The Count of Monte Cristo

by
Alexandre Dumas
Auguste Maquet
Pier Angelo Florentino

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THE

COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO.

Vol. II.
THE CARNIVAL AT ROME.

Drawn by Edmund H. Garrett.

The Count of Monte Cristo. II. Frontispiece.
THE

COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO.

BY

ALEXANDRE DUMAS.

VOL. II.

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1895.
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>ITALY: SINBAD THE SAILOR</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>THE WAKING</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>ROMAN BANDITS</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>AN APPARITION</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>LA MAZZOLATA</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>THE CARNIVAL AT ROME</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII</td>
<td>THE CATACOMBS OF ST. SEBASTIAN</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII</td>
<td>THE RENDEZVOUS</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX</td>
<td>THE GUESTS</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>THE BREAKFAST</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XI</td>
<td>THE PRESENTATION</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XII</td>
<td>MONSIEUR BERTUCCIO</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIII</td>
<td>THE HOUSE AT AUTEUIL</td>
<td>239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIV</td>
<td>THE VENDETTA</td>
<td>248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XV</td>
<td>THE RAIN OF BLOOD</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVI</td>
<td>UNLIMITED CREDIT</td>
<td>292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVII</td>
<td>THE DAPPLED GRAYS</td>
<td>310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVIII</td>
<td>IDEOLOGY</td>
<td>327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIX</td>
<td>HAYDÉE</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XX</td>
<td>THE MORREL FAMILY</td>
<td>348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXI</td>
<td>PYRAMUS AND THISBE</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXII</td>
<td>TOXICOLOGY</td>
<td>375</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO.

CHAPTER I.

ITALY: SINBAD THE SAILOR.

Towards the beginning of the year 1838, two young men belonging to the first society of Paris, the Vicomte 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 slight affair to spend the Carnival at Rome, especially when you have no great desire to sleep on the Place du Peuple, or the Campo Vaccino, they wrote to Maître Pastrini, the proprietor of the Hôtel de Londres, Place d'Espagne, to reserve comfortable apartments for them. Maître Pastrini replied that he had only two rooms and a cabinet al secondo piano, 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. After having passed several days here, when he had walked in the Eden called the Casines, when he had passed two or three evenings at the houses of the nobles of Florence, he took a fancy into his head after having already visited Corsica, the cradle of Bonaparte, to visit Elba, the halting-place of Napoleon.

One evening he loosened a boat from the iron ring that secured it to the port of Leghorn, laid himself down, wrapped in his cloak, at the bottom, and said to the crew,
"To the Isle of Elba!" The boat shot out of the harbor 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 landed at Piano, where he was assured that red partridges abounded. The sport was bad; Franz succeeded in killing only 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 that rose from the blue 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 permission, 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 isle 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 by licking 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 the chase is finished. 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 before rejoining his companion, and had no further occasion to trouble himself about his apartment in Rome, he accepted the proposition. Upon his answer in the affirmative, the sailors exchanged a few words together in a low tone. “Well,” he asked; “what? is there any difficulty to be surmounted?”

“No,” replied the captain, “but we must warn your Excellency that the island is contumacious.”

“What do you mean?”

“That Monte Cristo, although uninhabited, yet serves occasionally as a refuge for the smugglers and pirates who come from Corsica, Sardinia, and Africa; and that if anything betrays that we have been there, we shall have to perform quarantine for six days on our return to Leghorn.”

“The devil! that is quite another thing! Six days! just the time which God required to create the world. It is somewhat long, my children.”

“But who will say that 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 bow was turned towards the island; and the boat was soon sailing in that direction. Franz waited until all was finished; 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, just as there are 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; that no one knows what has become of it, and that doubtless it has struck on a rock and foundered. Now, this rock it has met is a long and narrow boat manned by six or eight men, who have surprised and plundered it some dark and stormy night near some deserted and gloomy isle, as bandits plunder a carriage at the corner of a wood."

"But," asked Franz, who lay wrapped in his cloak at the bottom of the bark, "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 every one's neck a four and twenty pound ball; a large hole is pierced in the vessel's bottom, and then they leave her.
ITALY: SINBAD THE SAILOR.

At the end of ten minutes the vessel begins to roll, labor, and then sink; then one of the sides plunges and then the other. It rises and sinks again; suddenly a noise like the report of a cannon is heard, — it is the air breaking 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, laughing, "why no complaints are made to the Government, and why the vessel does not arrive at the port?"

It is probable that if Gaetano had related this previously to proposing the expedition, Franz would have hesitated ere he accepted it; 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, encounter it with imperturbable coolness. He was one of those calm and resolute men who look upon a danger as an adversary in a duel; who calculate its movements and study its attacks; who retreat sufficiently to take breath, but not to appear cowardly; who, understanding all their advantages, kill at a single blow. "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, my dear Gaetano, 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 sailed six or seven knots an hour; and they were rapidly nearing the end of their voyage. As they approached, the island seemed to rise a huge mass from the bosom of the sea; and through the clear atmosphere in the light of closing day, they could distinguish the rocks heaped on one another like bullets in an arsenal, in whose crevices they could see the green bushes and trees that were growing. As for the sailors, although they appeared perfectly tranquil, yet it was evident that they were on the alert, and that they very 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, and showing their rugged peaks in bold relief; this mass of stones, like the giant Adamastor, rose threateningly before the boat, from which it hid the sun that gilded its higher peaks. By degrees the shadow rose from the sea 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 the shadow gradually covered the summit as it had covered the base, and the island now appeared to be a gray mountain that grew continually darker. Half an hour later, and 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 it was impossible to 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?" he asked.

"Silence!" 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 harbor 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 isle, for, as you see, the fire is behind us."

"But this fire," continued Franz, "seems to me a thing that should rather assure than alarm us; 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 Pianoso, but only from the sea."

"You think, then, that this fire announces unwelcome neighbors?"

"That is what we must ascertain," returned Gaetano, fixing his eyes on this terrestrial star.

"How can you ascertain?"

"You shall see."

Gaetano consulted with his companions; and after five minutes' discussion a manoeuvre was executed which caused the boat to tack about. They returned in the direction from which they had come, and in a few minutes the fire disappeared, hidden by a rise in the land. The pilot again changed the course of the little vessel, which rapidly ap-
proached the island, and was soon within fifty paces of it. Gaetano lowered the sail, and the boat remained stationary. All this was done in silence, and since their course had been 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 prepared 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 locks, 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 be traced only by the phosphorescent line in his wake. This track soon disappeared; it was evident that he had touched the shore. Every one on board remained motionless during half an hour, when the same luminous track was again observed, and in two strokes he had regained the boat.

"Well?" exclaimed Franz and the sailors all together.

"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 profound Christian charity, "we ought always to help one another. Very often the bandits are hard pressed by gendarmes or carabiniers; well, they see a boat, and good fellows like us on board. They come and demand
hospitality of us. How can you 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, one does a little of everything; we must live somehow," returned the other, smiling in a way impossible to describe.

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

"Oh, yes, we sailors are like freemasons, and recognize each other by certain 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.

"Eh!" said Gaetano, "it is not their fault that they are bandits; it is that of the authorities."

"How so?"

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

"What do you mean by having made a peu, — 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 check them; so for the last time steer to Monte Cristo.”
“Yes; but your Excellency will permit us to take some 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.

Every one 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 in his belt several thousand livres; and who had often examined his arms, 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 bore a very religious name, but which did not seem to offer Franz any other hospitality than that of Calvary to Christ, 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 imaginary dangers, he did not quit the crew with his eyes, or his gun with his hand.

However, the sailors had again hoisted the sail, and the vessel was once more cleaving the waves. Through the darkness Franz, whose eyes were now more accustomed to it, distinguished the granite giant by which the boat was sailing; and then, turning an angle of the rock, he saw the fire more brilliant than ever, round which five or six persons were seated. The blaze illumined the sea for a hundred paces round. Gaetano skirted the light, carefully
ITALY: SINBAD THE SAILOR.

keeping the boat out of its rays; then, when they were opposite the fire, he entered into the centre of the circle, singing a fishing-song, of which his companions sang the chorus. At the first words of the song, the men seated round the fire rose and approached the landing-place, their eyes fixed on the boat, of which they evidently sought to judge the force and divine the intention. They soon appeared satisfied and returned (with the exception of one, who remained at the shore) to their fire, at which a whole goat was roasting. When the boat was within twenty paces of the shore, the man on the beach made with his carbine the movement of a sentinel who sees a patrol, and cried, "Who goes there?" in Sardinian. Franz coolly cocked both barrels. Gaetano then exchanged a few words with this man, which the traveller did not understand, but which evidently concerned him.

"Will your Excellency give your name, or remain incognito?" asked the captain.

"My name must rest unknown; merely say I am a Frenchman travelling for pleasure."

As soon as Gaetano had transmitted this answer, the sentinel gave an order to one of the men seated round the fire, who rose and disappeared among the rocks. Not a word was spoken; every one seemed occupied,—Franz with his disembarkment, the sailors with their sails, the smugglers with their goat,—but in the midst of all this carelessness it was evident that they mutually observed each other. The man who had disappeared returned suddenly on the opposite side to that by which he had left; he made a sign with his head to the sentinel, who, turning to the boat uttered these words, "S'accommodi." The Italian 'S'accommodi' is untranslatable; it means at once: "Come; enter; you are welcome; make yourself at home; you are the master." It is like that Turkish
phrase of Molière's that so astonished *le bourgeois gentilhomme* by the number of things it contained. The sailors did not wait for a second invitation; four strokes of the oar brought them to the land. Gaetano sprang to shore, exchanged a few words with the sentinel; then his comrades disembarked, and lastly came Franz's turn. One of his guns was swung over his shoulder, Gaetano had the other, and a sailor held his rifle; his dress, half artist, half dandy, excited no suspicion, and consequently no disquietude. The boat was moored to the shore, and they advanced a few paces to find a comfortable bivouac; but doubtless the spot they chose did not suit the smuggler who filled the post of sentinel, for he cried out, "Not that way, if you please."

Gaetano faltered an excuse, and advanced to the opposite side, while two sailors kindled torches at the fire to light them on their way. They advanced about thirty paces, and then stopped at a small esplanade surrounded with rocks, in which seats had been cut, not unlike sentry-boxes. Around in the crevices of the rocks grew a few dwarf oaks and thick bushes of myrtles. Franz lowered a torch and saw by the light of a mass of cinders that he was not the first to discover this retreat, which was doubtless one of the halting-places of the wandering visitors of Monte Cristo. As for his anticipation of events, once on *terra firma*, once that he had seen the indifferent if not friendly appearance of his hosts, his preoccupation had disappeared, or rather at sight of the goat had turned to appetite. He mentioned this to Gaetano, who replied that nothing could be more easy than to prepare a supper, since they had in their boat bread, wine, half a dozen partridges; and a good fire to roast them by. "Besides," added he, "if the smell of their roast meat tempts you, I will go and offer them two of our birds for a slice."
“You seem born for negotiation,” returned Franz; “go and try.”

During this time the sailors had collected dried sticks and branches, with which they made a fire. Franz waited impatiently, smelling the odor of the goat, when the captain returned with a mysterious air.


“Oh the contrary,” returned Gastano, “the chief, who was told you were a young Frenchman, invites you to sup with him.”

“Well,” observed Franz, “this chief is very polite; and I see no objection, — especially as I bring my share of the supper.”

“Oh, it is not that, — he has plenty and to spare for supper; but he attaches a singular condition to your presentation at his house.”

“His house! has he built one here, then?”

“No, but he has a very comfortable one all the same, so they say.”

“You know this chief, then?”

“I have heard him spoken of.”

“Ill or well?”

“Both.”

“The devil! and what is this condition?”

“That you are blindfolded, and do not take off the bandage until he himself bids you.” Franz looked at Gaetano, to see, if possible, what he thought of this proposal. “Ah,” replied he, guessing Franz’s thought, “I know this merits reflection.”

“What should you do in my place?”

“I, who have nothing to lose, — I should go.”

“You would accept?”

“Yes, were it only out of curiosity.”
"There is something very curious about this chief, then!"

"Listen," said Gaetano, lowering his voice; "I do not know if what they say is true—" He stopped to see if any one was near.

"What do they say?"

"That this chief inhabits a cavern to which the Pitti Palace is nothing."

"What nonsense!" said Franz, reseating himself.

"It is no nonsense; it is quite true. Cama, the pilot of the 'St. Ferdinand,' went in once, and he came back amazed, vowing that such treasures were only to be heard of in fairy tales."

"Do you know," observed Franz, "that with such stories you would make me enter the enchanted cavern of Ali Baba?"

"I tell you what I have been told."

"Then you advise me to accept?"

"Oh, I don't say that; your Excellency will do as you please. I should be sorry to advise you in the matter."

Franz reflected a few moments, felt that a man so rich could not have any intention of plundering him of what little he had; and seeing only the prospect of a good supper, he accepted. Gaetano departed with the reply. Franz was prudent, and wished to learn all he possibly could concerning his host. He turned towards the sailor who during this dialogue had sat gravely plucking the partridges with the air of a man proud of his office, and asked him how these men had landed, as no vessel of any kind was visible.

"Never mind that," returned the sailor; "I know their vessel."

"Is it a very beautiful vessel?"

"I would not wish for a better to sail round the world."
ITALY: SINBAD THE SAILOR.

"Of what burden is she?"
"About a hundred tons; but she is built to stand any weather. She is what the English call a yacht."
"Where was she built?"
"I do not know; but my own opinion is she is a Genoese."
"And how did a leader of smugglers," continued Franz, "venture to build a vessel designed for such a purpose at Genoa?"
"I did not say that the owner was a smuggler," replied the sailor.
"No; but Gaetano did, I thought."
"Gaetano had only seen the vessel from a distance; he had not then spoken to any one."
"And if this person be not a smuggler, who is he?"
"A wealthy signor, who travels for his pleasure."
"Come," thought Franz, "he is still more mysterious, since the two accounts do not agree. What is his name?"
"If you ask him he says Sinbad the Sailor; but I doubt its being his real name."
"Sinbad the Sailor?"
"Yes."
"And where does he reside?"
"On the sea."
"What country does he come from?"
"I do not know."
"Have you ever seen him?"
"Sometimes."
"What sort of a man is he?"
"Your Excellency will judge for yourself."
"Where will he receive me?"
"No doubt in the subterranean palace Gaetano told you of."
"Have you never had the curiosity, when you have
landed and found this island deserted, to seek for this en-
chanted palace?"

"Oh, yes, more than once, but always in vain; we ex-
amined the grotto all over, but we never could find the
slightest trace of any opening. They say that the door
is not opened by a key, but by a magic word."

"Decidedly," muttered Franz, "this is an adventure of
the 'Arabian Nights.'"

"His Excellency waits for you," said a voice which
Franz recognized as that of the sentinel. He was accom-
panied by two of the yacht's crew. Franz drew his hand-
kercchief from his pocket and presented it to the man who
had spoken to him. Without uttering a word they ban-
daged his eyes with a care that showed their apprehension
of his committing some indiscretion. Afterwards he was
made to promise that he would not make any attempt to
raise the bandage. Then his two guides took his arms,
and he advanced, guided by them and preceded by the
sentinel. After advancing about thirty paces he perceived
the appetizing odor of the kid that was roasting, and knew
thus that he was passing the bivouac; they then led him
on about fifty paces farther, evidently advancing in the
direction forbidden to Gaetano,—a prohibition which he
could now comprehend. Presently, by a change in the
atmosphere he perceived that they were entering a cave;
after going on for a few seconds more he heard a crack-
ling, and it seemed to him as though the atmosphere
again changed, and became balmy and perfumed. At
length his feet touched on a thick and soft carpet, and
his guides let go their hold of him.

There was a moment's silence, and then a voice, in
excellent French, although with a foreign accent, said,
"Welcome, Monsieur! I beg you will remove your ban-
dage." As may be easily imagined, Franz did not wait
for a repetition of this permission, but took off the handkerchief and found himself in the presence of a man from thirty-eight to forty years of age, dressed in a Tunisian costume,—that is to say, a red cap with a long blue silk tassel, a vest of black cloth embroidered with gold, pantaloons of deep red, large and full gaiters of the same color, embroidered with gold like the vest, and yellow slippers; he had a splendid cashmere round his waist, and a small cimeter, sharp and curved, was passed through his girdle. Although of a paleness that was almost livid, this man had a remarkably handsome face; his eyes were penetrating and sparkling; his nose, straight and almost in line with his brow, exhibited the Greek type in all its purity, while his teeth, as white as pearls, were well set off by the black mustache that covered them.

But that paleness was striking; it might be imagined that he had been imprisoned for a long time in a tomb, and was unable to recover the healthy glow and hue of the living. He was not particularly tall, but extremely well made, and like the men of the South, had small hands and feet. But what astonished Franz, who had treated Gaetano's description as a fable, was the splendor of the apartment in which he found himself. The entire chamber was lined with crimson brocade worked with flowers of gold. In a recess was a kind of divan, surmounted by a stand of Arabian swords in silver scabbards, the handles resplendent with gems; from the ceiling hung a lamp of Venetian glass, of beautiful shape and color, while the feet rested on a Turkey carpet, in which they sunk to the instep; tapestry was suspended before the door by which Franz had entered, and also in front of another door, leading into a second apartment, which seemed to be brilliantly lighted up.

The host left Franz for a moment absorbed in his sur-
prise, and moreover rendered him look for look, not tak-
ing his eyes off him. "Monsieur," he said at length, "a
thousand excuses for the precaution taken in your intro-
duction hither; but as during the greater portion of the
year this island is deserted, if the secret of this abode
were discovered, I should doubtless on my return hither
find my temporary retirement in a state of great disorder,
which would be exceedingly annoying, not for the loss it
might occasion, but because I should not have the cer-
tainty I now possess of being able to separate myself at
pleasure from all the rest of mankind. Let me now en-
deavor to make you forget this temporary unpleasantness,
and offer you what no doubt you did not expect to find
here,—that is to say, a tolerable supper and pretty com-
fortable beds."

"Ma foi! my dear host," replied Franz, "make no
apologies. I have always observed that they bandage the
eyes of those who penetrate enchanted palaces,—for in-
stance, those of Raoul in 'The Huguenots;' and really I
have nothing to complain of, for what I see is a sequel to
the wonders of the 'Arabian Nights.'"

"Alas! I may say with Lucullus, 'If I could have an-
ticipated the honor of your visit, I would have prepared
for it.' But such as is my hermitage, it is at your dis-
posal; such as is my supper, it is yours to share if you
will. Ali, is the supper ready?"

At this moment the tapestry was moved aside, and a
Nubian, black as ebony, and dressed in a plain white
tunic, made a sign to his master that all was prepared in
the dining-hall.

"Now," said the unknown to Franz, "I do not know
if you are of my opinion, but I think nothing is more
annoying than for two persons to remain two or three
hours face to face without knowing by what name or title
to address one another. Pray observe that I too much respect the laws of hospitality to ask your name or title. I only request you to give me one by which I may have the pleasure of addressing you. As for myself, that I may put you at your ease, I tell you that I am generally called 'Sinbad the Sailor.'"

"And I," replied Franz, "will tell you, as I only require his wonderful lamp to make me precisely like Aladdin, that I see no reason why at this moment I should not be called Aladdin. That will keep us from going away from the East, whither I am tempted to think I have been conveyed by some good genius."

"Well, then, Signor Aladdin," replied the singular amphitryon, "you heard our repast announced; will you now take the trouble to enter the dining-hall, your humble servant going first to show the way?" At these words, moving aside the tapestry, Sinbad preceded his guest. Franz proceeded from one enchantment to another; the table was splendidly covered, and once convinced of this important point, he cast his eyes around him. The dining-hall was scarcely less striking than the boudoir he had just left; it was entirely of marble, with antique bas-reliefs of priceless value, and at the two ends of the hall, which was oblong, were two magnificent statues having baskets in their hands. These baskets contained four pyramids of magnificent fruit; there were the pine-apples of Sicily, pomegranates from Malaga, oranges from the Balearic Isles, peaches from France, and dates from Tunis. The supper consisted of a roast pheasant garnished with Corsican blackbirds; a boar's ham, à la gelée, a quarter of a kid, à la tartare, a glorious turbot, and a gigantic lobster. Between these large dishes were smaller ones containing various dainties. The dishes were of silver and the plates of Japanese porcelain.
Franz rubbed his eyes to assure himself that this was not a dream. Ali alone was present to wait at table, and acquitted himself so admirably that the guest complimented his host thereupon.

"Yes," he replied, while he did the honors of the supper with much ease and grace, — "yes, he is a poor devil who is much devoted to me, and does all he can to prove it. He remembers that I saved his life, and as he has a regard for his head, he feels some gratitude towards me for having kept it on his shoulders."

Ali approached his master, took his hand, and kissed it.

"Would it be impertinent, Signor Sinbad," said Franz, "to ask you under what circumstances you performed that excellent deed?"

"Oh! it is a simple matter," replied the host. "It seems the fellow had been caught wandering nearer to the harem of the Bey of Tunis than etiquette permits to one of his color; and he was condemned by the bey to have his tongue cut out, and his hand and head cut off, — the tongue the first day, the hand the second, and the head the third. I always had a desire to have a mute in my service. I waited until his tongue had been cut out, and then proposed to the bey that he should sell me Ali for a splendid double-barrelled gun which I knew he was very eager to possess. He hesitated a moment, so intent was he on finishing up with the poor devil. But when I added to the gun an English cutlass with which I had shivered his Highness's yataghan, the bey yielded, and agreed to forgive the hand and head, but on condition that he would never again set foot in Tunis. This was a useless clause in the bargain, for whenever the coward sees the first glimpse of the shores of Africa, he runs down below, and can be induced to appear again only when we are out of sight of the third part of the globe."
ITALY: SINBAD THE SAILOR.

Franz remained a moment mute and pensive, hardly knowing what to think of the cruel bonhomie with which his host had related this incident. "And like the celebrated sailor whose name you have assumed," he said, by way of changing the conversation, "you pass your life in travelling?"

"Yes. It is in fulfilment of a vow which I made at a time when I little thought I should ever be able to accomplish it," said the unknown, with a singular smile. "I made some others also, which I hope I may fulfil in due season."

Although Sinbad pronounced these words with much calmness, his eyes darted gleams of singular ferocity.

"You have suffered a great deal, Monsieur?" said Franz, inquiringly.

Sinbad started and looked fixedly at him, as he replied, "What makes you suppose so?"

"Everything!" answered Franz, "your voice, your look, your pallid complexion, and even the life you lead."

"I! I live the happiest life I know, — the real life of a pacha. I am king of all creation. I am pleased with one place, and stay there; I get tired of it, and leave it. I am free as a bird, and have wings like one. My attendants obey me at a signal. Sometimes I amuse myself by carrying off from human justice some bandit it is in quest of, some criminal whom it pursues. Then I have my mode of dispensing justice, silent and sure, without respite or appeal, which condemns or pardons, and which no one sees. Ah! if you had tasted my life, you would not desire any other, and would never return to the world unless you had some great project to accomplish there."

"A vengeance, for instance!" observed Franz.

The unknown fixed on the young man one of those looks which penetrate into the depth of the heart.
and of the thoughts. "And why a vengeance?" he asked.

"Because," replied Franz, "you seem to me like a man who, persecuted by society, has a fearful account to settle with it."

"Ah!" responded Sinbad, laughing with his singular laugh, which displayed his white and sharp teeth. "You have not guessed rightly. Such as you see me, I am a sort of philosopher; and one day perhaps I shall go to Paris to rival M. Appert and the man in the Little Blue Cloak."

"And will that be the first time you will have made that journey?"

"Yes, it will. I must seem to you by no means curious, but I assure you that it is not my fault I have delayed it so long; I shall get around to it some day."

"And do you propose to make this journey soon?"

"I do not know; it depends on circumstances which are subject to uncertain contingencies."

"I should like to be there at the time you come, and I will endeavor to repay you as far as lies in my power for your liberal hospitality at Monte Cristo."

"I should avail myself of your offer with pleasure," replied the host; "but unfortunately, if I go there, I shall perhaps prefer to remain unknown."

Meantime they were proceeding with the supper, which however appeared to have been supplied solely for Franz, for the unknown scarcely touched one or two dishes of the splendid banquet to which his unexpected guest did ample justice. Then Ali brought on the dessert, or rather took the baskets from the hands of the statues and placed them on the table. Between the two baskets he placed a small silver cup, closed with a lid of the same metal. The care with which Ali placed this cup on the table roused Franz's
curiosity. He raised the lid and saw a kind of greenish paste, something like preserved angelica, but which was entirely unknown to him. He replaced the lid, as ignorant of what the cup contained as he was before he had looked at it, and then casting his eyes towards his host he saw him smile at his disappointment.

"You cannot divine what sort of confection is contained in that little vase; and it perplexes you, does it not?"

"I confess it."

"Well, then, that green confection is nothing less than the ambrosia which Hebe served at the table of Jupiter."

"But," replied Franz, "this ambrosia, no doubt, in passing through mortal hands has lost its heavenly appellation and assumed a human name; in vulgar phrase, what may you term this composition? — for which, to say the truth, I do not feel any particular desire."

"Ah! thus it is that our material origin is revealed," cried Sinbad: "we frequently pass so near to happiness without seeing, without regarding it; or if we do see and regard it, yet without recognizing it. Are you a man for the substantial, and is gold your god? taste this, and the mines of Peru, Guzerat, and Golconda are opened to you. Are you a man of imagination, — a poet? taste this, and the boundaries of possibility disappear; the fields of infinite space open to you; you advance free in heart, free in mind, into the boundless realms of unfettered revelry. Are you ambitious, and do you seek to reach the high places of the earth? taste this, and in an hour you will be a king, — not a king of a petty kingdom hidden in some corner of Europe, like France, Spain, or England, but king of the world, king of the universe, king of creation; your throne will be established on the mountain to which Jesus was taken by Satan, and without being obliged to do homage to Satan, without being compelled
to kiss his claw, you will be sovereign lord of all the kingdoms of the earth. Is it not tempting? And is it not an easy thing, since it is only to do thus? look!" At these words he uncovered the small cup which contained the substance so lauded, took a teaspoonful of the magic sweetmeat, raised it to his lips, and swallowed it slowly, with his eyes half shut and his head bent backward. Franz did not disturb him while he absorbed his favorite bonne bouche, but when he had finished, he inquired,—

"What, then, is this precious stuff?"

"Did you ever hear," asked the host, "of the Old Man of the Mountain, who attempted to assassinate Philippe Augustus?"

"Of course I have."

"Well, you know he reigned over a rich valley which was overhung by the mountain whence he derived his picturesque name. In this valley were magnificent gardens planted by Hassen-ben-Sabah, and in these gardens isolated pavilions. Into these pavilions he admitted the elect; and there, says Marco Polo, he gave them a certain herb to eat, which transported them to Paradise to the midst of ever blooming shrubs, ever ripe fruit, and ever lovely virgins. Now, what these happy persons took for reality was but a dream, but it was a dream so soft, so voluptuous, so enthralling, that they sold themselves body and soul to him who gave it to them. They were as obedient to his orders as to those of God; they went to the ends of the earth to strike down the victim indicated to them; and they died in torture without a murmur,—believing that death was but a quick transition to that life of delights of which the holy herb now before you had given them a slight foretaste."

"Then," cried Franz, "it is hashish! I know that,—by name at least."
ITALY: SINBAD THE SAILOR.

"That is it precisely, Signor Aladdin; it is hashish, — the best and purest hashish of Alexandria; the hashish of Abou-Gor, the celebrated maker, the unique man, the man to whom there should be built a palace inscribed with these words, 'A grateful world to the dealer in happiness.'"

"Do you know," said Franz, "I have a very great inclination to judge for myself of the truth or exaggeration of your eulogies."

"Judge for yourself, Signor Aladdin; judge, but do not confine yourself to one trial. As in everything else, we must habituate the senses to any new impression, gentle or violent, sad or joyous. There is a struggle in nature against this divine substance, — in nature, which is not made for joy, and clings to pain. Nature, subdued, must yield in the combat; reality must succeed to the dream; and then the dream reigns supreme. Then the dream becomes life, and life becomes the dream. But what a change is wrought by that transfiguration, on comparing the pains of actual being with the joys of the fictitious existence! you desire to live no longer, but to dream thus forever. When you return to this mundane sphere from your visionary world, you seem to leave a Neapolitan spring for a Lapland winter, — to quit paradise for earth, heaven for hell! Taste the hashish, guest of mine, — taste the hashish!"

Franz's only reply was to take a teaspoonful of the marvellous preparation, about as much in quantity as his host had eaten, and lift it to his mouth. "The devil!" he said after having swallowed the divine confection, "I do not know if the result will be as agreeable as you describe, but the thing does not appear to me as succulent as you say."

"Because your palate has not yet attained the sublimity of the substance it tastes. Tell me, the first time you
tasted oysters, tea, porter, truffles, and sundry other dainties which you now adore, did you like them? Can you comprehend how the Romans stuffed their pheasants with asafoetida, and the Chinese eat swallows’ nests! Eh, no! Well, it is the same with hashish; only eat for a week, and nothing in the world will seem to you to equal the delicacy of its flavor, which now appears to you tasteless and nauseating. Let us now go into the side-chamber,—that is, into your chamber,—and Ali will bring us coffee and pipes.”

They both arose, and while he who called himself Sinbad—and whom we have occasionally so named, that we might like his guest have some title by which to distinguish him—gave some orders to the servant, Franz entered the adjoining chamber. It was simply yet richly furnished. It was round, and a large divan completely encircled it. Divan, walls, ceiling, floor, were all covered with magnificent skins, as soft and downy as the richest carpets; there were skins of the lions of Atlas, with their large manes; skins of the Bengal tigers, with their striped hides; skins of the panthers of the Cape, spotted beautifully like those that appeared to Dante; skins of the bears of Siberia, and of the foxes of Norway; and all these skins were strewn in profusion one on the other, so that it seemed like walking over the most mossy turf, or reclining on the most luxurious bed. Both laid themselves down on the divan; chibouques with jasmine tubes and amber mouthpieces were within reach, and all prepared so that there was no need to smoke the same pipe twice. Each of them took one, which Ali lighted; Ali then retired to prepare the coffee. There was a moment’s silence, during which Sinbad gave himself up to thoughts that seemed to occupy him incessantly, even in the midst of his conversation; and Franz abandoned himself to that mute revery
into which we always sink when smoking excellent tobacco, which seems to remove with its smoke all the troubles of the mind, and to give the smoker in exchange all the visions of the soul.

Ali brought in the coffee.

"How do you take it?" inquired the unknown; "à la françoise or à la turque, strong or weak, with sugar or without, cool or boiling? As you please; it is ready in all ways."

"I will take it à la turque," replied Franz.

"And you are right," said his host; "it shows you have a taste for Oriental life. Ah! those Orientals,—they are the only men who know how to live. As for me," he added with one of those singular smiles which did not escape the young man, "when I have completed my affairs in Paris, I shall go and die in the East; and should you wish to see me again, you must seek me at Cairo, Bagdad, or Isphahan."

"Ma foi!" said Franz, "it would be the easiest thing in the world,—for I feel eagle's wings springing out at my shoulders, and with these wings I could make a tour of the world in four and twenty hours."

"Ah, ah! it is the hashish that is operating. Well, unfurl your wings, and fly into superhuman regions. Fear nothing,—there is a watch over you; and if your wings, like those of Icarus, melt before the sun, we are here to receive you."

He then said some Arabian words to Ali, who made a sign of obedience and withdrew, but remained near. As to Franz, a strange transformation had taken place in him. All the bodily fatigue of the day, all the preoccupation of mind which the events of the evening had brought on, disappeared, as they do in the early moments of repose, when we are still sufficiently conscious to be aware of the
coming of slumber. His body seemed to acquire an airy lightness; his perception brightened in a remarkable manner; his senses seemed to redouble their power. The horizon continued to expand; it was not that gloomy horizon over which hovers a vague terror, and which he had seen before he slept, but a blue, transparent, unbounded horizon, with all the blue of the ocean, all the spangles of the sun, all the perfumes of the summer breeze. Then, in the midst of the songs of his sailors,—songs so clear and sounding that they would have made a divine harmony had their notes been taken down,—he saw the island of Monte Cristo, no longer as a threatening rock in the midst of the waves, but as an oasis lost in the desert. Then, as the boat approached, the songs became louder,—for an enchanting and mysterious harmony rose to heaven from this island, as if some fay-like Loreley or some enchanter like Amphion had wished to attract thither a soul or build there a city.

At length the boat touched the shore, but without effort, without shock, as lips touch lips; and he entered the grotto amid continued strains of most delicious melody. He descended, or rather seemed to descend, several steps, inhaling the fresh and balmy air, like that which may be supposed to reign around the grotto of Circe, formed from such perfumes as set the mind a-dreaming, and such fires as burn the very senses; and he saw again all he had seen before his sleep, from Sinbad, his singular host, to Ali, the mute attendant. Then all seemed to fade away and become confused before his eyes, like the last shadows of the magic lantern before it is extinguished; and he was again in the chamber of statues, lighted only by one of those pale and antique lamps which watch in the dead of the night over sleep or pleasure. They were the same statues, rich in form, in attraction, and poesy, with eyes
of fascination, smiles of love, and flowing hair. They were Phryne, Cleopatra, Messalina, those three celebrated courtesans. Then among them glided like a pure ray, like a Christian angel in the midst of Olympus, a chaste figure, a calm shadow, a soft vision, which seemed to veil its virgin brow before these marble wantons. Then these three statues advanced towards him with looks of love, and approached the couch on which he was reposing,—their feet hidden in their long tunics, their throats bare, hair flowing like waves, and assuming attitudes which the gods could not resist, but which saints withstood, and looks inflexible and ardent like the serpent's on the bird; and then he gave way before these looks, as painful as a powerful grasp and as delightful as a kiss. It seemed to Franz that he closed his eyes, and that in his last look around he saw the modest statue completely veiled; and then his eyes being closed to all reality, his senses were opened to receive strange impressions.
 CHAPTER II.

THE WAKING.

When Franz returned to himself exterior objects seemed a second portion of his dream. He thought himself in a sepulchre into which scarcely penetrated, like a look of pity, a ray of the sun. He stretched forth his hand and touched stone; he rose to a sitting posture, and found himself on his burnoose in a bed of dry heather, very soft and odoriferous. The vision had entirely fled; and as if the statues had been but shadows coming from their tomb during his dream, they had vanished at his waking. He advanced several paces towards the point whence the light came, and to all the excitement of his dream succeeded the calmness of reality. He found that he was in a grotto, went towards the opening, and through an arched doorway saw a blue sea and an azure sky. The air and water were shining in the beams of the morning sun; on the shore the sailors were sitting, chatting and laughing; and at ten yards from them the boat was gracefully riding at anchor. There for some time he enjoyed the fresh breeze which played on his brow, and listened to the gentle noise of the waves, which came up on the beach and left on the rocks a lace of foam as white as silver. He abandoned himself for some time without reflection or thought to the divine charm which is in the things of Nature, especially after a fantastic dream; then gradually this outward life, so calm, so pure, so grand, showed him the unreality of his dream, and remembrances began to return to him. He recalled
his arrival on the island, his presentation to a smuggler chief, a subterranean palace full of splendor, an excellent supper, and a spoonful of hashish. It seemed however, even in the face of open day, that at least a year had elapsed since all these things had happened, so deep was the impression made in his mind by the dream, and so strong a hold had it taken of his imagination. Thus every now and then his fancy placed amid the sailors, seated on a rock, or saw on the boat, moving with its motion, one of those shadows which had shared his dreams with their looks and their kisses. Otherwise, his head was perfectly clear and his body completely rested. There was no dulness in his brain; on the contrary, he felt a certain degree of lightness, a faculty of absorbing the pure air and enjoying the bright sunshine more vividly than ever.

He went gayly up to the sailors, who rose as soon as they perceived him; and the captain, accosting him, said, "The Signor Sinbad has left his compliments for your Excellency, and desires us to express the regret he feels at not being able to take his leave in person; but he trusts you will excuse him, as very important business calls him to Malaga."

"So then, Gaetano," said Franz, "this is, then, all reality; there exists a man who has received me on this island, entertained me right royally, and has departed while I was asleep?"

"He exists so really that you may see his little yacht with all her sails spread; and if you will use your glass, you will in all probability recognize your host in the midst of his crew."

So saying, Gaetano pointed in a direction in which a small vessel was making sail towards the southern point of Corsica. Franz adjusted his telescope and directed it