside the house. Running outside, he had found the man lying on the ground, wounded. Father Busoni handed over to the police the note, signed by Caderousse, which said that he had been stabbed by Benedetto.

Caderousse's knife, his lantern, a bunch of keys, and all his clothes except a waistcoat, which could not be found, were taken away by the police.

They then began a search all over Paris for the murderer, Benedetto. They did not know that Benedetto was Andrea Cavalcanti. Benedetto could not be found.

CHAPTER 32

Haydée's Story

ONE day, Albert Morcerf came to visit Monte Cristo.

As they were talking, the sound of music, like a guitar, was heard coming from another room in the house.

'What do I hear?' asked Albert.

'It's Haydée, playing her gusla.'

'Haydée! What a wonderful name! I have seen her with you at the opera. Who is she?'

'She's a princess.'

'A princess! Where does she come from?'

'She comes from the East. I'll ask her to tell you her story herself.'

'I would love to meet her.'

'Come, let us go and talk to her.'

The Count led Albert to Haydée's room. Haydée was sitting on some cushions, playing her instrument. She was very beautiful and her large eyes lit up with pleasure when she saw Monte Cristo coming into the room.

The Count introduced her to Albert. Haydée asked a servant to bring coffee, and Albert and the Count sat down on the cushions beside her. When the coffee was served, Albert said to Haydée, 'I'm told by the Count that you come from the East and that you are a princess.'

'Yes,' replied Haydée, 'I'm the daughter of Ali Tebelin, Pacha of Janina, but I left my country when I was a little girl.'

'Do you remember it?'

'Yes, I was very happy with my mother and father until I was about four years old.'

'What happened then?'

'We were in the palace at Janina. One night my mother suddenly picked me up from the cushions where I was sleeping. I opened my eyes and saw hers were filled with tears. I began to cry too. 'Silence, child!' she said. She carried me away quickly. I found that we were running away from the palace. Many of our servants were with us; also a guard of soldiers. They had their guns and pistols. My father was there, too. He came behind the others, clothed in his splendid robes. He also was carrying a gun. Soon we came to the edge of a lake with a small island in the middle. On the island we could see a summer house. A boat was waiting for us and we went across the lake to the island.'

'I couldn't understand why we were running away. My father had always been an all-powerful prince. It didn't seem right that he should be running away now. Afterwards I learned that the Sultan had sent an army to attack Janina and capture my father. Our army in the fort at Janina did not seem to be able to resist the attackers. So my father decided to call for a truce. He sent a French officer, whom he trusted completely, to negotiate with the Sultan. Then he took us all to the summer house on the lake to await the result of the French officer's talks with the Sultan.'

'Here, my father had collected all his fortune, a vast quantity of money in gold, in a cellar. There were also two hundred

barrels of gunpowder. We went down into the cellar and my father placed a guard named Selim near the gunpowder barrels. Selim had a lighted torch in his hand and it was his duty to guard the cellar day and night. He had orders to light the gunpowder if a certain signal was given by my father. Then my father, his family, and all his fortune would be blown up.

'After a few days, my father told us that he was expecting the French officer to return with a message from the Sultan. At about four o'clock that afternoon the soldiers of the Sultan arrived at the edge of the lake. The French officer was with them. Ali Tebelin, my father, waited at the door of the summer house for them to cross the lake. My mother and I were sent down to the cellar. As soon as Ali Tebelin knew the Sultan's reply, he would send the French officer to Selim with either a dagger or a ring. If it was a dagger, it would mean that the news was bad and Selim would have to light the gunpowder. If he sent the ring, it meant that we were pardoned and could go free. Then Selim would put out his torch and we would go upstairs to join my father.'

'We could hear sounds above us. Soon there were footsteps outside the cellar. Selim held his torch ready. The French officer appeared in the doorway.

'Long live the Sultan!' he cried. 'He has pardoned Ali Tebelin.'

'Who sent you here?' asked Selim.

'Ali Tebelin,' replied the officer.

'If you come from Ali Tebelin,' said Selim, 'you know what you must give me.'

'Yes,' said the officer, 'I bring you his ring.'

'He held up something in his hand, but he was too far away

and the light was not good enough for Selim to see what it was.

"I cannot see what you have in your hand," he said.

"Come here then," said the French officer, "or I will come to you if you prefer it."

"No," said Selim, "put it on the ground in that ray of light and then go back while I come to look at it."

"Very well," said the officer. He put it on the ground and went back to the doorway. Selim went up to it and saw that it was a ring. He put out his torch. As he did this, the French officer clapped his hands twice. At this signal, four of the Sultan's soldiers suddenly appeared. They stabbed Selim who fell to the ground. We were betrayed!

'The Sultan's soldiers seized my father's fortune and captured my mother and myself. Upstairs, my father had already been killed. The French officer was allowed to take a large portion of my father's gold for himself. He was also allowed to sell my mother and me to some slave merchants who were on their way to Constantinople. My mother died when we reached there. I became the slave of the Sultan Mahmoud.

'Happily for me, the Count of Monte Cristo bought me from the Sultan. He has looked after me ever since and I have been able to forget my past troubles.'

'Come, finish your coffee,' said Monte Cristo to Albert. 'The story is ended.'

When they had left Haydée's room, Albert turned to Monte Cristo.

'My father was once in the service of Ali Tebelin,' he said. 'I should have asked Haydée if she ever knew him.'

'You can ask her that another time,' said the Count.

CHAPTER 33

News from Janina

It was now nearly the end of the year 1838. Following the advice of Monte Cristo, Danglars had written some weeks ago to his agent in Janina, to find out about Fernand Mondego and what had happened at the time of the downfall of Ali Tebelin.

When the reply came, Danglars read it carefully. The news did not please him. He decided that Fernand's son could not possibly marry his daughter. But what excuse could he give the Count Morcerf? He decided to send the report from Janina to the newspapers.

'When he reads it in the newspaper,' thought Danglars, 'I shall not have to explain everything to him.'

The next morning everybody in Paris read the report in their newspapers. It said:

A correspondent writes from Janina:

A new fact has come to light about the history of Janina, which was not known before. In the year 1823, when Janina was attacked by the Sultan's troops, the fort was given up to the attackers by a French officer whom Prince Ali Tebelin had completely trusted. Ali Tebelin was caught and killed. He had been betrayed by the same French officer. The name of this officer was Fernand Mondego, but he now calls himself the Count Morcerf and sits in the Upper House of our Parliament.

At this news there was an uproar in the French Parliament which was meeting that day. When the Count Morcerf came to take his seat in the Upper House, there were demands from all sides for an inquiry. Morcerf was asked when he would be ready to answer questions and be judged.

'The sooner the better,' he replied. 'Let it be this evening.'

At eight o'clock in the evening, the enquiry began. Questions were asked, and Morcerf showed documents to prove that Prince Ali Tebelin had trusted him right up to the time of his death. The prince had asked him to negotiate with the Sultan. There was the ring, with Ali Tebelin's seal, which had been given to Morcerf as an authority to come and go in the palace, or anywhere else, as he pleased.

'Unfortunately,' said Morcerf, 'my negotiations with the Sultan failed and, when I returned to defend Ali Tebelin, he was dead. But the prince trusted me so greatly that, on this death bed, he left a message that I should look after his wife and daughter. Again luck was against me. When I came back to Janina, Ali Tebelin's wife, and his daughter, had disappeared. I wasn't a rich man and I couldn't go in search of them. I don't know what happened to them. I only wish I could have found them so that I could have looked after them.'

'Have you anything else to say?' asked the President of the Upper House.

'Only that I don't know who wrote the false report in the newspapers, but as no witnesses have come here to speak against me, I say that this is proof enough that I am innocent.'

The members of the Upper House murmured their agreement. They were now ready to vote in favour of the Count Morcerf and to declare that the newspaper report must be false. But the President said,

'Gentlemen, I have just received a note from an important witness. Here it is. After what the Count Morcerf has told us, we can be sure that this witness has only come here to help to prove his innocence. Shall we read the letter, or shall we pass it by?'

When he heard this, the Count Morcerf turned pale and clenched his fists. He waited for the answer which the Upper House would give.

There were shouts from the members, 'Read the paper!' 'We must hear what it says!'

So the President read in a loud voice:

Monsieur the President—I was there when Ali Tebelin, Pacha of Janina, died. I know what became of his wife and his daughter. If the Upper House would like to hear me, I shall be outside, in the lobby, when this note is handed to you.

Morcerf sat in his seat and listened to this with his heart beating furiously. Who could this be?

'Would the House like to hear this witness?' the President asked.

'Yes, yes!' they all said.