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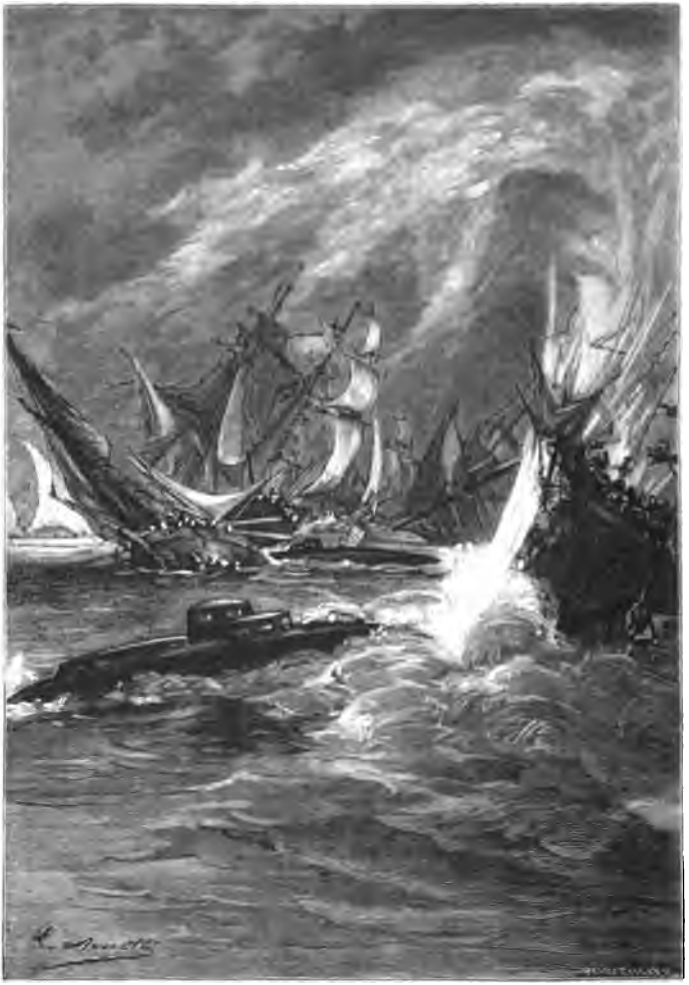

Page 197 The two *Electrics* rushed into the midst of the flotilla. Page 197

MATHIAS SANDORF

PART II.

THE

CAPTIVES OF ANTEKIRTTA

BY

JULES VERNE

AUTHOR OF "FIVE WEEKS IN A BALLOON," "ROUND THE WORLD IN EIGHTY DAYS," "THE VANISHED DIAMOND," ETC., ETC.

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MATHIAS SANDORF.

Part II.

THE CAPTIVES OF ANTEKIRTTA.

CHAPTER I.

THE MEDITERRANEAN.

FORTUNATELY for humanity Nature, failing Hercules, has separated the rock of Calpe from the rock of Abyla to form the Straits of Gibraltar. Notwithstanding the opinion of many geologists it would seem that these straits are of no recent formation. Without them there would have been no Mediterranean. Evaporation robs it of more than three times the water its rivers bring in, and were it not for the Atlantic current which pours in through the straits it would in a few centuries become a kind of Dead Sea instead of the Living Sea that it is.

It was in one of its obscurest retreats, in one of the most unknown spots in this vast inland lake, that Count Mathias Sandorf—who intended to remain Dr. Antekirtt until he had finished his work—had concealed himself so as to make the best of all the advantages that his supposed death had given him.

There are two Mediterraneans on the terrestrial globe, one in the Old World, the other in the New. The American Mediterranean is the Gulf of Mexico; it has an area of about 800,000 square miles. The Mediterranean has an area of about 1,150,000 square miles, and is more varied in general outline and richer in basins and distinct gulfs and large hydrographical subdivisions which have even obtained the name of seas—such as the Greek Archipelago, the Cretan Sea above the island of that name, the Lybian Sea

below it, the Adriatic between Italy, Austria, and Turkey, the Ionian Sea round the islands of Corfu, Zante, Cephalonia and the other islands, the Tyrrhenian Sea on the west of Italy, the Æolian Sea round the Liparis, the Gulf of Lyons running up into Provence, the Gulf of Genoa in the north of Italy, the Gulf of Khabs off the coast of Tunis, and the two Syrtes off the coast of Tripoli.

In what secret spot in this well-known sea had Dr. Antekirtt taken up his abode? There are islands in hundreds and islets in thousands within its bounds. To attempt to count its capes and creeks would be labour in vain. Many nations differing in race, in manners, in government, dwell on its coasts, where the history of humanity has been leaving its mark for the last twenty centuries,—French, Italians, Spaniards, Austrians, Turks, Greeks, Arabs, Egyptians, Tripolitans, Tunisians, Algerians, Moors, even Britons at Gibraltar, Malta, and Cyprus. Three huge continents form its shores—Europe, Asia, Africa. Where then had Count Mathias Sandorf, otherwise Dr. Antekirtt—a name dear to the Orientals—taken up his residence to work out the programme of his new life? Pierre Bathory was soon to know.

After opening his eyes for an instant he had fallen back completely exhausted, as insensible as when the doctor had left him for dead in the house at Ragusa. It was then that the doctor had succeeded in one of those physiologic experiments in which the will plays so important a part, and of which the phenomena are no longer open to doubt. Gifted with a singular power of suggestion he had been able without the aid of magnesium light or even a brilliant point of metal, simply by the penetration of his look, to cast the dying man into a hypnotic state and substitute his own will for his. Pierre, enfeebled by the loss of blood, had lost the very look of life and had fallen asleep to awake when the doctor wished. But his life was almost gone, and now it had to be saved. It was a difficult task and required the most minute care and all the resources of the medical art. The doctor must not fail.

"He will live! I must have him live!" he repeated. "Ah, why at Cattaro did I not act on my first idea? Why did the arrival of Sarcany at Ragusa prevent my snatching him from that accursed town? But I'll save him! In the time to come Pierre Bathory will be Mathias Sandorf's right hand!"

And for fifteen years to punish and reward had been the constant thought of Dr. Antekirtt. He had never forgotten what he owed to his companions, Stephen Bathory and Ladislas Zathmar. The time had now come to act, and that was why the *Savarena* had gone to Ragusa.

During these long years the doctor had so altered in appearance that it was impossible to recognize him. His hair, worn short, had become white, and his complexion had turned deadly pale. He was one of those men of fifty who have kept the strength of their youth and acquired the coolness and calm of ripe old age. The bushy hair, full complexion, and Venetian beard of the young Count Sandorf would never recur to those who looked at Dr. Antekirtt. But more rigidly refined and more highly tempered, he remained one of those natures of iron of whom it can be said that with them the magnet swings only as they near it. Of Stephen Bathory's son he wished to make what he had made of himself.

For a long time Dr. Antekirtt had been the sole representative of the great family of Sandorf. It will be remembered that he had a child, a daughter who after his arrest had been entrusted to the care of the wife of Landeck, the steward of the castle of Artenak. This little daughter, then only two years old, had been the count's sole heiress. To her when she reached eighteen was to come the half of her father's goods in accordance with the sentence which enjoined the confiscation and the death penalty. The steward Landeck had been retained as manager of that part of the Transylvanian domain put under sequestration, and he and his wife remained at the castle with the child, intending to devote their lives to her. But it seemed as though some fate pursued the Sandorf family, now reduced to this one small individual. A few months after the conviction of the Trieste conspirators and the events which succeeded, the child had disappeared, and it had proved impossible to find her. Her hat had been found on the bank of one of the numerous rivulets that ran through the park. It was only too obvious that the little girl had fallen into one of the ravines into which run the torrents of the Carpathians, and not a vestige of her could be found. Rosena Landeck, the steward's wife, took the loss so much to heart that she died a few weeks afterwards. The Government made no change in the arrangements ordered at the time of the sentence. The sequestration was maintained, and the

possessions of Count Sandorf would return to the State if the heiress, whose death had not been legally proved, did not reappear to claim them.

Such was the last blow that had reached the Sandorf race, now doomed to extinction by the disappearance of the last representative of the family. Time was gradually accomplishing its work, and oblivion was throwing its shadow over the event as over all the other facts of the conspiracy of Trieste.

It was at Otranto, where he was living in the strictest incognito, that Sandorf heard of his child's death. With his little daughter there disappeared all that remained to him of the Countess Rena who had died so soon and whom he loved so much. Then he left Otranto, as unknown as when he arrived there, and no one could tell where he began his life anew.

Fifteen years later when Sandorf had reappeared on the scene no one suspected that he was playing the part of Dr. Antekirtt. Thenceforth Sandorf devoted himself entirely to his work. Now he was alone in the world with a task to perform—a task he regarded as sacred. Many years after he had left Otranto, grown powerful by all that power that a large fortune gives, acquired under circumstances we shall soon ascertain, forgotten and concealed by his incognito he had put himself on the track of those he had sworn to punish and reward. Already in his thoughts Pierre Bathory had been associated in the work of justice. Agents were stationed in the different coast towns of the Mediterranean. Well paid and sworn to secrecy they corresponded only with the doctor either by the swift launches we know of or by the submarine cable which joined Antekirtta to Malta and Malta to Europe.

It was in verifying the statements of his agents that the doctor had discovered the traces of all those who directly or indirectly had been mixed up in Sandorf's conspiracy. He could then watch them from afar, and let them have their run as it were uninterfered with for four or five years. Silas Toronthal he knew had left Trieste and settled at Ragusa with his wife and daughter. Sarcany he traced to the principal cities of Europe where he wasted his fortune, and then to Sicily, to the eastern provinces, where he and his companion Zirone were meditating some new scheme to again put them in funds. Carpena he learnt had left Rovigno and Istria to do nothing in Italy or Austria—the

florins he had gained by his information permitting him to live in idleness.

Andrea Ferrato he would have helped to escape from the prison of Stein in the Tyrol—where he was expiating his generous conduct towards the fugitives of Pisino—had not death delivered the honest fisherman from his fetters a few months after he was sent there. His children Maria and Luigi had left Rovigno, and were now probably having a hard struggle for life. But they had disappeared and he had not yet been able to come upon any trace of them. Of Madame Bathory at Ragusa with her son Pierre, and Borik the old servant of Ladislas Zathmar, the doctor had never lost sight, and we know how he had sent them a considerable sum of money which was not accepted by the proud courageous woman.

But the hour had come for the doctor to begin his difficult campaign. Assuring himself that he would never be recognized after his fifteen years' absence and his being supposed to be dead he arrived at Ragusa, and found Stephen Bathory's son in love with Silas Toronthal's daughter. It will be remembered how Sarcany had intervened and thrust them apart, how Pierre had been taken to his mother's house, how Dr. Antekirtt had acted when he was on the point of death, and how he had called him back to life to reveal himself to him under his real name of Mathias Sandorf. Now his task was to cure him, to tell him what he did not know, to tell him how treachery had delivered over his father and his companions, to acquaint him with the names of the traitors, to win over his help in the work the doctor had set himself of dealing out justice far beyond that ordinary justice of which he had been the victim.

In the first place then Pierre had to be restored to health, and it was to the restoration that he entirely devoted himself. In the first eight days after his arrival in the island Pierre literally hung between life and death. Not only was his wound very serious, but his mental state was even more so. The thought of Sava being now Sarcany's wife, the thought of his mother grieving for him, the resurrection of Count Mathias Sandorf as Dr. Antekirtt—Sandorf the most devoted of his father's friends—all was enough to unsettle a mind already sorely shaken. Day and night the doctor did not leave him. He heard him in his delirium repeat the name of Sava Toronthal. He learnt

how deep and true was his love for her, and how her marriage was torturing him. He asked if this love would not prove resistless even when he learnt that Sava was the daughter of the man who had sold and killed his father. The doctor would tell him nevertheless. He had made up his mind to do so. It was his duty.

Again and again Pierre almost succumbed. Doubly injured, in mind and body, he was so near to death that he did not recognize Sandorf at his bedside. He had not even strength to whisper Sava's name.

But skilful care prevailed and the reaction began.

Youth gained the mastery. The sick man was cured in body before he was cured in mind. His wound began to heal, his lungs regained their normal powers, and on the 17th of July the doctor knew that Pierre was saved.

That day the young man recognized him. In a voice still weak, however, he called him by his true name.

"To you, my son, I am Mathias Sandorf," was the reply; "but to you alone!"

And as Pierre by his looks seemed to ask for explanations which he was naturally anxious to hear,—

"Later on," added the doctor. "Later on."

It was in a beautiful room with the windows opening to the fresh sea breezes beneath the shade of lovely trees which the running streams kept evergreen, that Pierre speedily and surely grew convalescent. The doctor was untiring in his attention, he was with him every moment, but as the recovery became assured there was nothing strange in his calling in an assistant in whose intelligence and kindness he had absolute confidence.

This was Point Pescade, who was as devoted to Pierre as he was to the doctor. We need hardly say that he and Cape Matifou had kept profoundly secret what had taken place at the cemetery of Ragusa, and that they had revealed to none that the young man had been snatched alive from his tomb.

Point Pescade had been intimately concerned in all that had passed during the last few weeks, and consequently he took a lively interest in the patient. The love affair of Pierre, the intervention of Sarcany—a scoundrel who inspired him with well-founded antipathy—the meeting of the funeral and marriage processions in the Stradone, the exhumation in the cemetery, had deeply moved him, and although he could not understand the object he felt himself

more closely associated in the schemes of Dr. Antekirtt. He therefore readily accepted the task of nursing the invalid. His instructions were to distract his patient's attention as much as possible by his wit and humour. And he did his best. Since the holiday at Gravosa he had looked upon Pierre as his creditor, and on every occasion took every pains to pay off something on account of the debt. And so Point Pescade took up his quarters with the convalescent, and endeavoured all he could to keep his thoughts from running in the old groove by talking and joking incessantly and giving him the least possible time to reflect.

One day when thus occupied Pierre asked him how he had made Dr. Antekirtt's acquaintance.

"At the launch of the trabacolo," he answered. "You ought to remember it! The launch of the trabacolo that made a hero out of Cape Matifou!"

Pierre had not forgotten the important event; but he did not know that at the doctor's request the acrobats had abandoned their profession to enter his service.

"Yes, Mr. Bathory," answered Point Pescade.. "Yes! that was it, and Cape Matifou's devotion was a stroke of fortune for us! But what we owe to the doctor does not make us forget what we owe to you!"

"To me?"

"To you, Mr. Pierre, to you who on that day gave us a couple of florins we had not earned; for our audience ran away although he had paid for his seat."

And Point Pescade reminded Pierre how, just as he was about to enter the arena and had put down his money, he had disappeared.

Pierre had forgotten all about it, but he answered Pescade with a smile—a sad smile, for he remembered that he had disappeared in the crowd to find Sava Toronthal.

His eyes closed. He thought of all that had happened since that day. As he thought of Sava whom he believed to be married he was wrung with grievous anguish and tempted even to curse those who had snatched him from death!

Point Pescade saw at once that the remembrance of Gravosa had thrown Pierre into a sorrowful reverie. He said no more for a minute or two, and then he whispered as if to himself,—

"'Half a teaspoonful of cheerfulness to be taken every

five minutes'—those are the doctor's orders, but they are rather difficult to follow."

Pierre opened his eyes a few minutes afterwards and said,—

"And so, Point Pescade, until the launch of the trabacolo you did not know Dr. Antekirtt?"

"No, we had never seen him, and we had never heard his name."

"Since then you have never left him?"

"Never, except on a few errands he has required of us."

"And in what country are we now? Can you tell me, Point Pescade?"

"I believe we are in an island, for the sea surrounds us."

"Doubtless, but in what part of the Mediterranean?"

"Ah! There you are! Whether it is south or north, or west or east I really do not know. After all what does it matter? One thing is certain, we are with the doctor, and well fed, well clothed, well housed and—

"But don't you know the island's name if you don't know its position?"

"Its name?" asked Pierre. "Oh, quite well! Its name is Antekirtta!"

Pierre vainly racked his memory for some island of the Mediterranean bearing the name, and then he looked at Pescade.

"Yes, Mr. Pierre. Yes! Antekirtta. Latitude—nought and longitude less! It is to that address my uncle ought to write if I had an uncle, but unfortunately I have not yet been favoured with that pleasure! After all there is nothing wonderful in its being called Antekirtta seeing it belongs to Dr. Antekirtt! Whether the doctor has taken his name from the island or the island has taken its name from him I should find it impossible to say even if I were the Secretary of the Royal Geographical Society."

Pierre's convalescence took the ordinary course. None of the anticipated complications showed themselves. With substantial nourishment the invalid from day to day visibly regained his strength. The doctor visited him often and talked about many things except those which would appeal more directly to his mind. And Pierre thought it best not to provoke any premature confidences and waited till they were offered him.

Point Pescade always reported to the doctor the subjects of the conversations interchanged between him and his invalid. Evidently the incognito which enshrouded not only Count Sandorf but the island in which he lived was a knotty point with Pierre. None the less obvious was it that he was always thinking of Sava Toronthal, far away from him as she then seemed, for all communication appeared to be broken off between Antekirtta and the rest of Europe. But the time was coming when he would be strong enough to listen.

Yes! To hear everything! And on that day the doctor, like the operating surgeon, would be deaf to the patient's cries!

Many days went by. The young man's wound completely healed. Already he could leave his bed and take his place near the window. The lovely Mediterranean sun could caress him, and the life-giving breeze from the sea could inflate his lungs and yield him health and vigour. Against his will he felt himself restored to life. And his eyes dwelt on the distant horizon beyond which he would look in search of her who—in short he was still an invalid in his mind. The vast extent of water round the island was almost deserted. A few coasters, xebecs, or tartans, polaccas or speronares appeared on the horizon, and passed the island. Never came a merchant-ship, never a mail-steamer to plough its silent waters. Antekirtta seemed to be quite out of the world.

On the 24th of July the doctor told Pierre that he might go out the next afternoon, and offered to accompany him on his walk.

"Doctor," he replied, "if I am strong enough to go out I am strong enough to listen!"

"To listen? What do you mean?"

"You know my history. I do not know yours."

The doctor eyed him attentively, not more as a friend than as a physician seeking to find if he could bear the knife or the fire that was coming.

Then he sat down beside him.

"You wish to know my history, Pierre? Then listen."

CHAPTER II.

THE PAST.

"AND first for the history of Dr. Antekirtt, which begins when Mathias Sandorf threw himself into the waves of the Adriatic.

"From the last shower of bullets rained round me by the police I escaped safe and sound. The night was very dark. No one could see me. The current bore me out to sea, and I could not have returned to the shore even if I would. And I would not. It was better to die than to be recaptured to be taken back and shot in the donjon of Pisino. If I fell all was over. If I managed to save myself I could at the least pass for dead. Nothing would hinder me then in the work of justice I had sworn to Count Zathmar, to your father, and to myself to accomplish—and which I will accomplish."

"A work of justice?" answered Pierre, whose eyes kindled at the word so unexpected by him.

"Yes, Pierre, and this work you will soon know, for it was to associate you in it that I brought you—a dead man, as I am, but a living man, as I am—from the cemetery of Ragusa."

At these words Pierre felt himself carried back fifteen years to the time when his father fell dead in the fortress of Pisino.

"Before me," continued the doctor, "was the open sea to the Italian shore. Good swimmer as I was I could not hope to cross it. Unless I was providentially rescued, unless I met with a raft, unless some foreign vessel took me on board, I was doomed to perish. But when you have risked your life you are strong enough to defend it if defence is possible.

"At first I dived once or twice to escape from the bullets. Then when I was sure I was not seen I kept at the surface and swam out to sea. My clothes were not much in my way as they were very light and tight-fitting.

"It was then about half-past nine at night. I reckon that I swam away from the shore for about an hour; and I saw the lights of Rovigno vanish one after the other.

"Where was I going and what was my hope? I had no hope, Pierre, but I felt within me a strength of resis-

tance, a tenacity, a superhuman will which sustained me. It was no longer my life I sought to save, but my future work I sought to do. At that moment had a fishing-boat passed by I would have dived to avoid her! On that Austrian coast how many traitors might I not still find ready to hand me over for a reward as Carpena had done Andrea Ferrato!

"And this very thing happened at the end of the first hour. A boat did appear in the gloom. She came from the offing and was beating up to the coast. As I was getting tired I had just slipped on my back, but instinctively I turned over again ready to disappear. A fishing-boat bound for an Istrian port could hardly be otherwise than suspicious.

"I was soon confirmed in this opinion. I heard one of the sailors say in Dalmatian that it was time to go about. Instantly I dived, and the boat passed over my head before those on board of it could see me.

"Almost breathless I came to the surface and struck out towards the west. The breeze fell lighter, the waves fell with the wind, and I was carried out to sea on the wide sweeping surge.

"Sometimes swimming, sometimes floating, I kept on farther and farther for about another hour. I saw but the object to attain, and not the road to reach it. Fifty miles to cross the Adriatic! Yes! And I was willing to swim them! Yes! I would swim them. Ah! Pierre, you must go through such trials before you know of what man is capable, before you know what the human machine can do when all its mental and physical forces are combined!

"For the second hour I thus kept afloat. The Adriatic seemed absolutely deserted. The last birds had left it to regain the ledges in the rocks. Overhead the gulls and mews no longer circled, giving forth their plaintive screams.

"Although I felt no fatigue my arms became heavy, my legs seemed like lead. My fingers began to open, and I found it most difficult to keep my hands together. My head felt as if it were a shot on my shoulders, and I began to lose the power of keeping myself afloat.

"A kind of hallucination seized on me. The guidance of my thoughts escaped me. Strange associations of ideas arose in my troubled brain. I felt that I could no longer hear or see properly, but I fancied that some distance

away from me a noise was being produced, and a light was approaching, and I was right in its road. And that proved to be the case.

"It must have been about midnight when a dull, distant booming arose in the east—a booming that I could not explain. A light flashed through my eyelids, which had shut in spite of all I could do. I tried to raise my head, and I could not do so without letting myself almost sink. Then I looked.

"I give you all these details, Pierre, because it is necessary you should know them, and through them know me as well!"

"There is no need of that, doctor—none!" answered the young man. "Do you think my mother has never told me what sort of a man was Mathias Sandorf?"

"She may have known Mathias Sandorf, Pierre, but Dr. Antekirtt she does not know! And he it is you must know! Listen then! Hear me out!

"The noise I had heard was made by a vessel coming from the east and bound for the Italian coast. The light was her white light hanging on her forestay—which showed her to be a steamer. Her side-lights I also saw, red at port and green at starboard, and as I saw them both together the steamer must have been bearing straight down on me.

"That moment was a critical one. In fact, the chances were that the steamer was an Austrian bound outwards from Trieste. To ask help from her was to put myself again in the power of the gendarmes of Rovigno. I resolved to do nothing of the kind, but to take advantage of another means of safety that I had thought of.

"The steamer was a fast one. She grew rapidly larger as she neared me, and I saw the foam furrowed off white from her bows. In less than two minutes she would cut through the place where I lay motionless.

"That the steamer was an Austrian I had no doubt. But there was nothing impossible in her destination being Brindisi and Otranto, or at least she might call there. If so she would arrive in less than twenty-four hours.

"My decision was taken, and I waited. Sure of being unseen in the darkness I kept myself in the steamer's path, and fortunately she slowed slightly as she gently rose and fell with the surge.

"At length the steamer reached me; her bow some twenty

feet from the sea towered above me. I was wrapped in foam as she cleft the wave, but I was not struck. I was grazed by the long iron hull, and I pushed myself away from it with my hands as it passed me. That only lasted for a second or so. Then I found her lines begin to curve in for the run, and at the risk of being cut by the screw I caught hold of the rudder.

"Fortunately the steamer had a full cargo, and her screw was deep down and did not strike above the water, else I should not have been able to get out of the eddy or retain my hold of the support to which I had clung. Like all steamships she had a pair of chains hanging from her stern and fixed on to the rudder, and I had seized one of these chains, pulled myself up to the ring to which it hung, and there I sat on the chain close to the sternpost and just a few inches above the sea. I was in comparative safety.

"Three hours elapsed and day broke. I reckoned I would have to remain where I was for another twenty hours if the steamer was going to call at Brindisi or Otranto. What I should have to suffer most from would be hunger and thirst. The important thing for me was that I could not be seen from the deck nor even from the boat hung by the stern davits. Some vessel meeting us might, it is true, see me and signal me. But very few ships met us that day, and they passed too far off for them to notice a man hanging to the rudder-chains.

"A scorching sun soon dried my clothes. Andrea Ferrato's three hundred florins were in my belt; they made me feel safe once I got to land. There I should have nothing to fear. In a foreign country Count Mathias Sandorf would have nothing to fear from the Austrian police.

"There is no extradition for political refugees. But it was not enough that they should think my life was saved. I wished them to think I was dead. No one should know that the last fugitive from the donjon of Pisino had set foot on Italian soil.

"What I wished happened. The day passed without adventure. Night came. About ten o'clock in the evening I saw a light at regular intervals away to the south-west. It was the lighthouse at Brindisi. Two hours afterwards the steamer was just outside the harbour.

"But then before the pilot came on board, when we were about a mile from the land, after making a parcel of my

clothes and tying them to my neck, I slipped off the rudder-chains into the sea.

"A minute afterwards I had lost sight of the steamer, whose steam-whistle had begun its shrieking. In half an hour I had reached the shore, hidden among the rocks, resumed my clothes, and on a bed of seaweed had fallen asleep. In the morning I entered Brindisi, found one of the humblest hotels in the place, and there awaited events before settling on the plan of an entirely new life.

"Two days afterwards, Pierre, the newspapers informed me that the conspiracy of Trieste was at an end. They said that the search for Count Sandorf's body had been fruitless. I was held to be dead—as dead as if I had fallen with my two companions, Ladislas Zathmar and your father Stephen Bathory, in the donjon of Pisino.

"I, dead! No, Pierre—and they shall see that I am living!"

Pierre had listened greedily to the doctor's story. He was as deeply moved by it as if the story had been told him from the tomb. Yes! It was Count Mathias Sandorf who thus had spoken. In the presence of him, the living portrait of his father, the doctor's habitual coldness had gradually abandoned him, he had revealed his real character, he had shown himself as he really was, after years of disguise. What he had said about his audacious voyage across the Adriatic was true in the minutest detail. It was thus that he arrived at Brindisi, where Mathias Sandorf remained dead to the world.

But he had to leave Brindisi without delay. The town is only a transfer station. People come to it merely to embark for India or land for Europe. It is generally empty except on the two days of the week when the P. and O. boats come in.

The doctor had no further fear for his life, but it was important that his death should be believed in. Thus ran his thoughts on the morning after his arrival as he was walking at the foot of the terrace which overlooks the column of Cleopatra at the very spot where the old Appian Way begins. Already he had formed his plans. He would go to the East in search of wealth and power. But to embark on one of the steamboats trading to Asia Minor among a crowd of passengers of all nations would not be wise. He wanted some more secret means of transport than he could find at Brindisi. And that evening he took the train

"I had seized one of these chains."

In an hour and a half the train reached that town, which is situated almost at the end of the heel of the Italian boot. There in the almost abandoned port the doctor agreed with the captain of a xebec departing for Smyrna. In the morning the xebec sailed and the doctor saw the lighthouse of Punta di Luca, the extreme point of Italy, sink beneath the horizon, while on the opposite coast the Acroceraunian mountains were hidden in the mist. A few days afterwards, after a voyage without incident, Cape Matapan, at the extremity of Southern Greece, was doubled and Smyrna safely reached.

The doctor had succinctly related to Pierre this part of his voyage and also how he had learnt from the newspapers of the unexpected death of his daughter, leaving him alone in the world.

"At last," he said, "I was in the land of Asia Minor where for so many years I was to live unknown. It was in studies of medicine, chemistry, natural science, that I had delighted during my youth at the schools and universities of Hungary—where your father gained his renown,—and it was to these studies that I was to trust for my means of livelihood.

"I was fortunate enough to succeed and more promptly than I had hoped. I settled first at Smyrna, where for seven or eight years I obtained great reputation as a physician. Some unexpected cures brought me into connection with the richest people of those countries in which the medical art is still in a rudimentary state. I then made up my mind to leave the town. And like the doctors of the days gone by, healing at the same time as I taught the art of healing, studying the almost unknown therapeutics of the talebs of Asia Minor and the pundits of India, I travelled through the whole of those provinces, stopping here a few weeks, there a few months, called to Karahissar, Binder, Adana, Haleb, Tripoli, Damas, ever preceded by a renown which increased without ceasing and brought me a fortune that increased with my renown.

"But that was not enough. What I wanted was unbounded power, such as that possessed by the wealthy rajahs of India, whose knowledge is equal to their wealth.

"My opportunity came.

"There was at Homs, in Northern Syria, a man dying of a slow disease. No physician had been able to tell what was the matter with him. Hence none of them knew how

to treat him. The man was Faz-Rhât, and he had occupied very high posts in the Turkish Empire. He was then forty-five years of age, and an immense fortune allowed him to enjoy all the pleasures of life.

"Faz-Rhât had heard of me, for at the time my reputation was at its height he invited me to Homs, and I accepted the invitation.

"'Doctor,' said he, 'the half of my fortune is yours if you will give me back my life!'

"'Keep the half of your fortune,' I said, 'I will take care of you and cure you if Heaven permits.'

"I carefully studied the malady the physicians had abandoned. A few months at the outside was all they had given him to live. But I was lucky enough to discover what ailed him. For three weeks I remained with Faz-Rhât so as to follow the effects of the treatment I had prescribed. His cure was complete. When he wished to pay me I would accept only what seemed to me to be reasonable. And then I left Homs.

"Three years later by an accident when hunting Faz-Rhât lost his life. He had no relatives whatever and his will made me the sole heir of all his possessions. Their value was certainly not less than fifty millions of florins.

"Thirteen years had then elapsed since the fugitive of Pisino had taken refuge in Asia Minor. The name of Dr. Antekirtt, although somewhat legendary, was known throughout Europe. I had obtained the result I wished. And now I was ready to set to work at the object of my life."

CHAPTER III.

THE PRESENT.

"I HAD resolved to return to Europe, or at least to some point of the Mediterranean. I visited the African coast and for a considerable sum I became the owner of an important island, rich, fertile and suitable in every way for a small colony—this isle of Antekirtta. Here, Pierre, I am sovereign, absolute master, king without subjects, but with a people devoted to me body and soul, with means of defence that will be very formidable when I have finished

them, with means of communication that link me to different points of the Mediterranean border, with a flotilla of such speed that I may almost say I have made this sea my dominion!"

"Where is Antekirtta situated?" asked Pierre.

"In the neighbourhood of the Syrtis Magna, which has had an evil reputation from the remotest antiquity, in the south of the sea which the north wind makes so dangerous even to modern ships, in the deepest bend of the Gulf of Sidra which cuts back into the African coast between Tripoli and Barca."

There at the north of the group of the Syrtic Islands is the island of Antekirtta. A few years before the doctor had travelled through the Tripolitan coasts, and visited Souza the old port of Cyrene, the Barca country, the towns that have replaced the old Ptolemais, Berenice, Adrianopolis, and in a word that old Pentapolis, formerly Greek, Macedonian, Roman, Persian, Saracenic, and now Arabic and belonging to the Pachalik of Tripoli. The chances of his voyage—for he went to a certain extent where he was called—took him among the numerous archipelagoes off the Lybian sea-board, Pharos and Anthiroda, the Plinthine twins, Enesipte, and the Tyndaric rocks, Pyrgos, Platea, Ilos, the Hyphales, the Pontians, the White Islands, and last of all the Syrtics.

In the Gulf of Sidra, about thirty miles south-west of the vilayet of Ben Ghazi, the nearest point on the mainland, he found the isle of Antekirtta. It was large enough—eighteen miles in circumference—to accommodate all those he thought necessary for his plans; sufficiently elevated, consisting chiefly of a conical hill, towering up some eight hundred feet from the sea, and commanding the whole sweep of the gulf; and sufficiently varied in its productions, and watered by its streams, to satisfy the wants of several thousand inhabitants. Besides it was in that sea, terrible on account of its storms, which in prehistoric times had been fatal to the Argonauts, whose perils were sung by Apollonius of Rhodes, Horace, Virgil, Propertius, Valerius Flaccus, Lucan, and by so many others who were more geographers than poets, such as Polybius, Sallust, Strabo, Mela, Pliny and Procopius.

The doctor was the island's absolute owner. He had obtained the freehold for a considerable sum, clear of every feudal and other obligation; and the deed of cession which

made him sovereign proprietor had been fully ratified by the Sultan.

For three years the doctor had lived in this island. About 300 European and Arabic families, attracted by his offers and the guarantee of a happy life, formed a small colony of some 2000 souls. They were not slaves, nor were they subjects; they were companions devoted to their chief, and none the less so because that small corner of the terrestrial globe had become their new home.

Gradually a regular administration had been organized, with a militia for the defence of the island, and a magistrate chosen from among the notables, who very seldom found his services required. Then according to plans sent by the doctor to the leading builders of England, France, and America, he had had constructed his wonderful fleet of steamers, schooners, and "Electrics" for his rapid passages across the Mediterranean. At the same time fortifications began to be thrown up round Antekirtta, but they were not yet finished, although the doctor for serious reasons was urging on the works.

Had then Antekirtta some enemy to fear in the vicinity of the Gulf of Sidra? Yes. A formidable sect, or rather a society of pirates, who had not seen without envy and hatred a foreigner founding a colony off the Lybian coast.

This sect was the Mussulman Brotherhood of Sidi Mohammed Ben Ali Es Senoussi. In this year (1300 of the Hegira) it had become much more menacing than formerly, and its geographical dominion embraced some 3,000,000 of adherents. His zaouiyas, his vilayets, his centres of activity established in Egypt, in the Turkish Empire, in Europe and Asia, in Eastern Nigritia, Tunis, Algeria, Morocco and the independent Sahara up to the frontiers of Western Nigritia, existed in still greater numbers in Barca and Tripoli. They were a source of serious danger to the European establishments of Northern Africa, including Algeria destined to become hereafter the richest country in the world, and specially to Antekirtta, and hence the doctor was only acting with ordinary prudence in availing himself of every modern means of protection and defence.

So Pierre learnt from the conversation which followed and which taught him many other things as well. It was to the isle of Antekirtta that he had been brought, to the Syrtic Sea, as to one of the most forsaken corners of the Ancient World, many hundred miles from Ragusa, where

he had left behind two whose memory would never leave him—his mother and Sava Toronthal.

In a few words the doctor completed the details concerning the second half of his existence. While he was making his arrangements for assuring the security of his island, while he was developing the riches of the soil, and providing for the material and mental wants of the little colony, he had kept himself acquainted with all that was going on respecting his former friends, of whom he had never lost sight, and among whom were Madame Bathory, her son and Borik.

Pierre then learnt why the *Savarena* had arrived at Gravosa under conditions that so greatly excited the curiosity of the public, why the doctor had visited Madame Bathory, how and why her son had not been informed of his visit, how the money put at his mother's disposal had been refused by her, and how the doctor had arrived in time to snatch Pierre from the tomb to which he had been carried when in his magnetic sleep.

"You, my son," he added. "Yes! You lost your head entirely and did not recoil from suicide—"

At this word Pierre in a movement of anger found strength enough to sit up.

"Suicide!" he exclaimed. "Do you then think I stabbed myself?"

"Pierre—in a moment of despair—"

"Despair? Yes! I was! I thought I had been abandoned even by you, my father's friend, after the promises you had made! In despair? Yes! and I am now! But Heaven does not give death to those in despair! It says live—and be avenged!"

"No—punish!" answered the doctor. "But, Pierre, who stabbed you then?"

"A man I hate," replied Pierre, "a man who on that night I met by chance in a deserted road by the side of the walls of Ragusa! Perhaps he thought I was going to quarrel with him! But he prevented me! He stabbed me! This man, this Sarcany is—"

Pierre could not finish the sentence. At the thought of the wretch in whom he saw the husband of Sava, his brain seemed to fail him, his eyes closed and life seemed to leave him as if his wound had been reopened.

In a moment the doctor had restored him to consciousness and looking at him fixedly,—

"Sarcany! Sarcany!" he whispered to himself.

It was advisable for Pierre to take some rest after the shock he had just received. He declined to do so.

"No," said he. "You told me to begin with—'and first for the story of Dr. Antekirtt, which begins when Mathias Sandorf threw himself into the waves of the Adriatic'—"

"Yes, Pierre."

"Then there is something else I ought to know about Count Mathias Sandorf."

"Are you strong enough to hear it?"

"Speak."

"Be it so," replied the doctor. "It is better to finish with the secrets that you have a right to know, with all the terrible past that will never return. Pierre, you thought I had abandoned you because I had left Gravosa! Listen then and judge for yourself.

"You know, Pierre, that on the evening of the day fixed for our execution my companions and I attempted to escape from the fortress of Pisino; but Ladislas Zathmar was caught by the warders just as he was going to join us at the foot of the donjon. Your father and I, swept away by the torrent of the Buco, were already out of their reach.

"After miraculously escaping from the whirlpools of the Foiba, when we set foot on the Leme Canal we were noticed by a scoundrel who did not hesitate to sell our heads to the Government who had just put a price on them. Discovered in the house of a Rovigno fisherman just as he was about to take us across the Adriatic your father was arrested and returned to Pisino. I was more fortunate and escaped! You know that? But this you do not know.

"Before the information given to the police by this Spaniard named Carpena—information which cost Ferrato the fisherman his liberty and, a few months afterwards, his life—two men had sold the secret of the conspirators of Trieste—"

"Their names?" interrupted Pierre.

"First of all ask me how their treachery was discovered," said the doctor.

And he hurriedly told what had passed in the cell of the donjon, and explained the acoustic phenomenon which had revealed the names of the traitors.

"Their names, doctor!" exclaimed Pierre. "You will not refuse to give me their names?"

"I will tell you."

"Who were they?"

"One of them was the accountant who had introduced himself as a spy into Zathmar's house! The man who tried to assassinate you! Sarcany!"

"Sarcany!" exclaimed Pierre, who found sufficient strength to rise and walk towards the doctor. "Sarcany! That scoundrel! And you knew it! And you, the companion of Stephen Bathory, you who offered his son your protection, you to whom I had entrusted the secret of my love, you who had encouraged me, you allowed him to introduce himself into Silas Toronthal's house when you could have kept him out with a word! And by your silence you have authorized this crime—yes! this crime—which has delivered over that unfortunate girl to Sarcany!"

"Yes, Pierre, I did all that!"

"And why?"

"Because she can never be your wife!"

"She can never be my wife!"

"Because if Pierre Bathory marries Miss Toronthal he will be guilty of a still more abominable crime!"

"But why? Why?" asked Pierre in a paroxysm of anguish.

"Because Sarcany had an accomplice! Yes, an accomplice in the horrible scheme which sent your father to his death! And that accomplice—it is necessary that you should know it—was the banker of Trieste, Silas Toronthal!"

Pierre heard and understood! He could make no reply. A spasm contracted his lips. He sank, crushed to the earth, and horror completely paralyzed him. His pupils dilated and his look seemed to be plunged into unfathomable darkness.

The paroxysm lasted but a few seconds, during which the doctor asked himself if the patient were about to succumb under the dreadful operation to which he had submitted him.

But Pierre's nature was as energetic as his own. He gained the mastery over his tortured feelings. Tears welled up into his eyes. Then he fell back into his chair and held out his hand to the doctor, who said to him in a gentle, serious voice,—

"Pierre, to the whole world you and I are dead! Now

I am alone in the world, with no friend, no child! Will you be my son?"

"Yes! Father!" answered Pierre.

And the father and son sat clasped in each other's arms.

CHAPTER IV.

EVENTS AT RAGUSA.

MEANWHILE what was taking place at Ragusa?

Madame Bathory no longer lived there. After her son's death, Borik and a few of her friends had persuaded her to shut up the house in the Rue Marinella. At first it seemed as though the unhappy mother had been driven mad; and strong-minded though she was she had really given signs of derangement that alarmed her physicians. Under their advice she was removed to the little village of Vinticello, where a friend of her family was living. There she would receive every attention, but what consolation could they offer to the mother and the wife who had suffered twice over in her love for her husband and her son?

Her old servant would not leave her, and the house in the Rue Marinella having been shut up, he had followed to Vinticello to become her humble and assiduous confidant in sorrow.

They had ceased to trouble themselves about Sava Toronthal, and were even unaware that the marriage had been put off for some time. And in fact the young lady's health necessitated her keeping to her bed. She had received a blow as unexpected as it was terrible to her. He whom she loved was dead—dead of despair probably! And it was his corpse they were taking to the grave at the very moment she was leaving the house on her way to her hateful wedding! For ten days, that is till the 16th of July, Sava was in a most alarming state. Her mother would not leave her. Moreover, that care and attention was the last her mother could give, for she herself had received a fatal shock.

During these long hours what thoughts were interchanged between mother and daughter? We can imagine,

and we need not enlarge on them. Two names were of constant recurrence amid their sobs and tears—one, that of Sarcany, to be cursed, the other, that of Pierre, to be wept over.

From these conversations, in which Silas Toronthal refrained from taking part—for he even avoided seeing his daughter—it resulted that Madame Toronthal made one more appeal to her husband. She asked him to consent to break off a marriage which Sava regarded only with fear and horror.

The banker remained unmoved in his resolution. Had he been left to himself he might perhaps have yielded, but he was in the power of his accomplice, more even than may be imagined, and he refused to listen to his wife. The marriage of Sava and Sarcany was decided on, and it would take place as soon as the state of her health would allow.

It is easy to imagine what was Sarcany's irritation when this unexpected incident intervened, with what ill-dissembled anger he saw his game interfered with, and with what persistency he attacked Toronthal. It was only a delay, doubtless, but the delay if prolonged would lead to the collapse of the whole scheme on which he had arranged his future. And, besides, he knew that Sava felt for him nothing but insurmountable aversion.

And what would this aversion become if the young lady suspected that Pierre Bathory had been stabbed by the man who was forced upon her as her husband? For his part he was only too pleased at having had the chance of getting rid of his rival. Not a shade of remorse did he feel, so dead was he to every human sentiment.

"It is lucky," said he one day to Toronthal, "that that fellow thought of killing himself! There might have been too many Bathorys! Heaven does indeed protect us!"

And who was there left of these three families of Sandorf, Zathmar and Bathory? An old woman whose days were numbered! Yes! Heaven did seem to protect the scoundrels, and assuredly would carry its protection to its extreme limits the day that Sarcany became the husband of Sava Toronthal!

Nevertheless it appeared as though Heaven were trying people's patience very much, for the delay as to the marriage grew more and more prolonged. No sooner had Sava recovered—physically that is—and Sarcany was again

thinking of realizing his projects, than Madame Toronthal fell ill. She had indeed lived out her life. After all that had occurred at Trieste when she learnt to what a scoundrel she was bound, after all her troubles about Pierre in whom she had tried to repair the wrong done to his family, after all she had suffered since Sarcany's unwelcome return, her illness could hardly be wondered at.

From the first it was evident that her malady would be fatal. A few days of life were all that her doctors could promise her. She was dying of exhaustion. Nothing could save her, even if Pierre Bathory were to rise from his grave to become her daughter's husband.

Sava could now return with interest the care and attention she had received from her, and she never left her bedside by night or day.

What Sarcany felt at this new delay can be imagined. Daily he came to abuse the banker, who like him was powerless. All they could do was to wait for the end.

On the 29th of July Madame Toronthal seemed to have recovered a little of her strength; and she then fell into a burning fever, which threatened to carry her off in forty-eight hours.

In this fever she was seized with delirium; she began to wander in her mind, and many unintelligible phrases escaped her.

One word—one name repeated incessantly—came as a surprise to Sava. It was that of Bathory, not the name of the young man, but that of his mother, that the sick woman appealed to, prayed to, and returned to again and again as if she were assailed with remorse.

"Pardon! madame! Forgive me!"

And when madame during a lull in the fever was interrogated by her daughter,—

"Hush! Sava! Hush! I said nothing!" she exclaimed in terror.

The night between the 30th and 31st of July arrived. For a time the doctors might think that the fever having reached its maximum was about to subside. During the day she had been better, there had been no mental troubles, and the change in the patient seemed somewhat surprising. The night promised to be as calm as the day.

But if so, it was because Madame Toronthal on the point of death discovered an energy of which she had previously thought herself incapable. She had made her

peace with God, and taken a resolution which she only waited for the opportunity to carry out.

That night she insisted that Sava should go to bed for a few hours. Although she strongly objected to leave her, yet she did not think it right to disobey her mother's commands; and about eleven o'clock she went to her own room.

Madame Toronthal was then alone. All in the house were asleep, and the silence reigned which has been aptly named the silence of death.

Madame Toronthal rose from her bed, and this sick woman whom all thought too feeble to make even the slightest movement, dressed herself, and sat down in front of her writing-table.

There she took a sheet of letter-paper and with trembling hand wrote a few lines and signed them. Then she slipped the letter into an envelope, which she sealed and which she thus addressed :—

"Madame Bathory, Rue Marinella, Stradone, Ragusa."

Madame Toronthal then making a great effort to overcome the fatigue she had thus caused herself, opened the door of her room, descended the main staircase, crossed the courtyard, and by the small side gate let herself out into the Stradone.

The Stradone was then dark and deserted, for it was nearly midnight.

With tottering steps Madame Toronthal went along the pavement to the left for some fifty yards or so and stopped before a post-box. Into it she threw her letter. And then she returned to the hotel.

But all her strength was now exhausted; and she fell helpless and motionless on the step of the side gate. There an hour afterwards she was found. There Toronthal and Sava were brought to recognize her, and from there they took her back to her room before she had recovered her consciousness.

The next day Toronthal informed Sarcany of what had happened. Neither one nor the other suspected that Madame Toronthal had gone that night to post a letter in the Stradone. But why had she gone out of the house? They were unable to explain, and it proved to them a subject of great anxiety.

The sick woman lingered for another twenty-four hours.

She gave no sign of life except an occasional convulsive sob, that showed her end was near. Sava held her hand as if to hold her back to the world where she had found herself so cast away. But her mother was now silent, and the name of Bathory no longer escaped from her lips. Doubtless her conscience had been quieted, her last wish had been accomplished, and she had neither prayer to make nor pardon to ask.

The following morning about three o'clock, while Sava was bending over her, the dying woman moved, and her hand seemed to feel for her daughter's hand.

As the hands touched her eyes half opened. Then she looked at Sava. The look could not be misunderstood.

"Mother," said Sava, "what do you want?"

Madame Toronthal gave a slight nod.

"To speak to me?"

"Yes!" said she distinctly.

Sava bent down over her pillow; and another gesture from her mother showed that she wished her to come still closer.

Sava laid her head beside her mother's.

"My child, I am going to die!"

"Mother—mother!"

"Lower!" whispered Madame Toronthal. "Lower! Let no one hear me!"

Then, with an effort,—

"Sava," she said, "I have to ask your forgiveness for the injury I have done you—the injury I had not the courage to prevent."

"You—mother! You do me injury! Ask my forgiveness?"

"Kiss me, Sava! Yes! The last kiss that tells me you forgive me."

The girl gently pressed her lips on the pallid forehead. And the dying woman folded her arms round her neck, and raising herself slightly looked at her with terrible earnestness.

"Sava!" she said, "Sava—you are not Silas Toronthal's daughter! You are not my daughter! Your father—"

She was unable to finish the sentence. A final convulsion threw her back into Sava's arms, and she died with the last word on her lips.

The girl was bending over a corpse! She tried to bring it back to life—in vain.

Then she called for help; and Silas Toronthal was one of the first to reach his wife's room.

As she saw him, Sava, seized with an irresistible feeling of repulsion, recoiled before the man whom she had now the right to despise and hate—for he was no longer her father! The dying woman had said so, and people do not die with a lie on their lips. And then she fled, terrified at what she had been told by the unhappy woman who had loved her as a daughter—still more terrified perhaps at her not having had time to tell her more.

The next day but one the funeral of Madame Toronthal took place with much ostentation. The crowd of friends that all rich men have swarmed round the banker. Near him walked Sarcany, affirming by his presence that nothing had changed his plans of becoming one of the Toronthal family. Such was his hope, but if he were ever to realize it he had many more obstacles to surmount, although his idea was that now Sava was left more completely at his mercy circumstances were more favourable to the accomplishment of his schemes.

The delay caused by Madame Toronthal's illness was still further prolonged by her death. While the family was in mourning there could be no question of marriage. Etiquette required that at least several months should elapse before anything of the sort could take place.

This was of course very galling to Sarcany, who was in haste to attain his object; but he was forced to respect the usages of society, although many lively explanations were exchanged between him and Toronthal. And these interviews always ended with a remark by the banker to the effect that,—

"I can do nothing more, and besides if the marriage comes off within five months you have no reason to be anxious."

Evidently the two men understood each other; although Sarcany constantly showed an amount of irritation that often led to a violent scene. One thing puzzled them both, and that was the action of Madame Toronthal just before she died. The idea even occurred to Sarcany that she had gone out to post a letter whose destination she did not wish to be known.

"If that is it," repeated Sarcany, "that letter threatens us directly and seriously. Your wife always upheld Sava against me, she even helped my rival, and who knows but

that in her death-agony she did not find strength, for which we did not give her credit, to betray our secrets? In that case had we not better take the initiative and leave the place where you and I have more to lose than gain?"

"If that letter threatened us," said Toronthal, a few days later, "the threat would have produced its effect before now, and yet nothing has happened."

To this argument Sarcany had no reply. If Madame Toronthal's letter referred to his future plans, there had as yet been no result from it, and there seemed to be no danger. When the danger showed itself would be time enough to act.

But a fortnight after the death something did happen very different to what they had expected.

Sava had kept herself to her room, and no longer appeared at meal-times. The banker, who was very angry with her, did not care for an interview which might prove embarrassing. He therefore let her do as she pleased and kept away from her side of the house.

More than once Sarcany had blamed him for allowing such a state of things to continue. He had now no opportunity of meeting the girl, and that did not at all agree with his ulterior plans, as he very clearly explained to the banker. Although there could be no question of the wedding taking place in the early months of mourning, yet he did not wish Sava to become accustomed to the idea that the match had been broken off.

At last Sarcany became so imperious and exacting, that on the 16th of August Toronthal informed Sava that he wished to see her during the evening. As he also told her that Sarcany desired to be present at the interview he expected a refusal. He did not get one; Sava replied that she would obey his orders.

The evening came. Toronthal and Sarcany impatiently awaited her in the drawing-room; the latter intending to listen rather than to speak, to find out if possible what were the young lady's secret thoughts, for he could not help fearing that she knew more of certain matters than they supposed.

Sava entered the room at the appointed time. Sarcany rose when she appeared, but she merely greeted him with a slight inclination of her head. She did not seem to have seen, or rather she did not wish to see him.

[redacted] from Toronthal Sava sat down. Her pale face

looked even paler in her deep black dress, as with every sign of indifference she waited for the banker to begin.

"Sava," said he, "I respect the grief that your mother's death has caused you, and I have not troubled your solitude. But these sad events have necessarily had a certain influence on matters of interest to you, and although you have not yet attained your majority, it is well that you should now know what portion of the inheritance—"

"If it is only the money," answered Sava, "there is no need for us to say anything more about it! I claim no part in the inheritance you mention."

Sarcany gave a start which indicated a good deal of disappointment, and also, maybe, a certain surprise not unmixed with anxiety.

"I think, Sava," continued Toronthal, "that you misunderstand me. Whether you wish it or not, you are the heiress of Madame Toronthal, your mother, and the law obliges me to give you an account of it when you come of age—"

"Not if I renounce the succession!" was the tranquil reply.

"And why?"

"Because I have no right to it."

The banker rose from his armchair. The reply was quite unexpected by him.

Sarcany said nothing. In his eyes Sava was merely playing a game, and he was devoting himself entirely to seeing what that game was.

"I do not know, Sava," said Toronthal, angry at the girl's coolness, "I do not know what your words mean, nor who has dictated them to you. I am only discussing what is right and legal. You are under my guardianship, and you are not in a position to refuse or accept. You would do well then to submit to the authority of your father. You do not dispute it, I believe?"

"Perhaps I do."

"Indeed," exclaimed Toronthal, who began to lose the little coolness he had left. "Indeed! But you speak three years too soon, Sava! When you attain your majority you can do what you like with your fortune! At present your interests are entrusted to me, and I will look after them as I think fit."

"Well," answered Sava, "I am waiting."

"Waiting for what?" replied the banker. "You forget

that the position will change as soon as propriety admits. You will then have less right to manage your fortune when you are not the only one interested in the business—"

"Yes!—the business!" answered Sava with contempt.

"Believe me," said Sarcany, aroused by the word, which had been pronounced in a tone of the most scathing disdain, "believe me that a more honourable sentiment—"

Sava did not seem to hear him, and kept her eyes fixed on the banker, who continued angrily,—

"Not the only one—for your mother's death in no way has altered our plans."

"What plans?" asked the girl.

"The marriage you pretend to forget, and which is to make Mr. Sarcany my son-in-law."

"Are you sure that this marriage will make Mr. Sarcany your son-in-law?"

The insinuation this time was so direct that Toronthal would have left the room to hide his confusion. But Sarcany with a gesture kept him back. He wished to find out all he could, to know what it all meant.

"Listen, my father," said Sava, "and it is for the last time I give you the title. It is not I Mr. Sarcany wants to marry; he wants to marry the fortune that I abandon from to-day! Great as may be his impudence he will not dare deny it! You remind me that I had consented to this marriage, and my reply is easy. Yes! I would have sacrificed myself, when I thought my father's honour was at stake; but my father you know well is in no way concerned with this hateful scheme! If you wish to enrich Mr. Sarcany give him your money! That is all he wants!"

The girl rose, and walked towards the door.

"Sava," said Toronthal, barring the way, "there is in your words—such incoherence that I do not understand them—that you probably do not understand them yourself. Has the death of your mother—?"

"My mother!—Yes, she was my mother—my mother in her feelings towards me!"

"If grief has not deprived you of reason," continued Toronthal, who heard only himself, "yes! if you are not mad—"

"Mad!"

"But what I have resolved on shall take place, and before six months have elapsed you shall be Sarcany's wife."

"Never!"

"I know how to compel you."

"And by what right?" answered the girl indignantly.

"The right given me by my paternal authority."

"You—sir!—You are not my father, and my name is not Sava Toronthal!"

At these words the banker stepped back speechless, and the girl without even turning her head walked out of the room.

Sarcany, who had been carefully watching Sava during the interview, was not surprised at the way it ended. He had suspected it. What he feared had taken place. Sava knew that she was bound by no tie to the Toronthals.

The banker was overwhelmed at the unexpected blow. He was hardly master of himself. Sarcany therefore began to sum up the case as it stood, while he simply listened. Besides he could have nothing but approval for what his old accomplice proposed with so much indisputable logic.

"We can no longer reckon on Sava voluntarily consenting to this marriage," he said. "But for reasons we know it is more than ever necessary that the marriage should take place! What does she know of our past life? Nothing! For she told you nothing! What she knows is that she is not your daughter, that is all! Does she know her father? Not likely! His would have been the first name she would have thrown in your face! Has she known our position for long? No, probably since the moment of Madame Toronthal's death!"

Toronthal nodded his approval of Sarcany's argument. He was right, as we know, in his suspicions as to how the girl had gained her information, as to how long she had known it, and as to what she had learnt of the secret of her birth.

"Now to conclude," continued Sarcany. "Little as she knows of what concerns her, and although she is ignorant of our proceedings in the past, we are both of us in danger —you in the position you hold at Ragusa, I in what I should gain by the marriage and which I have no intention of giving up! What we must do then is this, and we must do it as soon as possible. Leave Ragusa, you and I, and take Sava with us, without a word to any one, either to-day or to-morrow, then return here only when the marriage is over, and when she is my wife Sava will have to keep her mouth shut. Once we get her away she will be so removed

from outside influences that we shall have nothing to fear from her. It will be my business to make her consent to this marriage which will bring me in so much, and if I don't succeed, why then—"

Toronthal agreed; the position was the same as it had been with the cryptogram. He did not see how to resist. He was in his accomplice's power, and could not do otherwise. And why should he?

That evening it was agreed that the plan should be put into execution before Sava could leave the house. Then Toronthal and Sarcany separated, and set to work as we shall soon see.

The next day but one Madame Bathory, accompanied by Borik, had left the village of Vinticello to return to the house in the Rue Marinella for the first time since her son's death. She had resolved to leave Ragusa for ever, and had come to prepare for her departure.

When Borik opened the door, he found a letter which had been slipped into the letter-box.

It was the letter Madame Toronthal had posted the day before her death.

Madame Bathory took the letter, opened it, looked first at the signature and then read the few lines that had been traced by the dying hand and revealed the secret of Sava's birth.

What sudden connection was there between the names of Sava and Pierre in Madame Bathory's mind?

"She! He!" she exclaimed.

And without another word—without answering her old servant, whom she thrust aside as he tried to hold her, she rushed out, ran down the Rue Marinella into the Stradone, and did not stop till she reached Toronthal's house.

Did she know what she was doing? Did she know that in Sava's interest it would be better for her to act with less precipitation and more prudence? No! she was resistibly urged towards the girl as if her husband and son had come from the grave and sent her to the

knocked at the door. The door opened. A
ing her business.
ry wished to see Sava.
as not in the house.
would speak with Mr. Toronthal.

The banker had gone away the day before without saying where he was going ; and he had taken his daughter with him.

Madame Bathory staggered and fell into the arms of Borik, who had just come up to her.

And when the old man had taken her back to the house in the Rue Marinella,—

"To-morrow, Borik," she said, "to-morrow, we will go together to the wedding of Sava and Pierre!"

Madame Bathory was mad.

CHAPTER V.

THE DOCTOR DELAYS.

DURING these events which concerned Pierre so intimately he grew better from day to day. Soon there was no reason for anxiety about his wound. It had almost completely healed. But great were Pierre's sufferings as he thought of his mother and of Sava—whom he believed to be lost to him.

His mother? She could not be left under the supposition of her son's fictitious death. It had been agreed that she should be cautiously informed of the real state of things and brought to Antekirtta. One of the doctor's agents at Ragusa had orders not to lose sight of her until Pierre was completely restored to health—and that would be very soon.

As far as Sava was concerned Pierre was doomed never to speak of her to Dr. Antekirtt! But although he thought she was now Sarcany's wife, how could he forget her? Had he ceased to love her because she was the daughter of Silas Toronthal? No! After all was Sava responsible for her father's crime? But it was that crime that brought Stephen Bathory to his death! Hence a continual struggle within him, of which Pierre alone could tell the innumerable vicissitudes.

The doctor felt this. And to give the young man's thoughts another direction, he constantly spoke to him of the act of justice they were to work out together. The

traitors must be punished, and they should be. How they were to reach them they did not yet know, but they would reach them.

"A thousand roads, one end!" said the doctor.

And if need be he would follow the thousand roads to reach that end.

During the last days of his convalescence Pierre went about the island, sometimes on foot, sometimes in a carriage. And he was astonished at what the little colony had become under the administration of Dr. Antekirtt.

Work was going on at the fortifications destined to protect the town, the harbour, and in short the whole island from attack. When the works were finished they were to be armed with long-range guns, which from their position would cross their fires and thus render the approach of an enemy's ship impossible.

Electricity was to play an important part in the defensive system, not only in firing the torpedoes with which the channel was armed, but even in discharging the guns in the batteries. The doctor had learnt how to obtain the most marvellous results from this agent to which the future belongs. The central station, provided with steam motors and boilers, contained twenty dynamo machines on a new and greatly improved system, and there the currents were produced which special accumulators of extraordinary intensity stored up in convenient form for the general use of Antekirtta—the water supply, the lighting of the town, telegraphs, telephones, and the circular and other railways on the island. In a word the doctor had applied the studies of his youth to practical purposes, and realized one of the desiderata of modern science—the transmission of power to a distance by electric agency. Having succeeded in this he had had vessels built as we have seen, and the *Electrics* with their excessive speed enabled him to move with the rapidity of an express from one end of the Mediterranean to the other. As coal was indispensable for the steam-engines which were required to produce the electricity, there was always a considerable stock in store at Antekirtta, and this stock was continually renewed by a ship that traded backwards and forwards to Wales.

The harbour, from which the little town rose in the form of an amphitheatre, was a natural one, and had been greatly improved. Two jetties, a mole, and a breakwater made it safe in all weathers. And there was always a good depth

of water even alongside the wharves, so that at all times the flotilla of Antekirtta was in perfect security. This flotilla comprised the schooner *Savarena*, the steam collier working to Swansea and Cardiff, a steam yacht of between seven and eight hundred tons named the *Ferrato*, and three *Electrics*, of which two were fitted as torpedo boats which could usefully contribute to the defence of the island.

Under the doctor's directions Antekirtta saw its means of resistance improve from day to day; and of this the pirates of Tripoli were well aware. Great was their desire to capture it, for its possession would be of great advantage to the Grand Master of Senousism, Sidi Mohammed El Mahdi. But knowing the difficulties of the undertaking they waited their opportunity with that patience which is one of the chief characteristics of the Arab. The doctor knew all this, and actively pushed on his defensive works. To reduce them when they were finished the most modern engines of destruction would be required, and these the Senousists did not yet possess. All the inhabitants of the island between eighteen and forty were formed into companies of militia, provided with the newest arms of precision, drilled in artillery manœuvres, and commanded by officers of their own election; and this militia made up a force of from five to six hundred trustworthy men.

Although there were a few farms in the country, by far the greater number of colonists lived in the town which had received the Transylvanian name of Artenak in remembrance of Count Sandorf's estate on the Carpathian slopes. A picturesque place was Artenak with its few hundred houses! Instead of being built like a chessboard in the American style, with roads and avenues running at right angles, it was arranged irregularly. The houses clustered on the smaller hills, shaded with orange-trees and standing amid beautiful gardens, some of European, some of Arab design, and past them flowed the pleasant, cooling streams from the water-works. It was a city in which the inhabitants were members of the same family, and could live their lives in common, without forfeiting the quiet and independence of home. Happy were the people of Antekirtta. *Ubi bene, ibi patria* is perhaps not a very patriotic motto, but it was appropriate enough for those who had gathered to the doctor's invitation and left their old country, in which they had been miserable, to find happiness and comfort in this hospitable island.

Dr. Antekirtt lived in what was known as the Stadthaus —not as their master, but as the first among them. This was one of those beautiful Moorish dwellings, with miradores and moucharabys, interior court, galleries, porticoes, fountains, saloons and rooms decorated by clever ornamentists from the Arabic provinces. In its construction the most precious materials had been employed—marble and onyx from the rich mountain of Filfila on the Numidian Gulf, a few miles from Philippeville—worked and introduced with as much knowledge as taste. These carbonates lend themselves marvellously to an architect's fancies, and under the powerful climate of Africa soon clothe themselves with that golden tone that the sun bestows on the buildings of the East. At the back of the city rose the tower of the small church built of the black and white marble from the same quarry, which served, indeed, for all the requirements of architecture and statuary, and which with its blue and yellow veins was curiously similar to the ancient products of Paros and Carrara.

Outside the town on the neighbouring hills were a few houses, a villa or two, a small hospital at the highest point, where the doctor intended to send his patients—when he had them. On the hill-sides sloping to the sea there were groups of houses forming a bathing-station. Among the other houses one of the most comfortable—a low blockhouse-looking building near the entrance on to the mole—was called "Villa Pescade and Matifou," and there the two inseparables had taken up their quarters with a servant of their own. Never had they dreamt of such affluence!

"This is good!" remarked Cape Matifou over and over again.

"Too good!" answered Point Pescade. "It is much too good for us! Look here, Cape Matifou, we must educate ourselves, go to college, get the grammar prize, obtain our certificates of proficiency."

"But you are educated, Point Pescade," replied the Hercules. "You know how to read, to write, to cipher—"

In fact by the side of his comrade Point Pescade would have passed for a man of science! But he knew well enough how deficient he was. All the schooling he had had was at the "Lycée des Carpes de Fontainebleau," as he called it. And so he was an assiduous student in the library of Artenak, and in his attempt to educate himself he read and worked, while Cape Matifou with the doctor's

permission cleared away the sand and rocks on the shore, so as to form a small fishing harbour.

Pierre gave Pescade every encouragement, for he had recognized his more than ordinary intelligence which only required cultivation. He constituted himself his professor, and directed his studies so as to give him very complete elementary instruction, and his pupil made rapid progress. There were other reasons why Pierre should interest himself in Point Pescade. Was he not acquainted with his past life? Had he not been entrusted with the task of watching Toronthal's house? Had he not been in the Stradone during the procession when Sava had swooned? More than once Point Pescade had had to tell the story of the sad events in which he had indirectly taken part. It was to him alone that Pierre could talk when his heart was too full for him to be silent. But the time was approaching when the doctor could put his double plan into execution—first to reward, then to punish.

That which he could not do for Andrea Ferrato, who had died a few months after his sentence, he wished to do for his children. Unfortunately his agents had as yet been unable to discover what had become of them. After their father's death Luigi and his sister had left Rovigno and Istria, but where had they gone? No one knew, no one could say. The doctor was much concerned at this, but he did not give up the hope of finding the children of the man who had sacrified himself for him, and by his orders the search was continued.

Pierre's wish was that his mother should be brought to Antekirtta, but the doctor thinking of taking advantage of Pierre's pretended death, as he had of his own, made him understand the necessity of proceeding with extreme prudence. Besides, he wished to wait till the convalescent had regained sufficient strength to accompany him in his campaign, and as he knew that Sava's marriage had been postponed by the death of Madame Toronthal, he had decided to do nothing until the wedding had taken place.

One of his agents at Ragusa kept him informed of all that took place, and watched Madame Bathory's house with as much care as he did Toronthal's. Such was the state of affairs, and the doctor waited with impatience for the delay as to the wedding to come to an end. If he did not know what had become of Carpena whose track he had lost after his departure from Rovigno, Toronthal and

Sarcany at Ragusa could not escape him. Suddenly, on the 20th of August, there arrived a telegram informing him of the disappearance of Silas Toronthal, Sava, and Sarcany, and also of Madame Bathory and Borik, who had just left Ragusa without giving any clue to their destination.

The doctor could delay no longer. He told Pierre what had happened, and hid nothing from him. Another terrible blow for him! His mother disappeared, Sava dragged off they knew not where by Silas Toronthal, and, there was no reason to doubt, still in Sarcany's hands.

"We shall start to-morrow," said the doctor.

"To-day!" exclaimed Pierre. "But where shall we look for my mother? Where shall we look for—?"

He did not finish the sentence. The doctor interrupted him,—

"I do not know if it is only a coincidence! Perhaps Toronthal and Sarcany have something to do with Madame Bathory's disappearance! We shall see! But we must be after the two scoundrels first!"

"Where shall we find them?"

"In Sicily—perhaps!"

It will be remembered that in the conversation between Sarcany and Zirone, that the doctor overheard in the donjon of Pisino, Zirone had spoken of Sicily as the usual scene of his exploits, and proposed that his companion should join him there if circumstances required it. The doctor had not forgotten this, nor had he forgotten the name of Zirone. It was a feeble clue perhaps, but in default of any other it might set them again on the trail of Sarcany and Toronthal.

The start was immediately decided on. Point Pescade and Cape Matifou were informed that they would be wanted to go with the doctor. Point Pescade at the same time was told who Toronthal, Sarcany, and Carpena were.

"Three scoundrels!" he said. "And no mistake!"

Then he told Cape Matifou,—

"You will come on the scene soon."

"Now?"

"Yes, but you must wait for the cue."

CHAPTER VI.

OFF MALTA.

THEY started that evening. The *Ferrato*, always ready for sea, with provisions on board, bunkers coaled, and compasses regulated, was ordered to sail at eight o'clock.

It is nine hundred and fifty miles from the Syrtis Magna to the south of Sicily, near Portio di Palo. The swift steam yacht whose mean speed exceeded eighteen knots would take about a day and a half to accomplish the distance. She was a wonderful vessel. She had been built at one of the best yards on the Loire. Her engines could develop nearly fifteen hundred horse-power effective. Her boilers were on the Belleville system—in which the tubes contain the flame and not the water—and possessed the advantage of consuming little coal, producing rapid vaporization, and easily raising the tension of the steam to nearly thirty pounds without danger of explosion. The steam, used over again by the re-heaters, became a mechanical agent of prodigious power, and enabled the yacht, although she was not as long as the despatch boats of the European squadrons, to more than equal them in speed.

It need scarcely be said that the *Ferrato* was fitted so as to insure every possible comfort to her passengers. She carried four steel breech-loaders mounted on the barbette principle, two revolving Hotchkiss guns, two Gatlings, and, in the bow, a long chaser which could send a five-inch conical shot a distance of four miles.

The captain was a Dalmatian named Kostrik, and he had under him a mate and second and third officers. For the machinery there was a chief engineer, a second engineer, and six firemen; the crew consisted of thirty men, with a boatswain and two quartermasters; and there was a steward, a cook, and three native servants. During the first hour or two the passage out of the gulf was made under favourable conditions. Although the wind was contrary—a brisk breeze from the north-west—the captain took the *Ferrato* along with remarkable speed; but he did not set either of the headsails or the square sails on the foremast, r the lateens on the main and mizen.

During the night the doctor and Pierre in their rooms

aft, and Point Pescade and Matifou in their cabin forward, could sleep without being inconvenienced by the movement of the vessel which rolled a little like all fast boats. But although sleep did not fail the two friends, the doctor and Pierre had too much anxiety to take any rest. In the morning when the passengers went on deck more than a hundred and twenty miles had been run in the twelve hours since they had left Antekirtta. The wind was in the same direction with a tendency to freshen. The sun had risen on a stormy horizon, and everything betokened a roughish day.

Point Pescade and Cape Matifou wished the doctor and Pierre good morning.

"Thank you, my friends," said the doctor. "Did you sleep well in your bunks?"

"Like dormice with an easy conscience!" answered Point Pescade.

"And has Cape Matifou had his first breakfast?"

"Yes, doctor, a tureen of black coffee, and four pounds of sea biscuit."

"Hum! A little hard, that biscuit!"

"Bah! For a man that used to chew pebbles between his meals!"

Cape Matifou slowly nodded his huge head in sign of approval of his friend's replies.

The *Ferrato* by the doctor's orders was now driving along at her utmost speed, and sending off from her prow two long paths of foam. To hurry on was only prudent. Already Captain Kostrik, after consulting the doctor, had begun to think of putting for shelter into Malta, whose lights were sighted about eight o'clock in the evening. The state of the weather was most threatening. Notwithstanding the westerly breeze, which freshened as the sun went down, the clouds mounted higher and higher, and gradually overspread three-quarters of the sky. Along the sea-line was a band of livid grey, deepening in its density and becoming black as ink when the sun's rays shot from behind its jagged edges. Now and then the silent flashes tore asunder the cloud-bank whose upper edge rounded off into heavy volutes and joined on to the masses above. At the same time, as if they were struggling with the wind from the west and the wind from the east that they had not yet felt, but whose existence was shown by the disturbed state of the sea, the waves

increased as they met, and breaking up confusedly began to come rolling on to the deck. About six o'clock the darkness had completely covered the cloudy vault, and the thunder growled, and the lightning vividly flashed in the gloom.

"Better keep outside!" said the doctor to the captain.

"Yes!" answered Captain Kostrik. "In the Mediterranean it is either one thing or the other! East and west strive which shall have us, and the storm coming in to help, I am afraid the first will get the worst of it. The sea will become very rough off Gozo or Malta, and it may hinder us a good deal. I don't propose to run in to Valetta, but to find a shelter till daylight under the western coast of either of the islands."

"Do as you think best," was the reply.

The yacht was then about thirty miles to the westward of Malta. On the island of Gozo a little to the north-west of Malta, and separated from it only by two narrow channels formed by a central islet, there is a large lighthouse with a range of twenty-seven miles.

In less than an hour notwithstanding the roughness of the sea the *Ferrato* was within range of the light. After carefully taking its bearings and running towards the land for some time the captain considered he was sufficiently near to remain in shelter for a few hours. He therefore reduced his speed so as to avoid all chance of accident to the hull or machinery. About half an hour afterwards, however, the Gozo light suddenly vanished.

The storm was then at its height. A warm rain fell in sheets. The mass of cloud on the horizon, now driven into ribbons by the wind, flew overhead at a terrible pace. Between the rifts the stars peeped forth for a second or two, and then as suddenly disappeared, and the ends of the tatters dragging in the sea swept over its surface like streamers of crape. The triple flashes struck the waves at their three points, sometimes completely enveloping the yacht, and the claps of thunder ceaselessly shook the air. The state of affairs had been dangerous; it rapidly became alarming.

Captain Kostrik, knowing that he ought to be at least twenty miles within the range of the Gozo light, dared not approach the land. He even feared that it was the height the cliffs which had shut out the light, and if so he was

extremely near. To run aground on the isolated rocks at the foot of the cliffs was to risk immediate destruction.

About half-past nine the captain resolved to lay-to and keep the screw at half-speed. He did not stop entirely, for he wanted to keep the ship under the control of her rudder.

For three hours she lay head to wind. About midnight things grew worse. As often happens in storms, the strife between the opposing winds from the east and west suddenly ceased. The wind went round to the point from which it had been blowing during the day.

"A light on the starboard bow!" shouted one of the quartermasters who was on the look-out by the bowsprit.

"Put the helm hard down!" shouted Captain Kostrik, who wished to keep off the shore.

He also had seen the light. Its intermittent flashes showed him it was Gozo. There was only just time for him to come round in the opposite direction, the wind sweeping down with intense fury. The *Ferrato* was not ten miles from the point on which the light had so suddenly appeared.

Orders to go full speed were telegraphed to the engineer, but suddenly the engine slowed, and then ceased to work.

The doctor, Pierre, and all those on deck feared some serious complication. An accident had in fact happened. The valve of the air pump ceased to act, the condenser failed, and after two or three loud reports, as if an explosion had taken place in the stern, the screw stopped dead.

Under such circumstances the accident was irreparable. The pump would have to be dismantled, and that would take many hours. In less than twenty minutes the yacht, driven to leeward by the squalls, would be on shore.

"Up with the fore-staysail! Up with the jib! Set the mizen!"

Such were the orders of Captain Kostrik, whose only chance was to get under sail at once. The orders were rapidly executed. That Point Pescade with his agility and Cape Matifou with his prodigious strength rendered efficient service we need hardly stop to say. The halliards would have soon broken if they had not yielded to the weight of Cape Matifou.

But the position of the *Ferrato* was still very serious. A steamer with her long hull, her want of beam, her slight draught, and her insufficient canvas is not made for work-

ing against the wind. If she is laid too near and the sea is rough she is driven back in irons; or she is blown off altogether. That is what happened to the *Ferrato*. She found it impossible to beat off the lee shore. Slowly she drifted towards the foot of the cliffs, and it seemed as though all that could be done was to select a suitable place to beach her. Unfortunately the night was so dark that the captain could not make out the coast. He knew that the two channels separated Gozo from Malta on each side of the central islet, one the North Comino, the other the South Comino. But how was it possible for him to find the entrances in the pitch darkness, or to take his ship across the angry sea to seek shelter on the eastern coast of the island, and perhaps get into Valetta harbour? A pilot might perhaps attempt the dangerous manœuvre; but in this dense atmosphere, in this night of rain and fog, what fisherman would venture out even to a vessel in distress? There was perhaps a chance that one might come, and so the steam whistle was set going, and three cannon shots were fired one after the other as a signal.

Suddenly from the landward side a black point appeared in the fog. A boat was bearing down on the *Ferrato* under close-reefed sail. Probably it was some fisherman who had been obliged by the storm to take shelter in the little creek of Melleah, where his boat run in behind the rocks had found safety in that admirable grotto of Calypso which bears favourable comparison with the grotto of Fingal in the Hebrides. He had evidently heard the whistle and the signal of distress, and at the risk of his life had come to the help of the half-disabled yacht. If the *Ferrato* was to be saved it could only be by him.

Slowly his boat came up. A rope was got ready to be thrown to him as soon as he came alongside. A few minutes elapsed which seemed interminable. The steamer was not above half a cable's length from the reefs. The rope was thrown, but a huge wave caught the boat on its crest, and dashed it against the side of the *Ferrato*. It was smashed to pieces, and the fisherman would have certainly perished had not Matifou snatched at him, lifted him at arm's-length, and laid him on the deck as if he had been a child.

Then without a word—would there have been time?—the man ran to the bridge, seized the wheel, and as the bows of the *Ferrato* fell off towards the rocks, he sent the wheel-spokes

spinning round, headed her straight for the narrow channel of the North Comino, took her down it with the wind dead aft, and in less than twenty minutes was off the east shore of Malta in a much calmer sea. Then with sheets hauled in he ran along about half a mile from the coast, and about four o'clock in the morning, when the first streaks of dawn began to tinge the horizon, he ran down the Valetta channel, and brought-up the steamer off Senglea Point.

Doctor Antekirtt then mounted the bridge, and said to the young sailor,—

"You saved us, my friend."

"I only did my duty."

"Are you a pilot?"

"No, I am only a fisherman."

"And your name?"

"Luigi Ferrato!"

CHAPTER VII.

MALTA.

AND so it was the son of the Rovigno fisherman who had just told his name to Dr. Antekirtt. By a providential chance it was Luigi Ferrato whose courage and ability had saved the yacht and her passengers and crew from certain destruction!

The doctor was going to seize Luigi and clasp him in his arms. He checked himself. It would have been Count Sandorf who would have thus shown his gratitude; and Count Sandorf was dead to everybody, even to the son of Andrea Ferrato.

But if Pierre Bathory was obliged to keep the same reserve, and for the same reasons, he was about to forget it when the doctor stopped him by a look. The two went into the saloon and Luigi was asked to follow.

"My friend," asked the doctor, "are you the son of an Istrian fisherman whose name was Andrea Ferrato?"

"Yes, sir."

"Have you not a sister?"

"Yes, and we live together at Valetta, but"—he added

with a certain amount of hesitation—"did you know my father?"

"Your father!" answered the doctor. "Your father fifteen years ago gave shelter to two fugitives in his house at Rovigno! Those fugitives were friends of mine whom his devotion was unable to save. But that devotion cost Andrea Ferrato his liberty and his life, for on account of it he was sent to Stein, where he died."

"Yes, died, but he did not regret what he had done," said Luigi.

The doctor took the young man's hand.

"Luigi," said he, "it was to me that my friends gave the task of paying the debt of gratitude they owed your father. For many years I have been seeking to find what had become of your sister and you, but all trace had been lost when you left Rovigno. Thank Heaven you were sent to our assistance! The ship you saved I named the *Ferrato* in remembrance of your father Andrea! Come to my arms, my child!"

While the doctor clasped him to his breast Luigi felt the tears start into his eyes. At this affecting scene Pierre could not remain unmoved. He felt his whole soul go forth towards this young man of his own age, the brave son of the fisherman of Rovigno.

"And I! I!" exclaimed he with outstretched arms.

"You, sir?"

"I! The son of Stephen Bathory!"

Did the doctor regret the avowal? No! Luigi Ferrato could keep the secret as well as Pescade and Matifou.

Luigi was then informed how matters stood, and learnt Dr. Antekirtt's objects. One thing he was not told; and that was that he was in the presence of Count Mathias Sandorf.

The doctor wished to be taken at once to Maria Ferrato. He was impatient to see her again, impatient above all to hear how she had lived a life of work and misery since Andrea's death had left her alone with her brother to look after.

"Yes, doctor," answered Luigi, "let us go ashore at once! Maria will be very anxious about me! It is forty-eight hours since I left her to [illegible] creek, and during last nig[illegible] have got drowned!"

You are fond of

"She is my mother and my sister combined!" answered Luigi.

Does the Isle of Malta, situated about sixty-two miles from Sicily, belong to Europe or to Africa from which it is separated by one hundred and sixty miles? This is a question which has much exercised geographers; but in any case, having been given by Charles V. to the Hospitallers whom Solyman drove out of Rhodes, and who then took the name of Knights of Malta, it now belongs to England—and it would take some trouble to get it away from her. It is about eighteen miles long and ten across. It has Valetta and its suburbs for its capital, besides other towns and villages, such as Citta Vecchia—a sort of sacred town which was the seat of the bishop at the time of the Knights—Dingzi, Zebbug, Birchircara, &c. Rather fertile in its eastern half, and very barren in its western half, the density of its population towards the east is in striking contrast to that towards the west. In all it contains about a hundred thousand inhabitants. What Nature has done for this island in cutting out of its coast its four or five harbours, the most beautiful in the world, surpasses all that can be imagined. Everywhere water; everywhere points, capes and heights ready to receive fortifications and batteries. The Knights had already made it a difficult place to take, and the English have made it impregnable. No ironclad could hope to force her way in against such an array of guns, which among others includes two at the water's edge, each of a hundred tons, fully equipped with hydraulic apparatus, and capable of sending a shot weighing seventeen and a half hundredweight to a distance of nine and a half miles! A piece of information that may be profitably noted by the powers who regret to see in England's hands this admirable station commanding the Central Mediterranean and which could hold the whole British fleet.

Assuredly there are English at Malta. There is a Governor lodged in the ancient palace of the Grand Master, there is an admiral to look after the fleet and the harbours, and a garrison of from four to five thousand men; but there are Italians who wish to be considered at home, a floating cosmopolitan population as at Gibraltar, and there are, of course, Maltese.

The Maltese are Africans. In the harbours they work brightly-coloured boats, in the streets they drive

their vehicles down the wildest slopes, in the markets they deal in fruits, vegetables, meats, fish, making a deafening uproar under the lamp of some small sacred daub. It is said that all the men are alike, copper in colour, with black slightly woolly hair, with piercing eyes, and robust and of medium height. It seems as though all the women were of the same family, with large eyes and long lashes, dark hair, charming hands, supple figures, and skin of a whiteness that the sun cannot touch beneath the "falzetta," a sort of black silk mantle worn in Tunisian fashion, common to all classes, and which answers at the same time for headdress, mantle, and even fan.

The Maltese have the mercantile instinct. Everywhere they are found doing a trade. Hardworking, thrifty, economic, industrious, sober, but violent, vindictive and jealous, it is among the lower classes that they are best worth studying. They speak a dialect of which the base is Arabic, the result of the conquest which followed the fall of the Roman Empire, a language animated and picturesque, lending itself easily to metaphor and to poetry. They are good sailors when you can keep them, and bold fishermen familiarized with danger by their frequent storms.

It was in this island that Luigi pursued his calling with as much audacity as if he had been a Maltese, and here he had lived for nearly fifteen years with his sister Maria.

Valetta and its suburbs, we said. There are really six towns on the Grand and Quarantine harbours—Floriana, Senglea, Bighi, Burmola, Vittoriosa, Sliema, are hardly suburbs, nor even mere assemblages of houses inhabited by the poorer classes; they are regular cities with sumptuous mansions, hotels and churches, worthy of a capital which boasts some twenty-five thousand inhabitants.

It was at Valetta that the brother and sister lived. It would perhaps be more correct to say "under Valetta," for it was in a kind of subterranean quarter known as the Manderaggio, the entrance to which is on the Strada San Marco, that they had found a lodging suitable for their slender means; and it was into this hypogeum that Luigi led the doctor as soon as the yacht wa

After declining the services of th
that surrounded them
tering by the Marine
and ringing of the be

atmosphere over the Maltese capital, they passed beneath the double casemated fort, and mounted first a steep slope and then a narrow staircase. Between the high houses with their greenish miradores and niches with lighted lamps they arrived before the cathedral of St. John, and mingled with a crowd of the noisiest people in the world.

When they had reached the back of this hill, a little lower than the cathedral, they began their descent towards the Quarantine harbour; there in the Strada San Marco they stopped midway before a staircase which went off to the right down into the depths.

The Manderaggio runs along under the ramparts with narrow streets where the sun never shines, and high yellow walls irregularly pierced with innumerable holes which do duty as windows, some of them grated and most of them free. Everywhere round about are flights of steps leading to veritable sewers; low gateways, humid, sordid, like the houses of a Kasbah; miserable courtyards, and gloomy tunnels, hardly worthy of the name of lanes. And at every opening, every breathing-place, on the ruined landings and crumbling footpaths, there gathers a repulsive crowd of old women with faces like sorceresses, mothers dirty and pallid and worn, daughters of all ages in rags and tatters, boys half-naked, sickly, wallowing in the filth, beggars with every variety of disease and deformity, men, porters, or fisher-folk, of savage look capable of everything evil—and among this human swarm a few phlegmatic policemen, accustomed to the hopeless throng, and not only familiarized but familiar with it! A true Court of Miracles, but transported into a strange underwork, the last ramifications of which open on to the curtain walls on the level of the Quarantine harbour, and are swept by the sun and the sea breeze.

It was in one of the houses in this Manderaggio, but in the upper portion of it, that Maria and Luigi Ferrato lived in two rooms.

The doctor was struck with the poverty of the miserable lodging and also with its neatness. The hand of the careful housekeeper again showed itself, as it had done in the house of the fisherman of Rovigno.

As the doctor entered Maria rose, saying to her brother, "[redacted] child! my Luigi!"

[redacted]raced his sister, and introduced his friends.

[redacted] related in a few words how Luigi had risked

his life to save a ship in distress, and at the same time he mentioned Pierre as the son of Stephen Bathory.

While he spoke, Maria looked at him with so much attention and even emotion that he feared for a moment she had recognized him. But it was only a flash that vanished from her eyes almost immediately. After fifteen years how was it possible for her to recognize a man who had only been in her father's house for a few hours?

Andrea Ferrato's daughter was then thirty-three years old. She had always been beautiful owing to the purity of her features and the bright look of her splendid eyes. The white streaks here and there in her raven hair showed that she had suffered less from the length than from the severity of her life. Age had nothing to do with this precocious greyness, which was due entirely to the fatigues and troubles and griefs she had been through since the death of the fisherman of Rovigno.

"Your future and that of Luigi now belongs to us," said Dr. Antekirtt as he finished his story. "Were not my friends deeply indebted to Andrea Ferrato? You will not object, Maria, to Luigi remaining with us?"

"Sirs!" said Maria, "my brother has only acted as he should have done in going to your help last night, and I thank Heaven that he was inspired with the thought to do so. He is the son of a man who never knew but one thing, and that was his duty."

"And we know only one," replied the doctor, "and that is to pay a debt of gratitude to the children of him—"

He stopped. Maria looked at him again, and the look seemed to pierce through him. He was afraid he had said too much.

"Maria," broke in Pierre, "you will not prevent Luigi from being my brother?"

"And you will not refuse to be my daughter?" added the doctor, holding out his hand.

And then Maria told the story of her life since she left Rovigno, how the espionage of the Austrian police rendered her existence insupportable, and how they had come to Malta for Luigi to perfect himself in his trade of a seaman by continuing that of a fisherman; and how for many years they had struggled against misery, their feeble resources being soon exhausted.

But Luigi soon equalled the Maltese in boldness and ability. A wonderful swimmer like them he could almost be

compared to that famous Nicolo Pescei, a native of Valetta, who carried despatches from Naples to Palermo by swimming across the Æolian Sea. He was an adept at hunting the curlews and wild pigeons, whose nests have to be sought for among the almost inaccessible caves that border on the sea. He was the boldest of fishermen, and never had the wind kept him ashore when it had been necessary for him to go out to his nets and lines. And it was owing to this that he had been in Melleah creek when he heard the signals of the yacht in distress.

But at Malta the sea-birds, the fish, the mollusks are so abundant that the moderation of their price makes fishing anything but a lucrative trade. Do all he could, Luigi could hardly manage to supply the wants of the humble home, although Maria contributed something towards it by what she earnt from her needlework. And so they had been obliged to reduce their expenses and take this lodging in the Manderaggio. While Maria was telling her story, Luigi went into the other room and came back with a letter in his hand. It was the one Andrea Ferrato had written just before he died :—

"Maria," he said, "take care of your brother! He will soon have only you in the world! For what I have done, my children, I have no regret, unless it is for not having succeeded in saving those who trusted in me even at the sacrifice of my liberty and my life. What I did I would do again! Never forget your father, who is dying as he sends you this—his last love.

"ANDREA FERRATO."

As he read this Pierre Bathory made no attempt to conceal his emotion, and Dr. Antekirtt turned away his head to avoid Maria's searching look.

"Luigi," said he abruptly, "your boat was smashed last night against my yacht—"

"She was an old one, doctor," answered Luigi, "and for any one but me the loss would not be much."

"Perhaps so, but you will allow me to give you another for her. I will give you the boat you saved."

"What?"

"Will you be the mate of the *Ferrato?* I want a man who is young, active, and a good sailor."

"Accept, Luigi," said Pierre, "accept!"

"But my sister?"

"Your sister shall become one of the family that lives on my island of Antekirtta!" replied the doctor. "Your lives henceforth belong to me, and I will do all I can to make you happy, and that the only regret for your past life shall be that of having lost your father."

Luigi seized the doctor's hands; he clasped them, he kissed them, while Maria could find no other way of showing her gratitude than by bursting into tears.

"To-morrow I expect you on board!" said the doctor.

And as if he could no longer master his emotion he hurriedly left, after beckoning Pierre to follow him.

"Ah!" he said, "it is good—it is good to make amends—"

"Yes, better than to punish!" answered Pierre.

"But it is necessary to punish!"

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SPY IN THE MANDERAGGIO

THE next morning the doctor was waiting ready to receive Maria and Luigi Ferrato. Already Captain Kostrik had taken steps to have the engine repaired. Thanks to the efforts of Messrs. Samuel Grech and Co., shipping agents of the Strada Levante, to which the ship had been consigned, the work advanced rapidly. But they required five or six days, for they had to unship the air pump and the condenser, several tubes of which were working badly. The delay was very serious to Doctor Antekirtt, who was most anxious to get to the Sicilian coast. And he even thought of sending for the *Savarena*, but it seemed better to wait a few days longer and start for Sicily in a fast and well-armed ship.

However, as a matter of precaution, and in view of eventualities that might arise, he sent a message by submarine cable to Antekirtta, and ordered *Electric No. 2* to cruise off the coast of Sicily near Cape Passaro.

About nine o'clock in the morning a boat came on board with Maria Ferrato and her brother. Both were received by the doctor with marks of the liveliest affection. Luigi

was introduced to the captain and crew as the mate, the officer he replaced being transferred to *Electric No.* 2.

With regard to Luigi, there could be no mistake ; he was a thorough sailor. His courage and boldness were known from the way in which thirty-six hours before he had acted in the creek of Melleah. He was received with acclamation. Then his friend Pierre and Captain Kostrik did the honours of the ship, which he went round to examine in all her details ; while the doctor conversed with Maria and spoke of her brother in a way that deeply affected her.

"Yes!" she said, "he is all his father!"

To the doctor's proposal either for her to remain on board until the end of the projected expedition, or to return direct to Antekirtta, where he offered to take her, Maria asked to be allowed to go with him to Sicily; and it was agreed that she should profit by the stay of the *Ferrato* at Valetta to put her affairs in order, to sell certain things which were only valuable as remembrances, and realize the little she possessed, so as to take up her quarters the day before the yacht left.

The doctor had told her of his plans, and how he was going to persist until he had accomplished them. Part of his plan had been realized, for the children of Andrea Ferrato need now have no anxiety for the future. But to get hold of Toronthal and Sarcany on the one hand, and Carpena on the other, remained to be done, and it would be done. The two former he thought he should meet with in Sicily, the latter he had still to seek.

Thus he told Maria, and when he had finished she asked to speak with him in private.

"What I am going to tell you I have hitherto thought it my duty to keep hidden from my brother. He would not have been able to contain himself; and probably new misfortunes would have come upon us."

"Luigi is at this moment among the crew forward," answered the doctor. "Let us go into the saloon, and there you can speak without fear of being overheard."

When the door of the saloon was shut, they sat down on one of the benches, and Maria said,—

"Carpena is here, doctor!"

"In Malta?"

"Yes, and has been for some days."

"At Valetta?"

"In the Manderaggio, where we live."

The doctor was much surprised and pleased.

"You are not mistaken, Maria?"

"No, I am not mistaken! The man's face remains on my memory, and a hundred years might go by, but I should recognize him! He is here!"

"Luigi does not know this?"

"No, doctor; and you understand why I did not tell him. He would have found Carpena, he would have provoked him perhaps—"

"You have done well, Maria! The man belongs to me alone! But do you think he has recognized you?"

"I do not know," answered Maria. "Two or three times I have met him in the Manderaggio, and he has turned round to look after me with a certain suspicious attention. If he has followed me, if he has asked my name, he ought to know who I am."

"He has never spoken to you?"

"Never."

"And do you know why he has come to Valetta, and what he has been doing since his arrival?"

"All I can say is that he lives with the most hateful men in the Manderaggio. He hangs about the most suspicious drinking-houses, and associates with the worst of the scoundrels. Money seems to be plentiful with him, and I fancy that he is busy enlisting bandits like himself to take part in some villainous scheme—"

"Here?"

"I do not know."

"I will know!"

At this moment Pierre entered the saloon followed by the young fisherman, and the interview was at an end.

"Well, Luigi," asked the doctor, "are you contented with what you have seen?"

"The *Ferrato* is a splendid ship."

"I am glad you like her," answered the doctor, "for you will act as her mate until circumstances take place to make you her captain."

"Oh, sir—!"

"My dear Luigi," said Pierre, "with Dr. Antekirtt do not forget that all things will come."

"Yes, all things come, Pierre, but say rather with the help of God."

Maria and Luigi then took their leave to return to their small lodging. It was arranged that Luigi should com-

mence his duties as soon as his sister had come on board. It would not do for Maria to remain alone in the Manderaggio, for it was possible that Carpena had recognized the daughter of Andrea Ferrato.

When the brother and sister had gone, the doctor sent for Point Pescade, to whom he wished to speak in Pierre's presence.

Pescade immediately came in, and stood in the attitude of a man ever ready to receive an order and ever ready to execute it.

"Point Pescade," said the doctor, "I have need of you."

"Of me and Cape Matifou?"

"Of you alone at present."

"What am I to do?"

"Go ashore at once to the Manderaggio, and get a lodging in the dirtiest public-house you can find."

"Yes, sir."

"And then keep your eyes on a man that it is very important we should not lose sight of. But nobody must suspect you know him! If necessary you can disguise yourself."

"That is my business."

"This man I am told is trying to buy over some of the chief scoundrels in the Manderaggio. What his object is I do not know, and that is what I want you to find out as soon as possible."

"I understand."

"When you have found out, do not return on board, as you may be followed. Put a letter in the post, and meet me in the evening at the other end of Senglea. You will find me there."

"Agreed," answered Point Pescade; "but how am I to know the man?"

"Oh, that will not be very difficult! You are intelligent, my friend, and I trust to your intelligence."

"May I know the gentleman's name?"

"His name is Carpena."

As he heard the name Pierre exclaimed,—

"What! the Spaniard here?"

"Yes," replied the doctor; "and he is living in the very street where we found the children of Andrea Ferrato whom he sent to prison and to death."

The doctor told them all that he had heard from Mar
Point Pescade saw how urgent it was for them to cle

understand the Spaniard's game, for he was evidently at work at some dark scheme in the slums of Valetta.

An hour afterwards Point Pescade left the yacht. To throw any spy off the track in case he was followed, he began by a stroll along the Strada Reale, which runs from Fort Saint Elmo to Floriana; and it was only when evening closed in that he reached the Manderaggio.

To get together a band of ruffians ready for either murder or robbery no better place could be chosen than this sink of corruption. Here were scoundrels of every nation from the rising to the setting of the sun, runaways from merchant-ships, deserters from war-ships, and Maltese of the lowest class, cut-throats in whose veins ran the blood of their pirate ancestors who made themselves so terrible in the razzias of the past.

Carpena was endeavouring to enlist a dozen of these determined villains—who would stick at nothing—and was quite embarrassed in his choice. Since his arrival he had hardly been outside the taverns in the lower streets of the Manderaggio, and Pescade had no difficulty in recognizing him, though he could not easily find out on whose behalf he was acting.

Evidently his money was not his own. The reward of five thousand florins for his share in the Rovigno matter must have been exhausted long ago. Carpena, driven from Istria by public reprobation, and warned off from all the salt-works along the coast, had set out to see the world. His money soon disappeared, and rascal as he was before, he had become still more of a rascal.

No one would be astonished to find him in the service of a notorious band of malefactors for whom he recruited to fill the vacancies that the halter had caused. It was in this way that he was employed at Malta, and more particularly in the Manderaggio. The place to which he took his recruits Carpena was too mistrustful of his companions to reveal. And they never asked him. Provided he paid cash down, provided he guaranteed them a future of successful robbery, they would have gone to the world's end—in confidence.

It should be noted that Carpena had been considerably surprised at meeting Maria in the Manderaggio. After an interval of fifteen years he had recognized her at once, as she had recognized him. And he was very anxious to keep her from knowing what he was doing in Valetta.

Point Pescade had therefore to act warily if he wished to discover what the doctor had such interest in learning, and the Spaniard so jealously guarded. However, Carpena was completely circumvented by him. The precocious young bandit who became so intimate with him, who took the lead of all the rascality in the Manderaggio, and boasted to have already such a history that every page of it would bring him the rope in Malta, the guillotine in Italy, and the garotte in Spain, who looked with the deepest contempt at the poltroons whom the very sight of a policeman rendered uneasy, was just the man whom Carpena, a judge in such matters, could fully appreciate!

In this adroit way Point Pescade succeeded in gaining what he wanted, and on the 26th of August the doctor received a word making an appointment for that evening at the end of Senglea.

During the last few days the work had been pushed ahead on board the *Ferrato*. In three days or more the repairs would be finished, and she would be coaled up and ready for sea.

That evening the doctor went to the place named by Pescade. It was a sort of arcade near a circular road at the end of the suburb.

It was eight o'clock. There were about fifty people gathered about in the market, which was still in progress.

Dr. Antekirtt was walking up and down among these people—nearly all of them men and women of Maltese birth—when he felt a hand touch his arm.

A frightful scamp, very shabbily dressed, and wearing a battered old hat, presented him with a handkerchief, saying,—

"See here what I have just stolen from your Excellency! Another time you had better look after your pockets."

It was Point Pescade, absolutely unrecognizable under his disguise.

"You funny rascal!" said the doctor.

"Funny, yes! Rascal, no!" said Pescade as the doctor recognized him; and immediately came to the point with,—

"Carpena?"

"He is at work collecting a dozen of the biggest ruffians in the Manderaggio.

"What for?"

"On behalf of a certain Zirone!"

The Sicilian Zirone, the companion of Sarcany? What connection was there between those scoundrels and Carpena?

As he thought thus the following explanation presented itself to him, and it was the correct one:—

The Spaniard's treachery, which had brought about the arrest of the fugitives from Pisino, had not been unknown to Sarcany, who had doubtless sought him out, and finding him in want had easily gained him over to be an agent of Zirone's band. Carpena would therefore be the first link in the chain which the doctor could now follow up.

"Do you know what his object is?" he asked of Pescade.

"The gang is in Sicily."

"In Sicily? Yes! That is it! And particularly—?"

"In the eastern provinces between Syracuse and Catania!"

The trail was evidently recovered.

"How did you obtain that information?"

"From Carpena himself, who has taken me into his friendship, and whom I recommend to your Excellency!"

A nod was the doctor's reply.

"You can now return on board and resume a more fashionable costume!"

"No, this is the best for me."

"And why?"

"Because I have the honour to be a bandit in the gang of the aforesaid Zirone!"

"My friend," answered the doctor, "be careful! At that game you are risking your life—"

"In your service, doctor," said Pescade, "and it is my duty to do so."

"You are a brave lad."

"Besides, I am rather a knowing one, I fancy, without boasting too much, and I have made up my mind to trap these beggars!"

The doctor saw that in this way the help of Point Pescade might prove very useful. It was in playing this game that the intelligent fellow had gained Carpena's confidence and wormed out his secrets. He had better leave him to go on.

After five minutes the doctor and Point Pescade, not wishing to be surprised together, left each other. Point Pescade, following the wharves of Senglea, took a boat at the end and returned to the Manderaggio.

Before he arrived Doctor Antekirtt was already on board the yacht. There he told Pierre of what had taken place. At the same time he thought it his duty to tell Cape Matifou that his friend had started on a very dangerous enterprise for the common good.

Hercules lifted his head and three times opened and shut his huge hands. Then he was heard to repeat to himself,—

"If he has lost a hair of his head when he comes back—yes! a hair of his head—I'll—"

To finish the phrase was too much for Cape Matifou. He had not the gift of making long sentences.

CHAPTER IX.

THE ENVIRONS OF CATANIA.

THE coast of Sicily between Aci Reale and Catania abounds in capes, and reefs, and caves, and cliffs, and mountains. It faces the Tyrrhenian Sea just where the Straits of Messina begin, and is immediately opposite the hills of Calabria. Such as the Straits with the hills round Etna were in the days of Homer so they are to-day—superb! If the forest in which Æneas received Achemenides has disappeared, the grotto of Galatea, the cave of Polyphemus, the isles of the Cyclops, and a little to the north Scylla and Charybdis are still in their historic places, and we can set foot on the very spot where the Trojan hero landed when he came to found his new kingdom.

That the giant Polyphemus is credited with exploits to which our Herculean Cape Matifou could not pretend it may perhaps be as well to remember. But Cape Matifou had the advantage of being alive, while Polyphemus has been dead some three thousand years—if he ever existed, notwithstanding the story of Ulysses. Reclus has remarked that it is not unlikely that the celebrated Cyclops was simply Etna, "the crater of which during eruption glares like an immense eye at the summit of the mountain, and sends down from the top of the cliffs the rocky fringes which become islets and reefs like the Faraglioni."

These Faraglioni, situated a few hundred yards from the shore by the road to Catania, now doubled by the railway from Syracuse to Messina, are the ancient islands of the Cyclops. The cave of Polyphemus is not far off, and along the whole coast there is heard that peculiar roar which the sea always makes when it beats against basaltic rocks.

Half-way along these rocks on the evening of the 29th of August two men were to be seen quite indifferent to the charms of historic associations, but conversing of certain matters that the Sicilian gendarmes would not have been sorry to hear.

One of these men was Zirone. The other, who had just come by the Catania road, was Carpena.

"You are late," exclaimed Zirone. "I really thought that Malta had vanished like Julia, her old neighbour, and that you were food for the tunnies and bonicous at the bottom of the Mediterranean."

It was obvious that although fifteen years had passed over the head of Sarcany's companion, neither his loquacity nor his natural effrontery had left him. With his hat over his ear, a brownish cape over his shoulders, leggings laced up to the knee, he looked what he was, and what he had never ceased to be—a bandit.

"I could not come any sooner," answered Carpena, "and it was only this morning I landed at Catania."

"You and your men?"

"Yes."

"How many have you?"

"Twelve."

"Is that all?"

"Yes, but good ones!"

"Manderaggio fellows?"

"A few, and chiefly Maltese."

"Good recruits, but not enough of them; the last few months times have been rough and costly! The gendarmes have begun to swarm in Sicily, and they will soon get as thick as—well, if your goods are good—"

"I think so, Zirone, and you will see when you try them. Besides, I have brought with me a jolly fellow, an old acrobat from the shows, active and artful, of whom you can make a girl if you like, and who will be of great use, I fancy."

"What was he doing at Malta?"

"Watches when he had an opportunity, handkerchiefs when he could not get watches—"

"And his name?"

"Pescador."

"Good!" said Zirone. "We will see how to use his talents and his intelligence. Where have you put your men?"

"At the inn at Santa Grotta above Nicolosi."

"And you are going to begin again there as landlord?"

"To-morrow."

"No, to-night," answered Zirone, "when I have received my new orders. I am waiting here for the train from Messina. I am going to get a message from its last carriage."

"A message from—him?"

"Yes—from him—with his marriage that never comes off he obliges me to work for my living! Bah! What would not a fellow do for such a friend?"

At this moment a distant roar that could not be mistaken for the roar of the surf was heard along the Catanian shore. It was the train Zirone was waiting for. Carpena and he then climbed up the rocks, and in a few moments they were alongside the line.

Two whistles, as the train entered a short tunnel, told them it was near. Its speed was not very great. Soon the puffing of the engine became louder, the lamps showed their two white lights in the darkness, the rails in front were rendered visible by the long projecting glare.

Zirone attentively watched the train as it rolled past some three yards away from him.

A moment before the last carriage reached him, a window was put down and a woman put her head out of the window. As soon as she saw the Sicilian at his post she threw him an orange, which rolled on the ground about a dozen yards from Zirone.

The woman was Namir, Sarcany's spy. A few seconds afterwards she had disappeared with the train in the direction of Aci Reale.

Zirone picked up the orange, or rather the two halves of orange-skin that were sewn together. The Spaniard and he then hurried behind a lofty rock, and then Zirone lit a small lantern, broke open the orange-skin, and drew out a letter which contained the following message:—

"I hope to join you at Nicolosi in five or six days. Be particularly careful of a Doctor Antekirtt!"

Evidently Sarcany had learnt at Ragusa that this mysterious personage, who had so much exercised public curiosity, had twice visited Madame Bathory's house. Hence a certain uneasiness on his part, although he had hitherto defied everybody and everything; and hence also his sending this message to Zirone, not through the post, but by Namir.

Zirone put the letter in his pocket, extinguished his lantern, and, addressing Carpena, said,—

"Have you ever heard of a Dr. Antekirtt?"

"No," answered the Spaniard, "but perhaps Pescador has. That little beggar knows everything."

"We will see about it then," said Zirone. "There is no danger in going out at night, is there?"

"Less than in going out during the day!"

"Yes—in the day there are the gendarmes who are so thoughtless! Come on! In three hours we must be inside your place at Santa Grotta!"

And, crossing the railway, they took to the footpaths well known to Zirone, and were soon lost to sight as they crossed the lower buttresses of Etna.

For eighteen years there had existed in Sicily, and principally at Palermo its capital, a formidable association of malefactors. Bound together by a sort of freemasonry, their adherents were to be counted in thousands. Theft and fraud by every possible means were the objects of the Society of Maffia, to which a number of shopkeepers and working people paid a sort of annual tithe to be allowed to carry on their trade without molestation.

At this time Sarcany and Zirone—this was before the Trieste conspiracy—were amongst the chiefs of the Maffia, and none were more zealous than they.

However, with the general progress, with a better administration of the towns if not of the country round them, the association became somewhat interfered with in its proceedings. The tithes and black-mail fell off; and most of the members separated and tried to get a more lucrative means of existence by brigandage. The government of Italy then underwent a change owing to the unification, and Sicily like the other provinces had to submit to the common lot, to accept other laws, and especially to receive the yoke of conscription. Rebels who would not conform

to the new laws, and fugitives who refused to serve in the army, then betook themselves to the "maffissi" and other unscrupulous ruffians, and formed themselves into gangs to scour the country.

Zirone was at the head of one of these gangs, and when the share of Count Sandorf's possessions which had fallen to Sarcany had been run through, he and his friend had returned to their old life and waited till another opportunity offered to acquire a fortune. The opportunity came—the marriage of Sarcany with Toronthal's daughter. We know how that had failed up to the present, and the reasons for the failure.

Sicily at the time in question was singularly favourable for the pursuit of brigandage. The ancient Trinacria in its circuit of 450 miles round the points of the triangle, Cape Faro on the north-east Cape Marsala on the west, and Cape Passaro on the south-east, includes the mountains of Pelores and Nebrodes, the independent volcanic group of Etna, the streams of Giarella, Cantara, and Platani, and torrents, valleys, plains, and towns communicating with each other with difficulty, villages perched on almost inaccessible rocks, convents isolated in the gorges or on the slopes, a number of refuges in which retreat was possible, and an infinity of creeks by which the sea offered innumerable means of flight. This slip of Sicilian ground is the world in-miniature; in it everything that is met with on the globe can be found—mountains, volcanoes, valleys, meadows, rivers, rivulets, lakes, torrents, towns, villages, hamlets, harbours, creeks, promontories, capes, reefs, breakers—all ready for the use of a population of nearly 3,000,000 of inhabitants scattered over a surface of 16,000 square miles.

Where could there be found a better region for the operations of banditti? And so although they tended to decrease, although the Sicilian brigand like his cousin of Calabria seemed to have had his day, although they are proscribed—at least in modern literature—although they have begun to find work more profitable than robbery, yet travellers do well to take every precaution when they venture into the country so dear to Cacus, and so blessed by Mercury.

However, in the last few years the Sicilian gendarmerie, always on the alert, had made many successful forays into the eastern provinces, and many bands had fallen into

ambuscades and been partly destroyed. One of these bands was Zirone's, which had thus been reduced to thirty men; and on account of this he had conceived the idea of infusing some foreign blood into his troop, and Maltese blood more particularly. He knew that in the Manderaggio, which he used to frequent, bandits out of work could be picked up in hundreds; and that was why Carpena had gone to Valetta, and if he had only brought back a dozen men, they were, at least, picked men.

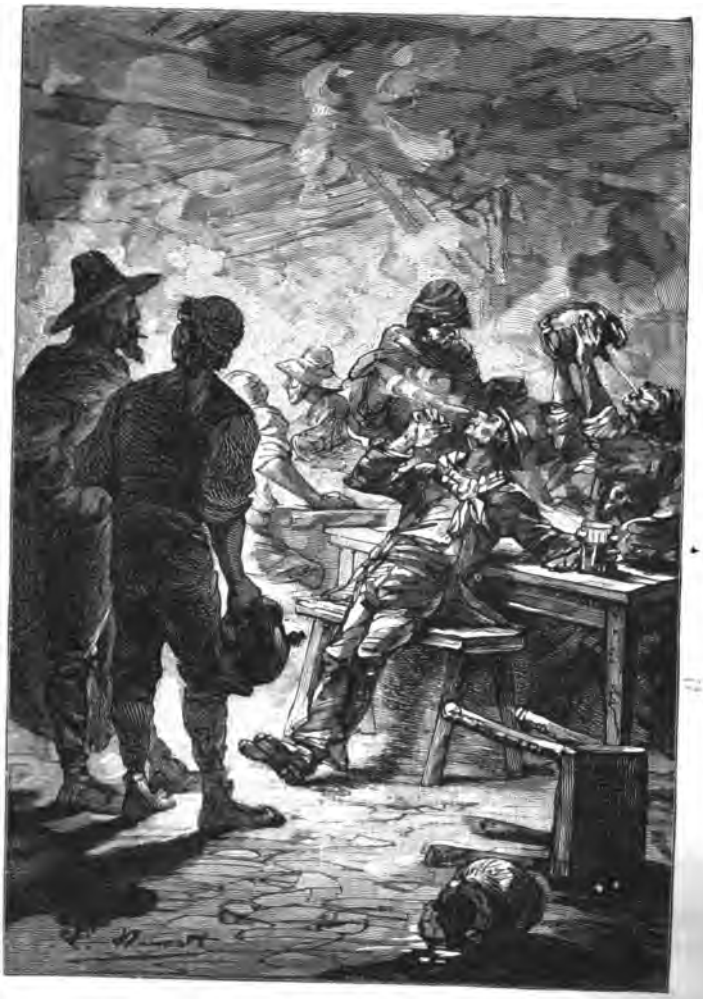
There was nothing surprising in the Spaniard showing himself so devoted to Zirone. The trade suited him; but as he was a coward by nature he put himself as little as possible within range of the rifles. It pleased him best to prepare matters, to draw up plans, to keep this tavern at Santa Grotta, situated in a frightful gorge on the lower slopes of the volcano.

Although Sarcany and Zirone knew all about Carpena's share in the matter of Andrea Ferrato, Carpena knew nothing of the Trieste affair. He thought he had become connected with honest brigands who had been carrying on their "trade" for many years in the mountains of Sicily.

Zirone and Carpena in the course of their walk of eight Italian miles from the rocks of Polyphemus to Nicolosi met with no mishap, in the sense that not a single gendarme was seen on the road. They went along the rough foot-paths among the vineyards and olive-trees, orange-trees, and cedars, and through the clumps of ash-trees, cork-trees, and fig-trees. Now and then they went up one of the dry torrent beds which seem from a distance to resemble macadamized roads in which the roller has left the pebbles unbroken. The Sicilian and the Spaniard passed through the villages of San Giovanni and Tramestieri at a considerable height above the level of the Mediterranean. About half-past ten they reached Nicolosi, situated as in the middle of an open plain flanking on the north and west the eruptive cones of Monpilieri, Monte Rossi, and Serra Pizzuta.

The town has six churches, a convent dedicated to San Nicolo d'Arena, and two taverns—a significant token of its importance. But with these taverns Carpena and Zirone had nothing to do. Santa Grotta was an hour farther on in one of the deepest gorges of the volcanic range, and they arrived there before midnight.

The men were not asleep at Santa Grotta. They were



The men were not asleep at Santa Grotta.

at supper with an accompaniment of shouts and curses. Carpena's recruits were there, and the honours were being done by an old fellow named Benito. The rest of the gang, some forty in number, were then about twenty miles off to the westward on the other side of Etna. There were therefore at Santa Grotta only the dozen Maltese recruited by the Spaniard, and among these Pescador—otherwise Point Pescade—was playing quite a prominent part, at the same time as he heard, saw, and noted everything so as to forget nothing that might prove useful.

And one of the things he had made a mental note of was Benito's shout to his comrades just before Carpena and Zirone arrived.

"Be quiet, you Maltese, be quiet! They will hear you at Cassone, where the central commissary, the amiable quæstor of the province, has sent a detachment of carabineers!"

A playful threat, considering how far Cassone was from Santa Grotta. But the new-comers supposed that their vociferations might possibly reach the ears of the soldiers, and moderated them considerably as they drank off large flasks of the Etna wine that Benito himself poured out for them. In short they were more or less intoxicated when the door opened.

"Jolly fellows!" exclaimed Zirone as he entered. "Carpena has been lucky, and I see that Benito has done his work well."

"These gallant fellows were dying of thirst!" answered Benito.

"And that worst of deaths," said Zirone with a grin, "you thought to save them! Good! Now let them go to sleep! We will make their acquaintance to-morrow!"

"Why wait till to-morrow?" said one of the recruits.

"Because you are too drunk to understand and obey orders."

"Drunk! Drunk! After drinking a bottle or two of this washy wine when we are accustomed to gin and whiskey in the Manderaggio!"

"And who are you?" asked Zirone.

"That is little Pescador!" answered Carpena.

"And who are you?" asked Pescador.

"That is Zirone!" answered the Spaniard.

Zirone looked attentively at the young bandit whom Carpena had praised so much, and who introduced himself

in such a free and easy manner. Doubtless he thought he looked intelligent and daring, for he gave an approving nod. Then he spoke to Pescador,—

"You have been drinking like the others?"

"More than the others."

"And you have kept your senses?"

"Bah! It has not hurt me in the least."

"Then tell me this, for Carpena says you may give me some information that I want!"

"Gratis?"

"Catch!"

And Zirone threw him a half-piastre which Pescador instantly slipped into his waistcoat pocket as a professional juggler would a ball.

"He is obliging!" said Zirone.

"Very obliging!" replied Pescador. "And now what do you want?"

"You know Malta?"

"Malta, Italy, Istria, Dalmatia, and the Adriatic," answered Pescador.

"You have travelled?"

"Much, but always at my own expense."

"I'll see that you never travel otherwise, for when it is the Government that pays—"

"It costs too much!" interrupted Pescador.

"Exactly," replied Zirone, who was delighted to have found a new companion with whom he could talk.

"And now?" asked Pescador.

"And now, Pescador, in your numerous voyages did you ever hear of a certain Dr. Antekirtt?"

In spite of all his cleverness Point Pescade had never expected that; but he was sufficiently master of himself not to betray his surprise.

How Zirone, who was not at Ragusa during the stay of the *Savarena*, nor at Malta while the *Ferrato* was there, could have heard of the doctor was a puzzler. But with his decision of character he saw that his reply might be of use to him, and he did not hesitate to say at once,—

"Dr. Antekirtt! Oh! Perfectly! People talk of nothing else throughout the Mediterranean!"

"Have you seen him?"

"Never."

"But do you know who he is?"

"A poor fellow, a hundred times a millionaire,

never goes about without a million in each pocket, and he has at least half a dozen! An unfortunate who is reduced to practise medicine as an amusement, sometimes on a schooner, sometimes on a steam yacht, a man who has a cure for every one of the 22,000 maladies with which nature has gratified the human species."

The mountebank of former days was again in his glory, and the fluency of his patter astonished Zirone, and none the less Carpena, who muttered,—

"What a recruit!"

Pescador was silent, and lighted a cigarette from which the smoke seemed to come out of his eyes, his nose, and his ears as he pleased.

"You say that the doctor is rich?" asked Zirone.

"Rich enough to buy Sicily and turn it into an English garden," replied Pescador.

Then thinking the moment had come for him to inspire Zirone with the idea of the scheme he had resolved to put into execution, he continued,—

"And look here, Captain Zirone, if I have not seen Dr. Antekirtt, I have seen one of his yachts, for they say he has quite a fleet to sail about the sea in!"

"One of his yachts?"

"Yes, the *Ferrato*, which would suit me nicely to go for a sail in the Bay of Naples with a princess or two."

"Where did you see the yacht?"

"At Malta."

"And when?"

"The day before yesterday at Valetta as we were going on board with Sergeant Carpena. She was then at her moorings in the military port, but they said she was going out four and twenty hours after us."

"Where to?"

"To Sicily, to Catania!"

"To Catania?" asked Zirone.

The coincidence between the departure of Dr. Antekirtt and the warning he had received from Sarcany to beware of him could not but awake Zirone's suspicions.

Point Pescade saw that some secret thought was working in Zirone's brain, but what was it? Not being able to guess he resolved to press Zirone more directly, and when he had asked,—

"What does the doctor want in Sicily, and at Catania more especially?"

He replied,—

"Eh! By Saint Agatha, he is coming to visit the town! He is going to ascend Mount Etna! He is going to travel like the rich traveller that he is!"

"Pescador," said Zirone, with a certain amount of suspicion, "you seem to have known this man some time."

"Not so long as I would like to if I had an opportunity."

"What do you mean?"

"That if Dr. Antekirtt, as is probable, comes for a walk in our ground we might as well make his Excellency pay his footing."

"Indeed!" said Zirone.

"And if that only comes to a million or two it will be good business."

"You are right."

"And in that case Zirone and his friends would not have been fools."

"Good," said Zirone with a smile. "After that compliment you can go to sleep."

"That will suit me, for I know what I shall get dreaming about."

"What?"

"The millions of Dr. Antekirtt—dreams of gold!"

And then Pescador, having given his cigarette its last puff, went off to rejoin his companions in the barn of the inn, while Carpena retired to his room.

And then he set to work to piece together all that he had said and heard. From the time that Zirone to his great astonishment had spoken to him of Dr. Antekirtt, had he done the best for the interests that were entrusted to him? Let us see.

In coming to Sicily the doctor hoped to again meet with Sarcany, and perhaps Toronthal, in case he accompanied him, which was not improbable, considering that they had left Ragusa together. Failing Sarcany, he reckoned on capturing Zirone, and by bribe or threat making him reveal where Sarcany and Toronthal could be found. That was his plan, and this was how he intended executing it.

In his youth the doctor had several times visited Sicily, particularly the district round Etna. He knew the different roads by which the ascent is made; the most used being that which passes by a house built at the commencement of the central cone, and which is known as the "Casa degli Inglesi."

Zirone's gang, for which Carpena had been recruiting at Malta, was then at work on the Etna slopes, and it was certain that the arrival of a personage as famous as Dr. Antekirtt would produce the usual effect at Catania. If the doctor were to put it about that he was going to make the ascent of Etna, Zirone would be sure to hear of it—especially with the help of Point Pescade. The scheme had begun well, for Zirone himself had introduced the subject of the doctor to Pescade.

The trap which was to be laid for Zirone, and in which there was a good chance of his being caught, was the following:—

The night before the doctor was to make the ascent of the volcano a dozen well-armed men from the *Ferrato* were to make their way secretly to the Casa degli Inglesi. In the morning the doctor, accompanied by Luigi, Pierre, and a guide, would leave Catania and follow the usual road so as to reach the Casa degli Inglesi about eight in the evening, and then pass the night like all the tourists do who wish to see the sun rise over the mountains of Calabria.

Zirone, urged by Point Pescade, would doubtless endeavour to capture the doctor, thinking he had only to do with him and his two companions; but when he reached the Casa degli Inglesi he would be received by the sailors of the *Ferrato*, and resistance would be impossible.

Point Pescade, knowing this scheme, had happily profited by the circumstances that presented themselves to put this idea of capturing the doctor into Zirone's head. It meant a heavy ransom, and would also work in with the message he had received. If he was to be careful of this man, would it not be better for him to seize him even if he lost the ransom? And Zirone decided to do so and wait for further instructions from Sarcany. But to be certain of success, as he had not his whole gang with him, he resolved to make the attempt with Carpena's Maltese—much to the comfort of Pescade, as the dozen ruffians would be no match for the *Ferrato* men.

But Zirone trusted nothing to chance. As Pescador had told him that the steam yacht was to arrive in the morning he left Santa Grotta early, and walked down to Catania. Not being known he could go there without danger.

In a few hours the steam yacht arrived at her moorings, not near the quay which is always crowded with ships, but at a sort of entrance harbour between the north jetty

and a huge mass of blackish lava which the eruption of 1669 sent down into the sea.

Already at daybreak Cape Matifou and eleven men of the *Ferrato* crew under Luigi had been landed at Catania, and separately had started on the road to the Casa degli Inglesi. Zirone knew nothing of this landing, and as the *Ferrato* was moored a cable-length from the shore he could not even see what was passing on board.

About six o'clock in the evening the gig brought ashore two passengers. These were the doctor and Pierre Bathory. They went up the Via Stesicoro and the Strada Etnea towards the Villa Bellini, a public garden perhaps one of the most beautiful in Europe, with its masses of flowers, its varied slopes, its terraces shaded with large trees, its running streams, and the superb volcano plumed with mist rising in the background.

Zirone had followed the two passengers, doubting not that one of them was this famous Dr. Antekirtt. He even managed to get rather near them in the crowd that the music had attracted to the Villa Bellini, but he did not do this without being noticed by the doctor and Pierre. If this suspicious fellow were the Zirone they were looking for, here was a fine opportunity for enticing him still further into the snare that they had laid!

And so about eleven o'clock in the evening, when they were leaving the garden to return on board, the doctor replying to Pierre in a loud tone said,—

"Yes, it is understood! We start to-morrow, and will sleep at the Casa degli Inglesi."

Doubtless the spy had learnt what he wanted, for a moment afterwards he had disappeared.

CHAPTER X.

THE CASA DEGLI INGLESI.

NEXT day about one o'clock in the afternoon the doctor and Pierre Bathory completed their preparations to go ashore.

The gig received its passengers; but, before he left, the

doctor ordered Captain Kostrik to watch for the arrival of *Electric No. 2*, then hourly expected, and to send her out beyond the Faraglionis, otherwise known as the rocks of Polyphemus. If the plan succeeded, if Sarcany or even Zirone and Carpena were taken prisoners, the launch would be ready to convey them to Antekirtta, where he would have them in his power.

The gig put off. In a few minutes she reached the steps at the wharf. Doctor Antekirtt and Pierre had assumed the usual dress of tourists ascending the mountain who may have to endure a temperature of fourteen degrees below freezing, while at the sea-level it stands at fifty degrees above that point. A guide was in waiting with the horses which at Nicolosi were to be replaced by mules as more untiring and surer of foot.

The town of Catania is of little width compared to its length and was soon crossed. Nothing occurred to show that the doctor was watched and followed. Pierre and he, after taking the Belvidere road, began to ascend the earlier slopes of the mountain to which the Sicilians give the name of Mongibello, and of which the diameter is not less than twenty-five miles.

The road is uneven and winding. It turns aside frequently to avoid the lava streams and basaltic rocks solidified millions of years ago, the dry ravines filled in the spring time with impetuous torrents, and on its way it cuts through a well-wooded region of olive-trees, orange-trees, carob-trees, ash-trees, and long-branched vines. This is the first of the three zones which gird the volcano, the "mountain of the smithy," the Phœnician translation of the word Etna—"the spike of the earth and the pillar of the sky" for the geologists of an age when geological science did not exist.

After a couple of hours' climbing during a halt of some minutes, more needed by the horses than the riders, the doctor and Pierre beheld at their feet the town of Catania, the superb rival of Palermo. They could look down on the lines of its chief streets running parallel to the quays, the towers and domes of its hundred churches, the numerous and picturesque convents, and the houses in the pretentious style of the seventeenth century—all enclosed in the belt of green that encircles the city. In the foreground was the harbour, of which Etna itself formed the principal walls in the frightful eruption of 1669 which destroyed

fourteen towns and villages and claimed 18,000 victims, and poured out over the country more than a million cubic yards of lava.

Etna is quieter now, and it has well earned the right to rest. In fact there have been more than thirty eruptions since the Christian era. That Sicily has not been overwhelmed is a sufficient proof of the solidity of its foundation. It should be noted, however, that the volcano has not formed a permanent crater. It changes it as it pleases. The mountain falls in where one of the fire-vomiting abysses opens, and from the gap there spreads the lavic matter accumulated on the flanks. Hence the numerous small volcanoes—the Monte Rossi, a double mountain piled up in three months to a height of four hundred feet by the sands and scoriæ of 1669, Frumento, Simoni, Stornello, Crisinco, arranged like the turrets round a cathedral dome, to say nothing of the craters of 1809, 1811, 1819, 1838, 1852, 1865, 1875, whose funnels perforate the flanks of the central cone like the cells of a beehive.

After crossing the hamlet of Belvidere the guide took a short cut so as to reach the Tramestieri road near that from Nicolosi. The first cultivated zone extends almost from this town to two thousand one hundred and twenty feet above. It was nearly four o'clock in the afternoon when Nicolosi appeared, and the travellers had not met with a single adventure along the nine miles from Catania, and had seen neither boars nor wolves. They had still twelve and a half miles to go before they reached the Casa degli Inglesi.

"How long will your Excellency stop here?" asked the guide.

"No longer than necessary," answered the doctor; "let us get in to-night about nine o'clock."

"Forty minutes, then?"

"Forty minutes be it!"

And that was enough to procure a hasty meal in one of the two inns of the town, which—be it said to the honour of the three thousand inhabitants of Nicolosi, including the beggars who swarm in it—has rather a better culinary reputation than most Sicilian inns. A piece of kid, some fruit, raisins, oranges, and pomegranates, and San Placido wine from the environs of Catania—there are very few important towns in Italy in which an innkeeper would offer as much.

Before five o'clock the doctor, Pierre, and the guide, mounted on their mules, were climbing the second stage of the ascent—the forest zone. Not that the trees there are numerous, for the wood-cutters, as everywhere else, are at work destroying the ancient forests which will soon be no more than a mythologic remembrance. Here and there, however, in clumps and groups along the sides of the lava streams and on the edges of the abysses grow beeches and oaks, and almost black-leaved figs, and then, still higher, firs and pines and birches. Even the cinders mixed with a little mould give birth to large masses of ferns, fraxinellas, and mallows, rising from a carpet of moss.

About eight o'clock in the evening the doctor and Pierre had already reached the 3280 feet almost marking the limit of perpetual snow, which on the flanks of Etna is abundant enough to supply all Italy and Sicily. They were then in the region of black lavas, cinders, and scoriæ which stretches away beyond an immense crevasse, the vast elliptic amphitheatre of the Valle del Bove, forming cliffs of from 1000 to 3000 feet high, at whose base lie the strata of trachyte and basalt which the elements have not yet destroyed.

In front rose the cone of the volcano, on which, here and there, a few phanerogams formed hemispheres of verdure. This central hump, which is quite a mountain in itself—a Pelion on Ossa—rises till it reaches an altitude of 10,874 feet above the level of the sea.

Already the ground trembled under foot. Vibrations caused by the plutonic labouring ever present in the mountain ran beneath the patches of snow. The cloud of sulphurous vapours driven down by the wind from the mouth of the crater occasionally reached to the base of the cone, and a shower of scoriæ like incandescent coke fell on the whitish carpet, where it hissed as it suddenly cooled.

The temperature was then very low—many degrees below freezing—and respiration had become difficult owing to the rarefaction of the air. The travellers wrapped their cloaks more closely round them. A biting wind cut across the shoulder of the mountain, whirling along the snowflakes it had swept from the ground. From the height there could be seen the mouth where issued the faintly-flickering flame and many other secondary craters, narrow solfataras or gloomy depths, at the bottom of which could be heard the roaring of the subterranean fire—a continuous roaring

rising occasionally into a storm, as if it were due to an immense boiler from which the steam had forced up the valves. No eruption was anticipated, however, and all this internal rage was due to the rumblings of the higher crater and the eructations from the volcanic throats that opened out on to the cone.

It was then nine o'clock. The sky was resplendent with thousands of stars that the feeble density of the atmosphere at this altitude rendered still more sparkling. The moon's crescent was dipping in the west in the waters of the Æolian Sea. On a mountain that was not an active volcano the calm of the night would have been sublime.

"We ought to have arrived," said the doctor.

"There is the Casa degli Inglesi," answered the guide.

And he pointed to a short wall having two windows and a door which its position had protected from the snow, and which was about fifty paces away to the left, and nearly 1400 feet below the summit of the central zone. This was the house constructed in 1811 by the English officers then stationed in Sicily. It is built on a plateau at the base of the lava mass named Piano del Lago.

Works have now been commenced by the Italian Government and the municipality of Catania for transforming the Casa degli Inglesi into an observatory. It is sometimes called the Casa Etnea, and was kept up for some years by M. Gemellaro, the brother of the geologist of that name. A few months previous to the doctor's arrival it had been restored by the Alpine Club.

Not very far away there loomed in the darkness the Roman ruins which are known as the Tower of the Philosopher. From it legend states that Empedocles was precipitated into the crater; in fact it would require a singular dose of philosophy to spend eight hours of solitude in such a spot, and we can quite understand the act of the celebrated philosopher of Agrigentum.

However, Dr. Antekirtt, Pierre Bathory, and the guide came up to the Casa degli Inglesi, and as soon as they reached it they knocked at the door which was opened immediately. A moment afterwards they were among their men.

The Casa degli Inglesi consisted of only three rooms, with table, chairs, and cooking utensils; but that was enough for the climbers of Etna, after reaching a height of 9469 ft. Till then Luigi, fearing that the presence of his little

detachment might be suspected, had not lighted a fire, although the cold was extreme. But now there was no need to continue the precaution, for Zirone knew that the doctor was to spend the night at the Casa degli Inglesi. Some wood found in reserve in the shed was therefore piled on the hearth, and soon a crackling flame gave the needed warmth and light.

The doctor took Luigi apart, and asked him if anything had happened since he arrived.

"Nothing," answered Luigi. "But I am afraid that our presence here is not as secret as we wished."

"And why?"

"Because, after we left Nicolosi, if I am not mistaken, we were followed by a man who disappeared just before we reached the base of the cone."

"That is a pity, Luigi! That may prevent Zirone from having the honour to surprise me! Since sundown no one has been lurking round the Casa degli Inglesi?"

"No one, sir," answered Luigi, "I even took the precaution to search the ruins of the Philosopher's Tower; there is nobody there."

"See that a man is always on guard at the door! You can see a good way to-night, for it is so clear, and it is important that we should not be surprised."

The doctor's orders were executed, and when he had taken his place on a stool by the fire the men lay down on the bundles of straw around him. Cape Matifou, however, came up to the doctor. He looked at him without daring to speak. But it was easy to understand what made him anxious.

"You wish to know what has become of Point Pescade?" asked the doctor. "Patience! He will return soon, although he is now playing a game that might cost him his neck."

An hour elapsed, and nothing occurred to trouble the solitude round the central cone. Not a shadow appeared on the shining slope in front of the Piano del Lago. Both the doctor and Pierre experienced an impatience and even an anxiety that they could not restrain. If unfortunately Zirone had been warned of the presence of the little detachment he would never dare to attack the Casa degli Inglesi. The scheme had failed. And yet, somehow, it was necessary to get hold of this accomplice of Sarcany, failing Sarcany himself.

A little before ten o'clock the report of a gun was heard about half a mile below the Casa degli Inglesi.

They all went out and looked about, but saw nothing suspicious.

"It was unmistakably a gun!" said Pierre.

"Perhaps some one out after an eagle or a boar!" answered Luigi.

"Come in," said the doctor, "and keep yourselves out of sight."

They went back into the house.

But ten minutes afterwards the sailor on guard without rushed in hurriedly.

"All hands!" he said. "I think I can see—"

"Many of them?" asked Pierre.

"No, only one!"

The doctor, Pierre, Luigi, Cape Matifou went to the door, taking care to keep out of the light.

They saw a man bounding along like a chamois and crossing the lines of old lava which ran alongside the plateau. He was alone, and in a few bounds he fell into the arms that were held open for him—the arms of Cape Matifou.

It was Point Pescade.

"Quick! Quick! Under cover, doctor!" he exclaimed.

In an instant all were inside the Casa degli Inglesi, and the door was immediately shut.

"And Zirone?" asked the doctor, "what has become of him? You have had to leave him?"

"Yes, to warn you!"

"Is he not coming?"

"In twenty minutes he will be here."

"So much the better."

"No! So much the worse! I do not know how he was told that you had first sent up a dozen men."

"Probably by the mountaineer that followed us!" said Luigi.

"Anyhow he knows it," answered Pescade, "and he saw that you were trying to get him in a trap."

"He will come then!" said Pierre.

"He is coming, Mr. Pierre! But to the dozen recruits he had from Malta there has been added the rest of the band, come in this very morning to Santa Grotta."

"And how many bandits are there?" asked the doctor.

"Fifty," replied Pescade.

The position of the doctor and his little band, consisting of the eleven sailors, Luigi, Pierre, Cape Matifou, and Point Pescade—sixteen against fifty—was rather alarming; and if anything was to be done, it should be done immediately.

But in the first place the doctor wished to know from Pescade what had happened, and this is what he was told:—

That morning Zirone had returned from Catania, where he had passed the night, and he it was whom the doctor had noticed prowling about the gardens of the Villa Bellini. When he returned to Santa Grotta he found a mountaineer who gave him the information that a dozen men coming from different directions had occupied the Casa degli Inglesi.

Zirone immediately understood how matters lay. It was no longer he who was trapping the doctor, but the doctor who was trapping him. Point Pescade, however, insisted that Zirone ought to attack the Casa degli Inglesi, assuring him that the Maltese would soon settle the doctor's little band. But Zirone remained none the less undecided what he should do, and the urgency of Point Pescade appeared so suspicious, that Zirone gave orders that he should be watched—which Pescade easily and immediately discovered. It is probable that Zirone would have given up his idea of carrying off the doctor had not his band been reinforced about three o'clock in the afternoon. Then with fifty men under his orders he no longer hesitated, and leaving Santa Grotta with all his followers he advanced on the Casa degli Inglesi.

Point Pescade saw that the doctor and his people were lost if he did not warn them in time, so as to let them escape, or at least put them on their guard. He waited until the gang were in sight of the Casa degli Inglesi, the position of which he did not know. The light shining in the windows rendered it visible about nine o'clock, when he was less than two miles off on the slopes of the cone. As soon as he saw it Point Pescade set off at a run. A gun was fired at him by Zirone—the one that was heard up at the Casa—but it missed him. With his acrobatic agility he was soon out of range. And that is how he had arrived at the house only about twenty minutes in advance of Zirone.

CHAPTER XI.

THE FIGHT ON MOUNT ETNA.

WHEN Point Pescade had told his story a clasp from the doctor's hand thanked him for what he had done. The next question was how to foil the brigands. To leave the Casa degli Inglesi and retreat in the middle of the night down the flanks of the volcano with Zirone and his people knowing every footpath and every refuge was to expose themselves to complete destruction. To wait for daylight to entrench themselves and defend themselves in the house would be a far more advantageous plan. When the day came, if they had to retreat, they could at least do so in broad daylight and would not go out like blind men down the precipices and solfataras. The decision was therefore to remain and fight. The preparations for the defence immediately commenced.

And first the two windows of the Casa degli Inglesi had to be closed and their shutters firmly fastened down. As embrasures there were the openings between where the rafters of the roof rested on the front wall. Each man was provided with a repeating rifle and twenty cartridges. The doctor, Pierre and Luigi could assist with their revolvers, but Cape Matifou had only his arms and Point Pescade had only his hands. Perhaps they were not the worst armed.

Nearly forty minutes passed and no attempt at attack was made. Zirone, knowing that Dr. Antekirtt had been warned by Point Pescade and could not be surprised, had possibly abandoned his idea? With fifty men under his command and all the advantages that a thorough knowledge of the ground could give him, he had certainly all the chances on his side.

Suddenly about eleven o'clock the sentry reported a number of men approaching in skirmishing order so as to attack the hut on three sides—the fourth side, backing on to the slope, afforded no possible retreat. The manœuvre having been discovered, the door was shut and barricaded, and the men took their posts near the rafters with orders not to fire unless they were sure of their object.

Zirone and his men advanced slowly and cautiously, taking advantage of the cover of the rocks to reach the

crest of the Piano del Lago. On the edge there were heaped up enormous masses of trachyte and basalt, intended probably to protect the Casa degli Inglesi from being destroyed by the snow during the winter. Having reached the plateau the assailants could more easily charge up to the house, break through the door or windows, and by means of their superior numbers carry off the doctor and his people.

Suddenly there was a report. A light smoke drifted in between the rafters. A man fell mortally wounded. The bandits at once rushed back and disappeared behind the rocks. Profiting by the unevenness of the ground, Zirone gradually brought his men to the foot of the Piano del Lago; but he did not do so until a dozen shots had been fired from the eaves of the Casa degli Inglesi—and two more of his associates were stretched dead on the snow.

Zirone then gave the word to storm, and at the cost of several wounded the whole band rushed on the Casa degli Inglesi. The door was riddled with bullets, and two sailors were slightly hurt, and had to stand aside while the struggle grew brisker. With their pikes and hatchets the assailants attempted to break through the door and one of the windows, and a sortie had to be undertaken to repel them under an incessant fusilade from all sides. Luigi had his hand pierced by a bullet, and Pierre, without the assistance of Cape Matifou, would have been killed by a pike-thrust, had not Hercules seized the pike and settled its possessor at one blow.

During this sortie Cape Matifou was quite a terror. Twenty times was he shot at, and not a bullet reached him. If Zirone won, Point Pescade was a dead man, and the thought of this redoubled his rage. Against such resistance the assailants had again to retreat; and the doctor and his friends returned into the Casa and reviewed their position.

"What ammunition have you left?" asked he.

"Ten or a dozen cartridges per man," said Luigi.

"And what o'clock is it?"

"Hardly midnight."

Four hours still to daybreak! The men must be more careful with the ammunition, for some of it would be wanted to protect the retreat at the earliest streak of dawn.

But how could they defend the approaches, or prevent the capture of the Casa degli Inglesi, if Zirone and his band again tried an assault? And that is what he did in a quarter of an hour's time, after taking all the wounded to the rear under shelter of a line of lava that did duty for an entrenchment, when the bandits enraged at the resistance, and drunk with fury at the sight of five or six of their injured comrades, mounted the ridge and appeared on the edge of the plateau.

Not a shot was fired as they crossed the open, and hence Zirone concluded that the besieged were running short of ammunition. The idea of carrying off a millionaire was just the thing to excite the cupidity of the scoundrels that followed him. Such was their fury during this attack that they forced the door and the window, and would have taken the house by assault, had not a volley point blank killed five or six of them. They had therefore to return to the foot of the plateau, not without wounding two of the sailors, who could take no further part in the fray.

Four or five rounds were all that remained to the defenders of the Casa degli Inglesi. Under these circumstances retreat even during daylight had almost become impossible. They felt that they were lost if help did not come. But where could help come from? Unfortunately they could not expect that Zirone and his companions would give up their enterprise while they were still nearly forty in number, unhurt, and well armed.

They knew that the besieged would soon be unable to reply to their fire, and they returned to the charge. Suddenly enormous blocks like the rocks of an avalanche came rolling down the slope, and crushed three between them before they had time to step aside.

Cape Matifou had started the rocks in order to hurl them over the crest of the Piano del Lago. But this means of defence was not enough. The heap of rocks would soon be used up, and the besieged would have to surrender or seek help from outside.

And now an idea occurred to Point Pescade which he did not care to mention to the doctor for fear that he would not give his consent. But he went and whispered it to Cape Matifou.

He knew from what he had heard at Santa Grotta that a detachment of gendarmes was at Cassone. To reach Cassone would only take an hour, and it would take another

hour to get back. Could he not fetch this detachment? Yes, but only by passing through the besiegers, and making off to the westward.

"It is necessary for me to go through, and I will go through!" he said. "I am an acrobat, or I am not."

And he told Cape Matifou what he proposed to do.

"But," said Matifou, "you risk—"

"I will go!"

Cape Matifou never dared to resist Point Pescade.

Both then went to the right of the Casa degli Inglesi, where the snow had accumulated to a considerable depth.

Ten minutes afterwards, while the struggle continued along the front, Cape Matifou appeared pushing before him a huge snowball, and among the rocks that the sailors continued to hurl on to their assailants he started this ball, which rolled down the slope past Zirone's men, and stopped fifty yards in the rear at the bottom of a gentle hollow. It half broke with the shock; it opened, and from it emerged a living man, active, and "a little malicious," as he said of himself.

It was Point Pescade. Enclosed in the carapace of hardened snow he had dared being started on the slope of the mountain at the risk of being rolled into the depths of some abyss!

And now he was free, he made the best haste he could along the footpaths to Cassone.

It was then half-past twelve.

At this moment the doctor not seeing Pescade thought he was wounded. He called him.

"Gone!" said Cape Matifou.

"Gone?"

"Yes! To get some help!"

"And how?"

"In a snowball!"

And Cape Matifou told him what Pescade had done.

"Ah! Brave fellow!" exclaimed the doctor. "Courage, my friends! The scoundrels will not have us after all."

And the masses of rock continued to roll down on the assailants, although the means of defence were rapidly disappearing.

About three o'clock in the morning the doctor, Pierre, Luigi, Cape Matifou and the sailors, carrying their wounded, would have to evacuate the house and allow it to

fall into the possession of Zirone, twenty of whose companions had been killed. The retreat would have to be up the central cone—that heap of lava, scoriæ, and cinders whose summit, the crater, was an abyss of fire—and all were to ascend it and carry their wounded with them. Of the 1000 feet they would have to climb, over 700 feet would be through the sulphurous fumes that the winds beat down from the top.

The day began to break, and already the crests of the Calabrian mountains above the eastern coast of the Straits of Messina were tipped with the coming light. But in the position in which the doctor and his men found themselves the day had no chance of being welcomed. They would have to fight as they retreated up the slope, using their last cartridges and hurling down the last masses of rock that Matifou sent flying along with such superhuman strength. They had almost given themselves up for lost when the sound of guns was heard below them. A moment of indecision was observed among the bandits. They hesitated; and then they broke into full flight down the mountain side. They had sighted the gendarmes who had arrived from Cassone, Point Pescade at their head.

He had not had to go as far as the village. The gendarmes had heard the firing and were already on the road. All he had to do was to lead them to the Casa degli Inglesi.

Then the doctor and his men took the offensive. Cape Matifou, as if he were an avalanche himself, bounded on the nearest and knocked down two before they had time to get away; and then he rushed at Zirone.

"Bravo, old Cape! Bravo!" shouted Pescade, running up. "Down with him! Lay him flat! The contest, gentlemen, the desperate contest between Zirone and Cape Matifou!"

Zirone heard him, and with the hand that remained free he fired his revolver at Pescade—who fell to the ground.

And then there was a terrible scene. Cape Matifou had seized Zirone and was dragging him along by the neck. The wretch, half strangled, could do nothing to help himself.

In vain the doctor, who wished to have him alive, shouted out for him to be spared. In vain Pierre and Luigi rushed up to stop him. Cape Matifou thought of one thing only; Zirone had mortally wounded Point Pescade! He heard

nothing, he saw nothing. He gave one last leap on to the edge of the gaping crater of a solfatara, and hurled the bandit into the abyss of fire!

Point Pescade, seriously wounded, was lifted on to the doctor's knee. He examined and bathed the wound, and when Cape Matifou returned to him, with great tears rolling down his cheeks,—

"Never fear, old Cape, never fear!" murmured Pescade. "It is nothing!"

Cape Matifou took him in his arms like a child, and followed by all went down the side of the cone, while the gendarmes gave chase to the last fugitives of Zirone's band.

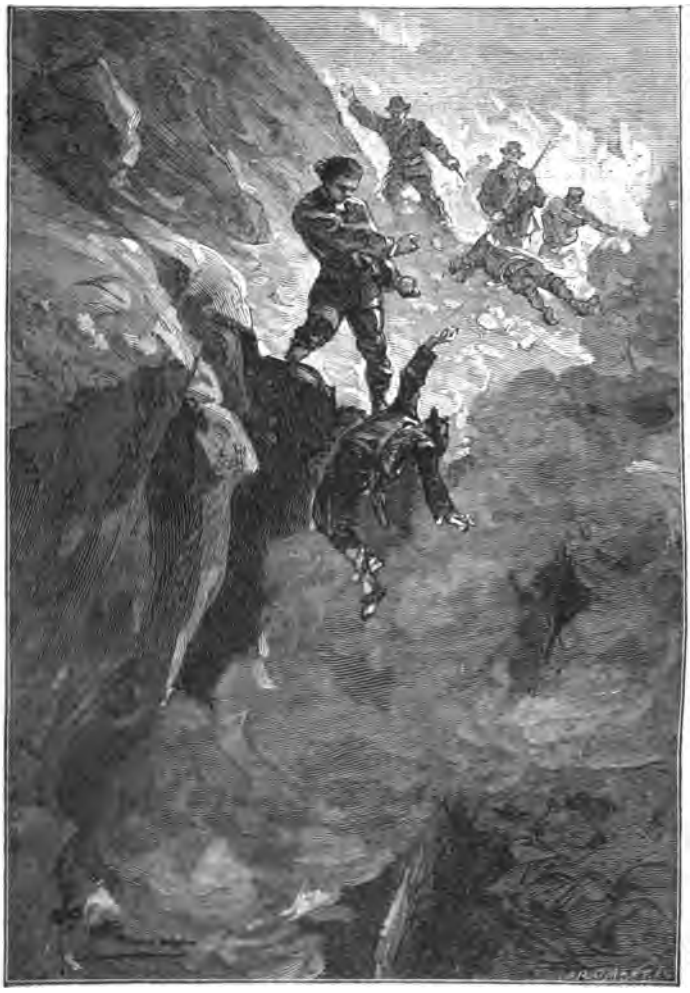
Six hours afterwards the doctor and his men had returned to Catania and were on board the *Ferrato*. Point Pescade was laid in the cabin. With Doctor Antekirtt for surgeon and Cape Matifou for nurse he was well looked after! His wound—a bullet in the shoulder—was not of a serious kind. His cure was only a question of time. When he wanted sleep Cape Matifou told him tales—always the same tales—and Point Pescade was soon in sound slumber!

However, the doctor's campaign had opened unsuccessfully. After nearly falling into Zirone's hands, he had not been able to get hold of Sarcany's companion and obtain the information from him that he wanted—and all owing to Cape Matifou! Although the doctor stayed at Catania for eight days, he could obtain no news of Sarcany. If Sarcany had intended to rejoin Zirone in Sicily, his plans had been changed probably when he heard the result of the attempt on Dr. Antekirtt.

The *Ferrato* put to sea on the 8th of September, bound for Antekirtta, and she arrived after a rapid passage.

There the doctor, Pierre and Luigi conferred as to their future plans. The first thing to do was obviously to get hold of Carpena, who ought to know what had become of Sarcany and Silas Toronthal.

Unfortunately for the Spaniard, although he escaped the destruction of Zirone's band, he remained at Santa Grotta, and his good fortune was of short duration. In fact ten days afterwards one of the doctor's agents informed him that Carpena had been arrested at Syracuse—not as an accomplice of Zirone, but for a crime committed more than fifteen years ago, a murder at Almayate in the



Hurled the bandit into the abyss of fire!

province of Malaga which had caused his flight to Rovigno.

Three weeks later Carpena, whose extradition was obtained, was convicted, and sent to the coast of Morocco, to Ceuta—one of the chief penal colonies of Spain.

"At last," said Pierre, "there is one of the scoundrels settled for life!"

"For life? No!" answered the doctor. "If Andrea Ferrato died in prison, it is not in prison that Carpena ought to die."

CHAPTER XII.

CEUTA.

ON the 21st of September, three weeks after the doctor left Catania, a swift steam yacht—the *Ferrato*—could have been seen running before a north-easterly breeze between the European cape the English hold on Spanish ground. and the African cape the Spaniards hold on Moorish ground. If we are to believe mythology, the twelve miles that separate these capes from each other were cleared away by Hercules—a predecessor of De Lesseps—who let in the Atlantic by knocking a hole with his club in the border of the Mediterranean.

Point Pescade would not have forgotten to tell this to his friend Cape Matifou as he showed him to the north the rock of Gibraltar, and to the south Mount Hacho. And Cape Matifou would have appreciated at its true value this wonderful feat, and not a shade of envy would have oveshadowed his simple, modest soul. The Provençal Hercules would have bowed low before the son of Jupiter and Alcmena.

But Cape Matifou was not among the yacht's passengers, and neither was Point Pescade. One taking care of the other, both had remained at Antekirtta. If, later on, their assistance became necessary, they could be summoned by telegram and brought from the island by one of the *Electrics*.

On the *Ferrato* were the doctor and Pierre Bathory, and in command were Kostrik and Luigi. The last expedition

to Sicily in search of Sarcany and Toronthal had resulted in nothing beyond the death of Zirone. They had therefore decided to resume the chase by obtaining from Carpena all the information he possessed as to Sarcany and his accomplice; and as the Spaniard had been sent to the galleys and shipped to Ceuta, they were on their way there to find him.

Ceuta is a small fortified town, a sort of Spanish Gibraltar, built on the eastern slopes of Mount Hacho; and it was in sight of its harbour that the yacht was now steaming some three miles from the coast. No more animated spot exists than this famous strait. It is the mouth of the Mediterranean. Through it come the thousands of vessels from Northern Europe and the two Americas bound for the hundreds of ports on the coast of the inland sea. Through it come the powerful mail-boats and ships of war, for which the genius of a Frenchman has opened a way to the Indian Ocean and the Southern Seas. Suez Canal

Nothing can be more picturesque than this narrow channel through the mountains. To the north are the sierras of Andalusia. To the south, along the strangely varied coast-line, from Cape Spartel to Almina, are the black summits of the Bullones, the Apes' Hill, and the Seven Brothers. To the right and left are picturesque towns crouching in the curves of the bays, straggling on the flanks of the lower hills, and stretching along the beaches at the base of the mountainous background—such as Tarifa, Algesiras, Tangier, and Ceuta. Between the two shores, cut by the prows of the rapid steamers that stop not for wind or wave, and the sailing vessels that the westerly winds keep back at times in hundreds, there stretches the expanse of ever-moving water, ever-changing, here grey and streaked with foam, there blue and calm, and broken into restless hills that mark the zigzagged current-line. No one can remain insensible to the sublime beauties that the two continents, Europe and Africa, bring face to face along the double panorama of the Straits of Gibraltar.

Swiftly does the *Ferrato* approach the African coast. The bay at the back of which Tangier is hidden begins to close, while the rock of Chuta becomes more visible as the shore beyond trends away to the south. Above, towards the top of Mount Hacho, there appears a fort, built on the site of a Roman citadel, in which the sentries keep con-

stant watch over the straits and the Moorish territory of which Ceuta is but a slip.

At ten o'clock the *Ferrato* dropped anchor in the harbour, or rather about two cable-lengths from the pier which receives the full strength of the sea; for there is nothing but an open roadstead exposed to the surf of the Mediterranean waves. Fortunately when vessels cannot anchor to the west of Ceuta they find a second anchorage on the other side of the rock, in which they lie sheltered from the easterly winds.

When the health officer had been on board and the clean bill duly passed, about one o'clock in the afternoon the doctor accompanied by Pierre went ashore, and landed at the little quay at the foot of the town walls.

That he was fully determined to carry off Carpena did not admit of a doubt. But how would he do so? Nothing could be done until he had seen the place, and made himself acquainted with the circumstances, and then he would be able to decide if it were best to carry off the Spaniard by force, or help him to escape.

This time the doctor did not attempt to remain incognito. Quite the contrary. Already his correspondents had been on board, and gone off again to announce the arrival of so famous an individual. Who throughout that Arab country from Suez to Cape Spartel had not heard of the reputation of the learned taleb who now lived in retirement at Antekirtta in the Syrtic Sea? And so the Spaniards like the Moors gave him a hearty welcome, and as there were no restrictions on visiting the *Ferrato*, very many boats came off to her.

All this excitement was evidently part of the doctor's plan. His celebrity was to be brought in to help his enterprise. Pierre and he did nothing to restrain the public enthusiasm. An open carriage obtained from the chief hotel enabled them to visit the town with its narrow streets of gloomy houses destitute of character and colour, and its little squares with sickly, dusty trees shading some miserable inn or one or two official buildings. In a word there was nothing original to be seen except perhaps in the Moorish quarter, where colour had not entirely disappeared.

About three o'clock the doctor requested to be taken to the Governor of Ceuta, whom he wished to visit—an act

of courtesy quite natural on the part of a stranger of distinction.

It need scarcely be said that the governor was not a civil functionary. Ceuta is above all things a military colony. It contains about 10,000 people, officers and soldiers, merchants, fishermen or coasting sailors housed in the town and along the strip of land whose prolongation towards the east completes the Spanish possession.

Ceuta was then administered by Colonel Guyarre. He had under his orders three battalions of infantry detached from the continental army to serve their time in Africa, one regiment permanently quartered in the colony, two batteries of artillery, a company of engineers, and a company of Moors whose families occupied special quarters. The convicts amounted to nearly 2000.

To reach the governor's house the carriage had to traverse a macadamized road outside the town which ran through the colony to its eastern end. On each side of the road a narrow band between the foot of the hills and the waste along the beach is well tilled, thanks to the assiduous labour of the inhabitants, who have a hard struggle against the poverty of the soil. Vegetables of all sorts and even trees are there to be found—and the labourers are many.

For the convicts are sentenced to various periods ranging from twenty years to detention for life, and are set to work in various ways under conditions determined by the Government. They are not only employed by the State in special workshops, on the fortifications, and the roads, which require constant repair, but fulfil the duties of urban police when their good conduct permits.

During his visit to Ceuta the doctor met several of these moving about freely in the streets of the town, and even engaged in domestic work, but he saw a much larger number outside the fortifications, employed on the roads and in the fields. To which class Carpena belonged it was important he should know, as his scheme would have to be modified to suit the man's being at work, guarded or unguarded, either for the State or a private individual.

"But," said he to Pierre, "as his conviction is so recent, it is unlikely that he would have obtained the advantages accorded to old stagers for good conduct."

"But if he is under lock and key?" asked Pierre.

"Then his capture will be more difficult, but it must be managed."

The carriage rolled slowly along. At a couple of hundred yards beyond the fortifications a number of convicts under a guard were working at macadamizing the road. They were about fifty, some breaking the stones, others scattering them, and some rolling them in. The carriage had to proceed slowly along the side where the repairs had not been commenced.

Suddenly the doctor touched Pierre's arm.

"There he is!" said he in a low voice.

A man was resting on the handle of his pickaxe, about twenty paces in front of his companions.

It was Carpena.

The doctor after fifteen years recognized the salt-marsh worker of Istria in his convict garb, as Maria Ferrato had recognized him in his Maltese dress in the lanes of the Manderaggio. He was even then only pretending to work. Unfit for any trade, he could not be employed in any of the workshops, and he was not really able to break stones on the road.

Although the doctor had recognized him, Carpena had not recognized Count Mathias Sandorf. He had only seen him for so short a time on the banks of the canal and in the house of Ferrato the fisherman when he brought in the police. But like everybody else he had heard that Dr. Antekirtt had arrived at Ceuta; and Dr. Antekirtt he remembered was the personage of whom Zirone had spoken during their interview near the grotto of Polyphemus on the coast of Sicily. He was the man whom Sarcany had warned them to beware of; he was the millionaire over whom Zirone's band had met their destruction at the Casa degli Inglesi.

What passed in Carpena's brain when he found himself so unexpectedly in the doctor's presence? Did he receive an impression with that instantaneousness which characterizes certain photographic processes? It would be difficult to say. But he did feel that the doctor had taken possession of him by a sort of moral ascendency, that his personality had been annihilated, that a strange will had taken the place of his own will. In vain he would have resisted; he had to yield to the domination.

The carriage stopped and the doctor continued to gaze into his eyes with penetrating fixity. The brilliancy of those eyes produced in Carpena's brain a strange and irresistible effect. Gradually the Spaniard's senses faded.

His eyelids closed, and blinked, and retained only a flickering vibration. Then the anæsthesia became complete, and he fell by the side of the road without his companions seeing anything of what had passed; and there he slept in a magnetic sleep from which not one of them could rouse him.

Then the doctor gave orders for the coachman to drive on to the governor's house. The scene had not occupied more than half a minute. No one had noticed what had passed between the Spaniard and the doctor—no one except Pierre Bathory.

"Now, that man is mine," said the doctor, "and I can do what I-like with him."

"Shall we find out all he knows?" asked Pierre.

"No, but he will do all that I require, and that unconsciously. At the first glance I gave at the scoundrel I saw I could become his master, and substitute my will for his."

"But the man was not ill."

"Eh! Do you think then that these effects of hypnosis can only be produced on neuropaths? No, Pierre, the most refractory are not safe from them. On the contrary it is necessary that the subject should have a will of his own, and I was favoured by circumstances in finding in Carpena a nature entirely disposed to submit to my influence. And so he will remain asleep until I choose to wake him."

"Exactly," said Pierre, "but what is the good of it, seeing that even in the state he now finds himself it is impossible to make him tell us what we are so anxious to know."

"Doubtless," answered the doctor, "and it is obvious that I cannot make him say what I do not know myself. But he is in my power. I can make him do what I please, and when I think fit I shall make him do it and he will be powerless to prevent it. For example, to-morrow, or the day after, or a week after, or six months after, even if he has awoke, if I desire him to leave Ceuta, he will leave Ceuta!"

"Leave Ceuta!" said Pierre. "Gain his liberty! But will the warders let him? The influence of the suggestion cannot make him break his chain, nor open the prison gate, nor scale an unscalable wall—"

"No Pierre," replied the doctor, "I cannot compel him

to do what I could not do myself, and it is for that reason that I am now on my way to visit the Governor of Ceuta."

The doctor was not exaggerating. The fact of the influence of suggestion in the hypnotic state is now admitted. The works and observations of Charcot, Brown-Séquard, Azam, Richet, Dumontpallier, Maudslay, Bernheim, Hack Tuke, Rieger, and many others leave no doubt on the subject. During his travels in the East the doctor had studied some of the more curious cases, and had added to that branch of physiology a rich contingent of new observations. He was thoroughly well informed as to the phenomena and the results that could be obtained from them. Gifted himself with great suggestive power which he had often exercised in Asia Minor, it was on it that he relied to carry off Carpena—if chance had not made the Spaniard insensible to its influence.

But if the doctor was henceforth master of Carpena, if he could make him do what he liked in suggesting to him his own will, it was still necessary that the prisoner should be free to move when the time came for him to accomplish whatever might be his work. And this permission the doctor hoped to obtain from Colonel Guyarre in such a form as to render it possible for the Spaniard to escape.

Ten minutes later the carriage arrived at the entrance to the large barracks just inside the Spanish boundary, and drew up before the governor's house.

Colonel Guyarre had already been informed that Dr. Antekirrt was in Ceuta. Thanks to the reputation he had gained by his talents and fortune, this famous individual was a sort of monarch on his travels, and as soon as he entered the reception-room the colonel gave a hearty welcome to him and his young companion Pierre Bathory, and at the outset offered to put at their entire disposal the "little piece of Spain so fortunately cut off from the Moorish territory."

"We thank you for your offer," was the doctor's reply in Spanish, a language which, like him, Pierre understood and spoke fluently. "But I am not sure that we shall be able to take advantage of your kindness."

"Oh! The colony is not a large one, Dr. Antekirtt," answered the governor. "In half a day you could get round it! Are you going to stay here any time?"

"Four or five hours at the most," said the doctor. "I

must leave to-night for Gibraltar, where I have an appointment to-morrow morning."

"Leave this evening!" exclaimed the governor. "Allow me to insist! I assure you, Dr. Antekirtt, that our military colony is worth studying thoroughly! You have doubtless seen much and observed much during your travels, but perhaps have not paid much attention to the question of prison discipline; and I assure you that Ceuta is worth study, not only by scientific men, but by economists."

Naturally the governor was not without some conceit in singing the praises of his colony, but he did not exaggerate in the least. The administrative system of Ceuta is considered one of the best in the world, both as affecting the material well-being of the convicts and their moral amelioration. The governor insisted that a man in Dr. Antekirtt's position should delay his departure so as to honour by a visit the different departments of the penitentiary.

"That would be impossible, but to-day I am at your service, and if you like—"

"It is four o'clock," said Colonel Guyarre, "and you see there is so little time—"

"Quite so," said the doctor, "and I am in a similar fix, for just as you wish to do me the honours of your colony, I am anxious to do you the honours of my yacht."

"Cannot you postpone for to-day your departure to Gibraltar?"

"I would do so if an appointment had not been arranged for me for to-morrow, and which, as I say, compels me to sail."

"That is really annoying!" replied the governor, "and I shall never console myself for not having kept you longer! But take care! I have got your vessel under the guns of my forts, and I can sink her if I give the word!"

"And the reprisals?" answered the doctor with a laugh. "Are you prepared for a war with the mighty kingdom of Antekirtta?"

"I know that would be serious!" replied the governor, in the same tone. "But what would we not risk to keep you here twenty-four hours longer?"

Pierre did not take part in this conversation. He contented himself with wondering if the doctor were making

any progress towards the object he had in view. The decision to leave Ceuta that evening astonished him not a little.

How in so short a time could he take the indispensable steps for bringing about Carpena's escape? In a few hours the convicts would be sent back to gaol and shut up for the night, and then to get the Spaniard away was a very doubtful undertaking indeed.

But Pierre saw that the doctor was acting on a quickly formed plan when he heard the reply,—

"Really, I am deeply grieved that I cannot accept your invitation—to-day at least! But we might perhaps arrange it in some way?"

"Say on, doctor, say on!"

"As I must be at Gibraltar to-morrow morning, I must leave here to-night. But I do not think my stay on the rock will last more than two or three days. It is now Thursday, and instead of continuing my voyage up the north of the Mediterranean, nothing could be easier than for me to call at Ceuta on Sunday morning—"

"Nothing could be easier," interrupted the governor, "and nothing would give me greater pleasure. Of course my vanity has something to do with it, but who has not some vanity in this world? So it is agreed, Dr. Antekirtt, Sunday?"

"Yes, on one condition!"

"Whatever it be, I accept!"

"That you and your aide-de-camp come to breakfast with me on the *Ferrato*."

"With pleasure, but on one condition also!"

"Following you, whatever it be, I accept the invitation."

"That M. Bathory and you come and dine with me!"

"Very good, and we will go the rounds between breakfast and dinner."

"And I will abuse my authority to make you admire all the splendours of my kingdom!" replied Colonel Guyarre, shaking hands with the doctor.

Pierre also accepted the invitation, and bowed respectfully to the very obliging and very much satisfied Governor of Ceuta.

The doctor then prepared to take his leave, and Pierre read in his eyes that he had gained his object. But the governor would not allow them to leave alone, and accompanied them to the town. The three therefore took their

seats in the carriage and drove along the only road which put the residence in communication with Ceuta.

The governor would not have been a Spaniard if he had not enlarged on the more or less contestable beauties of the little colony, on the improvements he proposed to introduce in both military and civil matters, on the superiority of the situation of the ancient Abyla to that of Calpe, on the fact of its being possible to make of it a Gibraltar as impregnable as that belonging to Britain, and of course he protested against the insolence of Mr. Ford in saying that "Ceuta ought to belong to England, for Spain does nothing, and hardly knows how to keep it," and showed great irritation against the English, "who never put their foot on a piece of ground without the foot taking root."

"Yes," he remarked, "before they think of taking Ceuta, let them take care of Gibraltar! There is a mountain there that Spain will one day shake down on their heads!"

The doctor, without inquiring how the Spaniards were to bring about such a geological commotion, did not contest the statement which was made with all the loftiness of a hidalgo. And besides the conversation was interrupted by the sudden stoppage of the vehicle. The driver had to pull in his horses before a crowd of some fifty convicts that barred the road.

The governor beckoned to one of the sergeants to approach. The sergeant immediately advanced to the carriage with military step, and with his heels together and his hand at his peak waited to be spoken to.

The other prisoners and warders were drawn up on each side of the road.

"What is the matter?" asked the governor.

"Excellency," replied the sergeant, "here is a convict we have found on the bank who seems to be asleep; and we cannot wake him."

"How long has he been in that state?"

"About an hour."

"Has he been asleep all the time?"

"He has, your Excellency. He is as insensible as if he was dead. We have shaken him, and prodded him, and even fired a pistol close to his ear. But he feels nothing and hears nothing."

"Why did you not send for the surgeon?" asked the governor.

"I did send for him, your Excellency, but he was not at

home, and until he comes we do not know what to do with this man."

"Well, take him to the hospital."

The sergeant was about to execute the order when the doctor intervened.

"Will your Excellency allow me, as a physician, to examine this recalcitrant sleeper? I shall not be sorry to have a closer look at him."

"And it is really your trade, is it not?" answered the governor. "A lucky rascal to be a patient of Dr. Antekirtt! He will not have much cause to complain."

The three left the carriage, and the doctor walked up to the convict who was stretched at full length by the side of the road. In the man's heavy sleep the only signs of life were the panting respiration and the beating of the pulse.

The doctor made a sign that the crowd should stand away from him. Then he bent over the inert body, spoke to it in a low voice, looked at it for some time, as if he wished to penetrate its brain with his will.

Then he arose.

"It is nothing," said he. "The man has simply fallen into a magnetic sleep!"

"Indeed!" said the governor. "That is very curious! And can you wake him?"

"Nothing can be easier!" answered the doctor. And after touching Carpena's forehead he gently lifted his eyelids and said,—

"Awake! I will it so!"

Carpena shook himself and opened his eyes, though he still remained in a certain state of somnolence. The doctor made several passes across his face so as to stir the cushion of air, and gradually the torpor left him. Then he sat up; then unconscious of all that had happened he took his place among his companions.

The governor, the doctor and Pierre Bathory stepped into the carriage and resumed their road to the town.

"Had not that rascal had something to drink?" asked the governor.

"I do not think so," replied the doctor. "It was only a simple effect of somnambulism."

"But how is it produced?"

"That I cannot say. Perhaps the man is subject to such attacks? But now he is on his legs again, and none the worse for it."

Soon the carriage reached the fortifications, entered the town, crossed it obliquely, and stopped in the little square above the wharf.

The doctor and the governor took leave of each other with great cordiality.

"There is the *Ferrato*," said the doctor, pointing to the yacht which was gracefully riding at her anchor.

"You will not forget that you have accepted my invitation to breakfast on board of her on Sunday?"

"No more than you will forget, Dr. Antekirtt, that you are to dine with me on Sunday evening."

"I shall not fail to be with you!"

They separated; and the governor did not leave the wharf until the gig had started.

And when as they were on their way back Pierre asked the doctor if all had gone as he wished, the reply was, "Yes! On Sunday evening, with the permission of the governor of Ceuta, Carpena will be on board the *Ferrato*."

At eight o'clock the steam yacht left her anchorage, proceeded to the north, and Mount Hacho, the prominent height of this part of the Moorish coast, soon vanished in the mists of the night.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE MEETING AT GIBRALTAR.

THE passenger who had not been told whither the ship was bound that carried him would hardly guess in what part of the world he had set foot if he landed at Gibraltar.

First there is a quay cut up into little docks for ships to be moored along, then a bastion and a wall with an insignificant gate, then an irregular square bordered by high barracks which rise one behind the other up a hill, then the long narrow, winding thoroughfare known as Main Street.

At the end of this road, which is always sloppy and dirty, among the porters, smugglers, boot-blacks, and sellers of cigar-lights, among the trucks, trollies, and carts of vegetables and fruits, all on the move there crowds a cosmopolitan mixture of Maltese and Moors, Spaniards and

Italians, Arabs and Frenchmen, Portuguese and Germans —a little of everything, in fact, even of citizens of the United Kingdom, who are specially represented by infantrymen in red coats, and artillerymen in blue tunics, with their caps only kept above their ears by a miracle of equilibrium.

Main Street runs right through the town from the Sea Gate to the Alameda Gate. Thence it runs on towards Europe, by the side of many-coloured villas and verdant squares, shaded by large trees, through beds of flowers, green parks, batteries of cannons of all designs, and masses of plants of all countries, for a length of four miles and three hundred yards. Such is the rock of Gibraltar, a sort of headless dromedary that crouches on the sands of San Roque, with its tail dragging in the Mediterranean Sea.

This enormous rock is nearly 1400 ft. above the shore of the continent that it menaces with its guns—"the teeth of the old woman," as the Spaniards call them—more than 700 pieces of artillery whose throats stretch forth from the embrasures of its casemates. Twenty thousand inhabitants and 6000 men of the garrison are housed on the lower spurs of the hill, without counting the quadrumana, the famous "monos," the tailless apes, the descendants of the earlier families of the place, the real proprietors of the soil who now occupy the heights of the ancient Calpe. From the summit of the rock the view extends across the straits; the Moorish coast can be seen; the Mediterranean is looked down upon from one side, the Atlantic from the other; and the English telescopes have a range of 124 miles, of which they can keep watch over every foot—and they do keep watch.

If happily the *Ferrato* had arrived two days sooner in the roadstead of Gibraltar, if between the rising and setting of the sun Dr. Antekirtt and Pierre Bathory had landed on the little quay, entered by the Sea Gate, walked along Main Street, passed the Alameda Gate and reached the lovely gardens that are planted half-way up the hill to the left, perhaps the events reported in this narrative would have advanced more rapidly, and had a different result. For on the afternoon of the 19th of September, on one of the wooden benches under the shade of the trees with their backs turned to the batteries commanding the roadstead, two persons were talking together, and carefully avoiding being overheard by the people around. They were Sarcany and Namir.

It may be remembered that Sarcany was to rejoin Namir in Sicily when the expedition took place against the Casa degli Inglesi which resulted in Zirone's death. Warned in time, Sarcany changed his plan of campaign, and consequently the doctor waited a week in vain at his moorings off Catania. Acting on the orders she received, Namir immediately left Sicily to return to Tetuan, where she then lived. From Tetuan she returned to Gibraltar, where Sarcany had appointed to meet her. He had arrived the night before, and intended to leave next day.

Sarcany's companion was devoted to him body and soul. She it was who had brought him up in the douars of Tripoli, as if she had been his mother. She had never left him even when he was living as a broker in the Regency, where through his secret acquaintances he becam one of the formidable sectaries of Senousism, whose schemes, as we have said above, were being directed against Antekirtta.

Namir in thought and deed treated Sarcany with almost maternal affection, and was even more attached to him than Zirone, the companion of his pleasures and miseries. At a sign from him she would have committed any crime; at a sign from him she would have walked to death without hesitation. Sarcany could thus have absolute confidence in Namir, and when he sent for her to Gibraltar, it was to talk to her about Carpena, from whom he had now much to fear.

This interview was the first that had taken place between them since Sarcany's arrival at Gibraltar; it was to be the only one, and the conversation was carried on in Arabic.

Sarcany began with a question, and received an answer which both probably regarded as of the utmost importance —for their future depended on it.

"Sava?" asked Sarcany.

"She is safe at Tetuan," replied Namir, "and you can feel quite easy concerning her."

"But during your absence?"

"During my absence the house is in charge of an old Jewess, who will not leave it for an instant! It is like a prison to which nobody goes or can go! Sava does not know she is at Tetuan, she does not know who I am, and she does not even know that she is in your power."

"You are always talking to her about the wedding?"

"Yes, Sarcany," replied Namir, "I never allow her to

be free from the idea that she is to be your wife—and she will be!"

"She must, Namir, she must; and all the more because Toronthal's money has nearly gone! Gambling does not agree with poor Silas!"

"You have no need of him, Sarcany; without him you can become richer than you have ever been."

"I know it, Namir, but the latest date at which my marriage with Sava must take place is approaching! I must have a voluntary consent on her part, and if she refuses—"

"I will make her!" replied Namir. "Yes! I will tear her consent from her! You can trust me, Sarcany!"

And it would be difficult to imagine a more savage, determined-looking face than that of the Moor as she thus expressed herself.

"Good, Namir!" answered Sarcany. "Continue to watch her, and I will soon be with you."

"Do you intend us to leave Tetuan soon?" asked the Moor.

"No, not till I am obliged, for no one there knows, or can know, Sava! If events oblige me to send you away, you will get notice in time."

"And now, Sarcany," continued Namir, "tell me why you have sent for me to Gibraltar?"

"Because I have certain things to say to you that are better said than written."

"Say on, then, Sarcany, and if it is an order I will obey it."

"This is now the position," answered Sarcany. "Madame Bathory has disappeared, and her son is dead. From that family I have nothing further to fear. Madame Toronthal is dead, and Sava is in my power! On that side I am also safe! Of the others who know my secret, one, Silas Toronthal, my accomplice, is under my thumb; the other, Zirone, died in Sicily. Of all those I have mentioned none can speak, and none will speak."

"What are you afraid of, then?"

"I am afraid only of the interference of two individuals; one knows a part of my past life, and the other seems to mix himself up with my present more than is convenient."

"One is Carpena?" asked Namir.

"Yes," answered Sarcany; "and the other is that

Dr. Antekirtt, whose communications with the Bathory family at Ragusa always seemed to me to be suspicious! Besides, I have heard from Benito, the innkeeper at Santa Grotta, that this personage, who is a millionaire, laid a trap for Zirone by introducing a certain Pescador into his service. If that is so, it was certainly to get possession of him—in default of me—and get my secret out of him!"

"Nothing can be clearer," answered Namir, "than that you should be more careful than ever of Dr. Antekirtt."

"And as much as possible we should know what he is doing, and above all things where he is."

"That is not easy, Sarcany," answered Namir; "for when I was at Ragusa, for instance, I heard that to-day he would be at one end of the Mediterranean, and to-morrow at the other."

"Yes! The man seems to have the gift of ubiquity," growled Sarcany. "But it shall not be said that I let him interfere with my game without making a fight for it, and when I go to his home in his island of Antekirtta, I know well—"

"That the wedding will have taken place," answered Namir, "and you will have nothing to fear from him or any one."

"That is so, Namir, and till then—"

"Till then we must mind what we are about! One way we shall always have the best of it, for we shall know where he is without his knowing where we are! Now about Carpena, Sarcany; what have you to fear from him?"

"Carpena knows my connection with Zirone! For many years he took part in expeditions in which I had a hand, and he might talk—"

"Agreed; but Carpena is now imprisoned for life at Ceuta."

"And that is what makes me anxious, Namir! Carpena, to improve his position, may say something. If we know he has been sent to Ceuta, others know it as well; others know him personally. There is that Pescador who found him out at Malta. And through that man Dr. Antekirtt may be able to get at him. He can buy his secrets from him! He may even try to help him escape. In fact, Namir, it is all so very obvious that I wonder why it has not yet happened."

Sarcany, wide awake and keen-sighted, had thus guessed

at the doctor's plans with regard to the Spaniard, and perceived the danger. Namir agreed that there was considerable cause for anxiety.

"Why," said Sarcany, "why did we not lose him instead of Zirone?"

"But what did not happen in Sicily might happen in Ceuta," said Namir coolly.

That, in short, was what the interview meant. Namir then explained to Sarcany that nothing could be easier than for her to go from Tetuan to Ceuta as often as she liked. It was only twenty miles from one town to the other. Tetuan was a little to the south of the penitentiary colony. As the convicts worked on the roads leading to the town, it would be easy to enter into communication with Carpena, whom she knew, to make him think that Sarcany was anxious for him to escape, and to give him a little money, or even a little extra food. And if it did happen that one of the pieces of bread or fruit was poisoned, who would trouble himself about the death of the convict Carpena? who would make any inquiries?

One scoundrel the less would not seriously inconvenience the Governor of Ceuta! And Sarcany would have nothing further to fear from the Spaniard, nor from the attempts of Dr. Antekirtt to fathom his secrets.

And from this interview it resulted that while one side was busy scheming the escape of Carpena, the other was endeavouring to render it impossible by sending him prematurely to the penal colony in the other world from which there is no escape!

Having agreed on their plans, Sarcany and Namir returned to the town, and separated. That evening Sarcany left Spain to join Silas Toronthal, and the next morning Namir, after crossing the Bay of Gibraltar, embarked at Algesiras on the steamer that runs regularly between Europe and Africa. As she left the harbour the steamer ran past a yacht steaming into the bay.

It was the *Ferrato*. Namir, who had seen her while she lay at Catania, recognized her immediately.

"Dr. Antekirtt here!" she muttered. "Sarcany was right. There is danger, and the danger is close at hand!"

A few hours afterwards the Moor landed at Ceuta. But before returning to Tetuan she had taken steps to enter into communication with the Spaniard. Her plan was simple, and it was almost sure [illegible] sufficient time.

But a complication had arisen which Namir did not expect. Carpena, owing to the doctor's intervention at his first visit to Ceuta, had been put on the sick list, and been obliged to go into hospital for some days. Namir could only loiter round the hospital without being able to get at him. One thing she contented herself with, and that was, that if she could not see Carpena, neither could the doctor nor his agents. There was therefore no danger, she thought; and no fear of escape until the convict got back to his work on the roads. Namir was mistaken. Carpena's entrance into the hospital favoured the doctor's plans, and would probably bring about their success.

The *Ferrato* anchored on the evening of the 22nd of September in the Bay of Gibraltar, which is so frequently swept by the easterly and south-easterly winds. But she was only to remain there during the 23rd. The doctor and Pierre landed on the Saturday morning, and went for their letters to the post-office in Main Street.

One of these, addressed to the doctor from his Sicilian agent, informed him that since the departure of the *Ferrato* Sarcany had not appeared at Catania, Syracuse, or Messina. Another, addressed to Pierre, was from Point Pescade, and informed him that he was much better, and felt none the worse for his wound; that Dr. Antekirtt could command his services as soon as he pleased, in addition to those of Cape Matifou, who also presented his respects. There was a third letter to Luigi from Maria. It was more than the letter of a sister—it was the letter of a mother.

If the doctor and Pierre had taken their walk in the gardens of Gibraltar thirty-six hours before, they would have come across Sarcany and Namir.

The day was spent in coaling the *Ferrato* from the lighters which carry the coals from the floating stores moored in the harbour. Fresh-water tanks were also replenished, and everything was in trim when the doctor and Pierre, who had dined at the hotel in Commercial Square, returned on board at gun-fire.

The *Ferrato* did not weigh anchor that evening. As it would only take her a couple of hours to cross the Straits, she did not start till eight o'clock the next morning. Then passing the English batteries, she went out under full steam towards Ceuta. At half-past nine she was under Mount Hacho, but as the breeze was blowing from the north-west, she could not bring up in the same position

she had occupied three days before. The captain therefore took her the other side of the town, and anchored about two cable-lengths from the shore in a small well-sheltered creek.

A quarter of an hour later the doctor landed at the wharf. Namir was on the watch, and had followed all the yacht's manœuvres. The doctor did not recognize the Moor, whom he had only seen in the shadow of the bazaar at Cattaro. But she had often met him at Gravosa and Ragusa, and recognized him immediately; and she resolved to be more on her guard than ever during his stay at Ceuta.

As he landed, the doctor found the governor and an aide-de-camp waiting for him on the wharf.

"Good morning, my dear friend, and welcome!" said the governor. "You are a man of your word! and now you belong to me for the rest of the day at least—"

"I do not belong to your excellency until you have been my guest! Don't forget that breakfast is waiting for you on board the *Ferrato*."

"And if it is waiting, Dr. Antekirtt, it would not be polite to keep it waiting any longer."

The gig took the doctor and his guests out to the yacht. The breakfast was luxuriously served, and all did it honour.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE DOCTOR'S EXPERIMENT.

DURING the breakfast, the conversation chiefly dwelt on the administration of the colony, on the manners and customs of the inhabitants, on the relations which had been established between the Spanish and native populations. Incidentally the doctor was led to speak of the convict whom he had awakened from the magnetic sleep two or three days before on the road into the town.

"He remembers nothing about it, probably?" asked the doctor.

"Nothing," replied the governor, "but he is not now at work on the roads."

"Where is he, then?" asked the doctor with a certain feeling of anxiety that Pierre was the only one to remark.

"He is in the hospital," answered the governor. "It seems that the shock upset his precious health."

"Who is he?"

"A Spaniard named Carpena, a vulgar murderer, not at all interesting, Dr. Antekirtt; and if he happened to die, I can assure you that he would be no loss to us!"

Then the conversation took another turn. Doubtless it did not suit the doctor to lay too much stress on the case of the convict, who would be quite recovered after a day or two in hospital.

Breakfast over, coffee was served on deck, and cigars and cigarettes vanished in smoke beneath the awning. Then the doctor suggested going ashore without delay. He now belonged to the governor, and was ready to visit the Spanish colony in all its branches.

The suggestion was accepted, and up to dinner-time the governor devoted himself to doing the honours of the colony to his illustrious visitor. The doctor and Pierre were conscientiously taken all over the place, and did not miss a single detail either in the prisons or the barracks. The day being Sunday, the convicts were not at their ordinary tasks, and the doctor could observe them under different circumstances. Carpena he only saw as they passed through one of the wards in the hospital, and he did not appear to attract his attention.

The doctor intended to leave for Antekirtta that night, but not until he had given the greater part of the evening to the governor; and about six o'clock he returned to the house, where an elegantly served dinner awaited them—the reply to the morning's breakfast.

We need hardly say that during this walk through the colony the doctor was followed by Namir, and was quite unaware that he was so closely watched.

The dinner was a pleasant one. A few of the chief people in the colony, officers and their wives, and two or three rich merchants had been invited, and did not conceal the pleasure they experienced at seeing and hearing Dr. Antekirtt. The doctor spoke of his travels in the East, in Syria, in Arabia, in the north of Africa. Then leading the conversation round to Ceuta, he complimented the governor who administered the Spanish colony with so much ability.

"But," added he, "looking after the convicts must give you a great deal of trouble."

"And why, my dear doctor?"

"Because they must try to escape. And as the prisoner must think more of getting away than the warders think of stopping him, it follows that the advantage is on the side of the prisoner, and I should not be surprised if one is sometimes missing at roll-call."

"Never," answered the governor. "Never! Where would the fugitives go? By sea escape is impossible! By land among the savage people of Morocco flight would be dangerous! And so the convicts remain here, if not from pleasure, from prudence!"

"Well," answered the doctor, "I must congratulate you! For it is to be feared that guarding the prisoners will become more and more difficult in the future."

"And why, if you please?" asked one of the guests who was much interested in the conversation owing to his being the director of the penitentiary.

"Because, sir," replied the doctor, "the study of magnetic phenomena has made great progress, because their action can be applied to everything in the world, because the effects of suggestion are becoming more and more frequent and tend so much towards substituting one-personality for another."

"And in that case?" asked the governor.

"In that case I think that if it is wise to watch your prisoners, it is just as wise to watch your warders. During my travels I have witnessed some extraordinary things, that I would not have believed possible, with regard to these phenomena. And in your own interest do not forget that if a prisoner can unconsciously escape under the influence of a stranger's will, a warder subject to the same influence can none the less unconsciously allow him to escape."

"Will you explain to us of what these phenomena consist?" asked the director of the penitentiary.

"Yes, sir, and I will give you an example to make them clear to you. Suppose a warder has a natural disposition to submit to magnetic or hypnotic influence; and admit that a prisoner can exercise such influence over him. Well, from that moment the prisoner has become the warder's master and can do what he likes with him.

He can make him go where he pleases, and can make him open the prison doors whenever he likes to suggest the idea to him."

"Doubtless," replied the director, "but on condition that he has first sent him to sleep—"

"That is where you make a mistake," said the doctor. "He can do all these things when he is awake, and yet he will know nothing about them."

"What, do you mean to say—?"

"I mean to say, and I affirm, that under the influence the prisoner can say to the warder, 'On such a day at such an hour you will do such a thing,' and he will do it. 'On such a day you will bring me the keys of my cell,' and he will bring them. 'On such a day you will open the gate of the prison,' and he will open it. 'On such a day I will pass by you,' and he will not see him pass."

"Not when he is awake?"

"Quite wide awake!"

To this affirmation of the doctor a shrug of incredulity passed round the company.

"Nothing can be truer, nevertheless," said Pierre, "for I myself have seen such things."

"And so," said the governor, "the materiality of one person can be suppressed at the look of another?"

"Entirely," said the doctor; "and in some people in such a way as to cause such changes in their senses that they will take salt for sugar, milk for vinegar, and wine for physic. Nothing is impossible in the way of illusion or hallucination while the brain is under the influence."

"It seems to me, Dr. Antekirtt," said the governor, "that the general feeling of the company is that those things must be seen to be believed!"

"And more than once!" said one of the guests.

"It is a pity," said the governor, "that the short time you have to give us will not allow you to convince us by an experiment."

"But I can!" replied the doctor.

"Now?"

"Yes, now, if you like!"

"How?"

"Your Excellency has not forgotten that three days ago one of the convicts was found asleep on the road, and I told you that it was a magnetic sleep?"

"Yes," said the director of the penitentiary, "and the man is now in the hospital."

"You remember I awakened him, for none of your warders could."

"Quite so."

"Well, that was enough to create between me and this convict—what is his name?"

"Carpena."

"Between me and Carpena, a bond of suggestion putting him completely in my power."

"When he is in your presence."

"And when we are apart."

"Between you here, and him in the hospital?" asked the governor.

"Yes; and if you will give orders for them to leave the doors open, do you know what he will do?"

"Run away!" said the governor with a laugh in which all joined.

"No, gentlemen," replied the doctor very seriously, "Carpena will not run away until I wish him to run away, and he will only do what I want him to do."

"And what is that, if you please?"

"For example, when he gets out of the prison, I can order him to take the road here."

"And will he come here?"

"Into this very room, if I please, and he will insist on speaking to you."

"To me?"

"To you. And if you like, as he will have to obey all my suggestions, I will suggest the idea to him to take you for somebody else—say—for his Majesty Alfonso XII.!"

"For his Majesty the King of Spain?"

"Yes, your Excellency, and he will ask you—"

"To pardon him?"

"Yes, to pardon him, and, if you like, to give him the cross of Isabella into the bargain!"

Shouts of laughter greeted this last assertion.

"And the man wide awake all the time?" asked the director of the penitentiary.

"As wide awake as we are."

"No! No! It is not credible, it is not possible," exclaimed the governor.

"Then try the experiment! Give orders for Carpena to be allowed to do what he likes, and for security let one or

two warders be told off to follow him at a distance. He shall do all I have just told you."

"Very well, when would you like to begin?"

"It is now eight o'clock," said the doctor, consulting his watch. "At nine o'clock?"

"Be it so; and after the experiment?"

"After the experiment Carpena will go quietly back to the hospital without the slightest remembrance of what has passed. I repeat—and it is the only explanation I can give you of the phenomenon—that Carpena will be under a suggestive influence coming from me, and in reality I shall be doing these things, not Carpena."

The governor, whose incredulity was manifest, wrote a note to the chief warder, directing him to allow Carpena full liberty of action and to follow him from a distance; and the note was immediately despatched to the hospital.

The dinner at an end, the company at the governor's invitation adjourned to the drawing-room.

Naturally the conversation still dwelt on the different phenomena of magnetism or hypnotism, and controversy between the believers and unbelievers grew animated. Dr. Antekirtt, while the cups of coffee circulated amid the smoke of the cigars and cigarettes, which even the Spanish ladies did not despise, related a score of facts of which he had been the witness or the author during the practice of his profession, all to the point, all indisputable, but none of them, seemingly, convincing.

He added also that this faculty of suggestion would give serious trouble to legislators and magistrates, for it could be used for criminal purposes; and cases could arise in which crime could be committed without its being possible to discover its author.

Suddenly, at twenty-seven minutes to nine, the doctor interrupted himself, and said,—

"Carpena is now leaving the hospital!"

And a minute afterwards he added,—

"He has just passed through the gate of the penitentiary!"

The tone with which the words were pronounced had a strange effect on those around him. The governor alone continued to shake his head.

Then the conversation for and against began again, each one saying but little at a time, until—at five minutes to nine—the doctor interrupted them for the last time,—

"Carpena is at the front door."

Almost immediately afterwards one of the servants entered the drawing-room and told the governor that a man dressed like a convict was waiting below and insisted on seeing him.

"Let him come in!" replied the governor, whose incredulity began to vanish in face of the facts.

As nine o'clock struck, Carpena appeared at the door of the drawing-room. Without appearing to see any of those present, although his eyes were wide open, he walked up to the governor, and, kneeling before him, said,—

"Sire, I ask you to pardon me."

The governor, absolutely dumfounded, as if he himself was under an hallucination, knew not what to say.

"You can pardon him," said the doctor with a smile; "he will have no recollection of all this!"

"I grant you your pardon!" said the governor with all the dignity of the King of all the Spains.

"And to that pardon, sire," said Carpena, still bending low, "will you add the cross of Isabella?"

"I give it you!"

And then Carpena made as though to take something from the governor's hand and attach the imaginary cross to his breast. Then he rose, and walking backwards quitted the room.

This time the whole company followed him to the front door.

"I will go with him, I will see him go back to the hospital," said the governor, struggling with himself as if loath to yield to the evidence of his senses.

"Come, then!" said the doctor.

And the governor, Pierre Bathory, Dr. Antekirtt, and the rest followed after Carpena as he went along the road towards the town. Namir, who had watched him since he left the penitentiary, glided along in the shadow and continued to watch.

The night was rather dark. The Spaniard walked along at a regular pace with no hesitation in his stride. The governor and his guests were twenty paces behind him with the two warders who had received orders to keep him in sight.

The road as it approaches the town bends round a small creek, forming the second harbour on that side of the rock. On the black, motionless water flickered the re-

flections of two or three lights. They came from the ports and lanterns of the *Ferrato*, whose hull loomed large in the darkness.

As he reached this spot Carpena left the road and inclined to the right towards a heap of rocks which rose from the shore a dozen feet away. Doubtless a gesture from the doctor, unseen by any one—perhaps a simple suggestion of his will—had obliged the Spaniard to leave the path.

The warders prepared to close up so as to send him back; but the governor, knowing that no escape from that side was possible, ordered them to leave him to himself.

However, Carpena halted on one of the rocks as if he had been struck motionless and fixed there by some irresistible power. He tried to lift his feet, to move his arms, but he could not. The doctor's will within him nailed him to the ground.

The governor looked at him for a minute or so. Then he said to his guest,—

"Well, doctor, whether he is awake or not, we must give in to the evidence!"

"You are convinced, quite convinced?"

"Yes, quite convinced that there are things we must believe in like the brutes! Now, Dr. Antekirtt, suggest to him to go back to the penitentiary! Alfonso XII. commands it!"

The governor had hardly finished the sentence before Carpena, without uttering a sound, threw himself into the water. Was it an accident? Was it a voluntary act on his part? Had some fortuitous circumstance intervened to snatch him out of the doctor's power? No one could say.

Immediately there was a general rush to the rocks, and the warders ran on to the beach. There was no trace of Carpena. Some fishing-boats came up, as did the boats from the yacht. All was useless. They did not even find the corpse, which the current would carry out to sea.

"I am very sorry, your Excellency," said the doctor, "that our experiment has had so tragical an end, which it was impossible to anticipate."

"But how do you account for it?" asked the governor.

"The reason is that in the exercise of this suggestive power, of which you cannot deny the effects, there are intermittances. That man escaped me for an instant,

undoubtedly, and either from his being seized with vertigo or some other cause he fell off the rocks! It is a great pity, for we have lost such a splendid specimen!"

"We have lost a scamp—nothing more!" said the governor philosophically.

And that was Carpena's funeral oration!

The doctor and Pierre then took leave of the governor. They had to start before daybreak for Antekirtta, and they were profuse in their thanks to their host for the hospitable welcome he had given them in the Spanish colony.

The governor shook the doctor's hand, wished him a pleasant journey, and after promising to come and see him, returned to his house.

Perhaps it may be said that Dr. Antekirtt had somewhat abused the good faith of the Governor of Ceuta. His conduct under the circumstances is certainly open to criticism. But we should not forget the work to which Count Sandorf had consecrated his life. "A thousand roads—one end!" And this was one of the thousand roads he had to travel.

A few minutes afterwards one of the boats of the *Ferrato* had taken them on board. Luigi was waiting for them as they came up the side.

"That man?" asked the doctor.

"According to your orders," said Luigi, "our boat was near the rocks and picked him up after his fall, and he is under lock and key in the fore-cabin."

"He has said nothing?" asked Pierre.

"How could he say anything? He seems asleep and unconscious of his acts."

"Good," answered the doctor. "I willed that Carpena should fall from those rocks, and he fell! I willed that he should sleep, and he sleeps! When I will that he wakes, he shall wake! And now, Luigi, up anchor and away!"

The steam was up, and a few minutes afterwards the *Ferrato* was off, heading out to sea straight for Antekirtta.

CHAPTER XV.

SEVENTEEN TIMES!

"SEVENTEEN times?"

"Seventeen times!"

"Yes, the red has passed seventeen times!"

"Is it possible?"

"It may be impossible, but it is!"

"And the players are mad against it?"

"More than 900,000 francs won by the bank!"

"Seventeen times! Seventeen times!"

"At roulette or trente-et-quarante?"

"At trente-et-quarante."

"It is fifteen years since anything like it!"

"Fifteen years, three months, and fourteen hours," coolly replied an old gambler belonging to the honourable class of the ruined. "Yes, sir, and a very strange thing—it was in the height of summer on the 16th of June, 1867—I know something about it!"

Such was the conversation, or rather the chorus of exclamation that was heard in the vestibule and peristyle of the Cercle des Étrangers at Monte Carlo, on the evening of the 3rd of October, eight days after the escape of Carpena from the Spanish penitentiary.

Among the crowd of gamblers—men and women of all nations, ages, and classes—there was quite an uproar of enthusiasm. They would willingly have greeted the red as the equal of the horse that had carried off the Epsom Derby or the Longchamps Grand Prix. In fact, for the people that the Old and New Worlds daily pour into the little principality of Monaco, this series of seventeen had quite the importance of a political event affecting the laws and equilibrium of Europe.

It will easily be believed that the red in its somewhat extraordinary obstinacy had made a good many victims, and that the winnings of the bank had been considerable. Nearly a million of francs, said some—which meant that nearly the whole of the players had become infuriated at the extraordinary series of passes.

Between them, two foreigners had paid a large part of what these gentlemen of the board of green cloth call the "déveine"—one, very cool, very self-restrained, although

the emotions within him were traceable in his pallid face; the other with his features distorted, his hair in disorder, his look that of a madman or a desperado—and these had just descended the steps of the peristyle, and were strolling out under the trees on the terrace.

"That makes more than 400,000 francs that the cursed series has cost us," said the eldest.

"You may as well say 413,000," said the younger in the tone of a cashier casting a column.

"And now I have only got 200,000—and hardly that," said the first gambler.

"One hundred and ninety-seven thousand," said the other in the same tone.

"Yes! Of nearly two millions that I once had, when you made me come with you!"

"One million seven hundred and seventy-five thousand francs!"

"And that in less than two months!"

"In one month and sixteen days!"

"Sarcany!" exclaimed the eldest, whom his companion's coolness seemed to exasperate as much as the ironical precision with which he rolled out the cyphers.

"Well, Silas?"

Toronthal and Sarcany were the speakers. Since leaving Ragusa, in the short space of three months they had reached the verge of ruin. After dissipating all that they had received as the reward of their abominable treachery, Sarcany had hunted his accomplice out of Ragusa, taking Sava with them, and then had enticed him into gambling and every dissipation in which he could squander his wealth. It is only just, however, to say that the old banker, daring speculator as he was, had in times gone by more than once risked his fortune in hazardous adventures in which luck was his only guide.

How could Toronthal resist? Was he not more than ever in the power of the Tripolitan broker? Sometimes he revolted, but Sarcany had obtained an irresistible ascendency over him, and the wretched man fell so heavily that strength almost failed him to rise again, so that Sarcany was not at all uneasy about the occasional fancies that Toronthal had to withdraw himself from his influence. The brutality of his retorts and the implacability of his logic soon brought Toronthal back beneath the yoke.

In leaving Ragusa under circumstances which will not

have been forgotten, their first care had been to put Sava in some safe place under the charge of Namir. And now in this retreat at Tetuan, on the borders of Morocco, it would have been difficult, if not impossible, to find her. There Sarcany's pitiless companion undertook to break down the girl's resolution, and tear from her her consent to the marriage. Unshaken in her repulsion and strengthened by the recollection of Pierre, Sava hitherto had obstinately resisted. But could she always do so?

In the meantime Sarcany never ceased from exciting his companion to plunge into the follies of the gaming-table, although he had lost his own fortune in a similar way. In France, in Italy, in Germany, in the great centres where chance keeps house in all its forms, on the Exchange, on the race-course, in the clubs of the great capitals, in the watering-places as in the seaside towns, Silas Toronthal had followed as Sarcany led, and had soon been reduced to a few hundred thousands of francs. While the banker risked his own money, Sarcany risked the banker's, and down this double slope both went to ruin at double quick time. What gamblers call the "déveine" had been dead against them, and it was not for want of trying every chance that offered. In short their amusement cost them the best part of the millions received from the possessions of Count Sandorf, and it had even become necessary to offer for sale the house in the Stradone at Ragusa.

And so they had been at Monte Carlo for the last three weeks, never leaving the tables of the club, trying the most infallible dodges, working out schemes that always went awry, studying the rotation of the cylinder of the roulette when the croupier's hand was tiring during his last quarter hour of duty, loading to the maximum numbers which obstinately refused to come, combining simple combinations with multiple combinations, listening to the advice of ruined old stagers and becoming professional gamblers, trying in fact every imbecile device, and employing every stupid fetish that could class the gambler between the child who has no reason and the idiot who has for ever lost it. And not only did they risk their money, but they enfeebled their intelligence by imagining absurd combinations; and they compromised their personal dignity by the familiarity which the frequenting of the very mixed assembly imposed upon all. In short at the close of this evening, which would hereafter be celebrated in the annals

of Monte Carlo, owing to their obstinacy in struggling against a series of seventeen rouges at trente-et-quarante, they had left off with less than 200,000 francs between them.

But if they had nearly lost their fortunes, they had not yet lost their senses, like the gambler who had become suddenly deranged while they were talking on the terrace, and who was running through the gardens shouting,—

"It turns! It turns!"

The unfortunate man imagined that he had just put his money on the coming number, and that the cylinder in a movement of fantastic gyration was turning, and doomed to turn for ages! He had gone mad for the rest of his life!

"Have you become calmer, Silas?" asked Sarcany of his companion. "Does not that lunatic teach you to keep cool? We have not won, it is true, but the luck will turn, for it must turn, and without our doing anything to make it. Why try to better it? It is dangerous, and besides, it is useless! You cannot change the 'veine' if it is bad, and you would not change it when it is good! Wait then, and when the luck turns, let us be bold and make our game while the 'veine' lasts."

Did Toronthal listen to this advice—absurd as is all advice connected with games of chance? No! He was overwhelmed, and he had then but one idea—to escape from this domination of Sarcany, to get away, and to get away so far that his conscience could not reproach him! But such a fit of resolution could not last long in his enervated, helpless nature. Besides, he was watched by his accomplice. Before he left him to himself Sarcany wanted him until his marriage had taken place with Sava. Then he would get rid of Silas Toronthal, he would forget him, and he would not even remember that that feeble individual had ever existed, or that he had ever been associated with him in any enterprise whatever! Until then it was necessary for the banker to remain under his thumb!

"Silas," continued Sarcany, "we have been unfortunate to-day; chance was against us. To-morrow, it will be for us!"

"And if I lose the little that is left?" answered Toronthal, who struggled in vain against these deplorable suggestions.

"There is still Sava, Toronthal!" answered Sarcany quickly. "She is our ace of trumps, and you cannot overtrump her!"

"Yes! To-morrow! to-morrow!" said the banker, who was just in that mental condition in which a gambler would risk his head.

The two then entered their hotel, which was situated half-way down the road from Monte Carlo to La Condamine.

The port of Monaco lies between Point Focinana and Fort Antoine, and is an open bay exposed to the north-east and south-east winds. It rounds off between the rock on which stands the capital and the plateau on which are the hotels and villas, at the foot of the superb Mont Agel whose summit rising to 3600 feet towers boldly above the picturesque panorama of the Ligurian coast. The town has a population of some 1200 inhabitants, and is situated on the rock of Monaco, surrounded on three of its sides by the sea. It lies hidden beneath the never-fading verdure of palms, pomegranates, sycamores, pear-trees, orange-trees, citron-trees, eucalyptuses, and arborescent bushes of geraniums, aloes, myrtles, lentisks, and palma-christies, heaped all over the place in marvellous confusion.

At the other side of the harbour Monte Carlo faces the tiny capital with its curious pile of houses built on all the ledges, and its zigzags of narrow climbing roads running up to the Corniche suspending in mid-mountain its chessboard of gardens in perpetual bloom, its panorama of cottages of every shape, its villas of every style, of which some seem actually to hang over the limpid waters of this Mediterranean bay.

Between Monaco and Monte Carlo, at the back of the harbour from the beach up to the throat of the winding valley which divides the group of mountains, is a third city —La Condamine.

Above to the right rises a large mountain, whose profile turned towards the sea has gained it the name of the Dog's Head. On this head there is now a fort which is said to be impregnable, and which has the honour to be French, for it marks the limit on that side of the Principality of Monaco.

From La Condamine to Monte Carlo vehicles have to ascend a superb hill, at the upper end of which are the private houses and the hotels, in one of which there were now staying Toronthal and Sarcany. From the windows of their apartment the view extended from La Condamine to

beyond Monaco, and was only shut in by the Dog's Head, which seemed to be interrogating the Mediterranean as the Sphinx does the Lybian desert.

Sarcany and Toronthal had retired to their rooms. There they examined the situation, each from his own point of view. Had the vicissitudes of fortune broken the community of interests which for fifteen years had bound them so closely together?

Sarcany when he entered had found a letter addressed to him. It came from Tetuan, and he hastily tore it open.

In a few lines Namir told him of two things that interested him deeply. The first was the death of Carpena, drowned in the harbour of Ceuta under such extraordinary circumstances; the second was the appearance of Dr. Antekirtt on the Moorish coast, the way in which he had dealt with the Spaniard, and then his immediate disappearance.

Having read the letter, Sarcany opened the window. Leaning on the balcony he looked out into space and set himself to think.

"Carpena dead? Nothing could be more opportune! Now his secrets are drowned with him! On that side I am at ease! Nothing more to fear there!"

Then coming to the second passage of his letter, "As to the appearance of Dr. Antekirtt at Ceuta, that is more serious! Who is this man? It would not matter much after all, if I had not found him for some time more or less mixed up in my concerns! At Ragusa his interviews with the Bathory family! At Catania, the trap he laid for Zirone! At Ceuta, this interference which has cost the life of Carpena! Then he is very near Tetuan, but it does not seem that he has gone there, nor that he has discovered Sava's retreat. That would be the most terrible blow, and it may yet come! We shall see if we cannot keep him off, not only in the future, but in the present. The Senousists will soon be masters of all the Cyrenaic, and there is only an arm of the sea to cross to get at Antekirtta! If they must be urged on—I know well—"

It was evident that Sarcany's horizon was not without its black spots. In the dark schemes which he followed out step by step in pursuit of the object he had set himself and which he had almost attained, he might stumble over the very smallest stone in his path and perhaps never get up again. Not only was this intervention of Dr. Antekirtt

enough to unsettle him, but the position of Toronthal was also beginning to cause him anxiety.

"Yes," he said to himself, "we are in a corner! To-morrow we must stake everything! Either the bank goes, or we go! If I am ruined by his ruin I know how to recoup myself! But for Silas it is different! He may become dangerous, he may talk, he may let out the secret on which all my future rests! I have been his master up to now, but he may become my master!"

The position was exactly as Sarcany had described it. He was under no mistake as to the moral courage of his accomplice. He had had his lesson before: Silas Toronthal, when he had nothing to lose, would only use him to make money out of him.

Sarcany pondered over what was best to be done. Absorbed in his reflections, he did not see what was happening at the entrance to the harbour of Monaco a few hundred feet beneath him.

About half a cable-length away a long hull without mast or funnel came gliding through the waves. Altogether, it did not show for more than three feet above the water-level. Soon after, gradually nearing Point Focinana, it slipped into smoother water near the beach. Then there shot off from it a little boat, which had appeared like an incrustation on the side of the almost invisible hull. Three men were in the boat. In a few strokes of the sculls they reached the shore, two of them landed, and the third took back the boat. A few minutes afterwards the mysterious craft, which had not betrayed its presence, either by light or sound, was lost in the darkness and had left no trace of its passage.

The two men as soon as they had left the beach went along by the edge of the rocks towards the railway station, and then up the Avenue des Spelugues, which runs round the gardens of Monte Carlo.

Sarcany had seen nothing of this. His thoughts were far away from Monaco—at Tetuan. But he would not go there alone, he would compel his accomplice to go with him.

"Silas, my master!" he repeated. "Silas being able to checkmate me with a word! Never! If to-morrow luck does not give us back what it has taken away from us, I shall be obliged to make him follow me! Yes! To follow me to Tetuan, and there on the coast of Mor

Silas Toronthal gives trouble, Silas Toronthal will disappear!"

As we know, Sarcany was not the man to recoil at one crime more, particularly when circumstances, the distance of the country, the wildness of the inhabitants, and the impossibility of seeking and finding the criminal, rendered its accomplishment so easy.

Having decided on his plans, Sarcany shut the window, went to bed, and was soon asleep without being in the least troubled by his conscience.

It was not so with Toronthal. He passed a horrible night. Of his former fortune what had he left? Hardly 200,000 francs—and these were to be squandered in play. It was the last throw! So his accomplice wished, and so he himself wished. His enfeebled brain, filled with chimerical calculations, was no longer able to reason coolly nor justly. He was even incapable—at this moment at least—of understanding his real position with regard to Sarcany. He could not see that the parts had shifted, and that he who held him in his power was now in his power. He only saw the present with its immediate ruin, and only dreamt of the morrow, which might float him again or plunge him into the depths of misery.

Thus passed the night for the two associates. One was permitted to spend it in repose, the other to struggle with all the anguish of insomnia.

In the morning about ten o'clock Sarcany joined Toronthal. The banker was seated before a table, covering the pages of his note-book with figures and formulæ.

"Well, Silas," said he in a careless tone—the tone of a man who would not assign more importance to the world's miseries than he could help,—"well, Silas, did you give the preference to the red or the black in your dreams?"

"I did not sleep a wink!" replied the banker.

"So much the worse, Silas, so much the worse. To-day you must be cool, and a few hours of repose were what you wanted. Look at me! I have had a little, and I am in capital condition to struggle with fortune! She is a woman after all, and she loves best the men who can command her."

"She has betrayed us all the same!"

"Bah! Merely caprice! And the caprice will pass, and she will smile on us!"

Toronthal made no reply. Did he even understand

what Sarcany had said to him, while his eyes were fixed on the pages of his note-book and the useless combinations?

"What are you doing there?" asked Sarcany. "Tips? Diddles? Tut-tut! You are ill, Silas! You can't mix up mathematics and luck; it is luck alone we want to-day!"

"Be it so!" said Toronthal, shutting up his book.

"Eh! Of course, Silas! I only know one way to go to work," said Sarcany ironically. "But to do that we must have made special studies—and our education has been neglected on that point! Then stick to chance! She stuck to the bank yesterday! She may desert it to-day! And if she does, she'll give back all she took!"

"All!"

"Yes, all, Silas! But don't be cast down! Cheer up and keep cool!"

"And to-night if we are ruined?" asked the banker, looking straight at Sarcany.

"Well, we'll clear out of Monaco!"

"Where to?" exclaimed Toronthal. "Cursed be the day I knew you, Sarcany! Cursed be the day I employed you! I should never have been where I am if it had not been for you!"

"It is too late to abuse me, my dear fellow, and it is not quite the thing to quarrel with people who are going to help you!"

"Be careful!" said the banker.

"I am careful!" said Sarcany.

And Toronthal's threat confirmed him in his scheme to put it out of his power to injure him.

"My dear Silas," he continued, "do not worry yourself! Why should you? It excites your nerves, and you must not be nervous to-day! Have confidence, and don't despair about me! If unfortunately the déveine goes against us, think of the other millions that are waiting for me, in which you will share."

"Yes! Yes! I must have my revenge!" said Toronthal with the gambler's instinct. "The bank was too lucky yesterday—and to-night—"

"To-night we shall be rich, very rich," said Sarcany. "And I engage that we shall get back all we have lost! And then we shall leave Monte Carlo! And start for—"

"For where?"

"For Tetuan, where we have another part to play! And that a far better one!"

CHAPTER XVI.

THE GAME BEGINS.

THE saloon of the Cercle des Étrangers—otherwise the Casino—had been open since eleven o'clock. The number of players was still few; but some of the roulette tables were already in operation.

The equilibrium of these tables had previously been rectified, it being important that their horizontality should be perfect. In fact the slightest flaw affecting the movement of the ball thrown into the turning cylinder would be remarked and utilized to the detriment of the bank.

At each of the six tables of roulette 16,000 francs in gold, silver, and notes had been placed; on each of the two tables of trente-et-quarante, 150,000. This is the usual stake of the bank during the season, and it is very seldom that the administration has to replenish the starting fund. Except with a drawn game or a zero the bank must win—and it always wins. The game is immoral in itself, but it is more than that, it is stupid, for its conditions are unfair.

Round each of the roulette tables are eight croupiers, rake in hand, occupying the places reserved for them. By their side, sitting or standing, are the players and spectators. In the saloons the inspectors stroll to and fro, watching the croupiers and the players, while the waiters move about for the service of the public and the administration which employs not less than 150 people to look after the tables.

About half-past twelve the train from Nice brings its customary contingent. To-day they were perhaps rather numerous. The series of seventeen for the rouge had produced its natural result. It was a new attraction, and all who worshipped chance came to follow its vicissitudes with increased ardour.

An hour afterwards the rooms had filled. The talk was chiefly of that extraordinary run, but it was carried on in subdued voices. In these immense rooms with their prodigality of gilding, their wealth of ornamentation, the luxury of their furniture, the profusion of the lustres that poured forth their floods of gaslight, to say nothing of the long suspenders from which the green-shaded oil-lamps more specially illuminated the gaming-tables, the dominat-

ing sound, notwithstanding the crowd of visitors, was not that of conversation; it was the clatter and chinking of the gold and silver pieces as they were counted or thrown on the table, the rustling of the bank-notes, and the incessant "Rouge gagne et couleur," or "Dixsept, noir, impair et manque," in the indifferent voices of the chiefs of the parties—and a very sad sound it was!

Two of the losers who had been amongst the most prominent the evening before had not yet appeared in the saloons. Already some of the players were following the different chances, endeavouring to tap the veine of luck, some at roulette, others at trente-et-quarante. But the alternations of gain and loss seemed to be pretty equal, and it did not look as though the phenomenon of the night before would be repeated.

It was not till three o'clock that Sarcany and Toronthal entered the Casino. Before entering the gaming-room they took a stroll in the hall, where they were the object of a little public curiosity. The crowd looked at them and watched them, and wondered if they would again try a struggle with this chance that had cost them so dear. Several of the profession would willingly have taken advantage of the occasion to favour them with infallible dodges—for a consideration—had they been more accessible. The banker with a wild look in his eyes did not seem to notice what was passing around him. Sarcany was cooler and firmer than ever. Both shrank for a time from trying their last stake.

Among the people who were watching them with that special curiosity accorded chiefly to patients or convicts, there was one stranger who seemed resolved never to lose sight of them. He was a knowing-looking young man of about three-and-twenty with a thin face and pointed nose —one of those noses that seem to look at you. His eyes, of singular vivacity, were sheltered behind spectacles merely of preserver glass. As if he had live money in his veins, he kept his hands in his coat pockets to prevent their gesticulating, and he kept his feet close together in the first position, to make sure of remaining in his place. He was fashionably dressed, without any sacrifices to the latest exigencies of dandyism, and he gave himself no airs —but probably felt very ill at ease in his well-fitting clothes. For the young man—there could be no doubt about it—was nobody else but Point-Pescade!

Outside, in the gardens, Cape Matifou was in attendance. The person on whose behalf these two had come on a special mission to this heaven or hell of Monte Carlo was Dr. Antekirtt.

The vessel that had dropped them the night before at Monte Carlo point was *Electric No. 2*, of the flotilla of Antekirtta, and this was their object:—

Two days after the kidnapping on board the *Ferrato*, Carpena had been brought ashore, and in spite of his protests imprisoned in one of the casemates on the island. There he found that he had only changed one prison for another. Instead of being in the penitentiary of Ceuta, he was, although he knew it not, in the power of Dr. Antekirtt. Where was he? He could not tell. Had he gained by the change? He wondered much, and not without anxiety. He resolved at any rate to do all he could to improve his position.

And to the first question propounded by the doctor he replied with the utmost frankness.

Did he know Silas Toronthal and Sarcany?

Toronthal, no, Sarcany, yes—but he had only seen him at rare intervals.

Had Sarcany been in communication with Zirone and his band while they were in the neighbourhood of Catania?

Yes, Sarcany was expected in Sicily, and he would certainly have come, if it had not been for the unfortunate expedition which ended in the death of Zirone.

Where was he now?

At Monte Carlo, at least unless he had left that town, where he had been living for some time, and very likely with Silas Toronthal.

Carpena knew no more. But what he had just told the doctor was sufficient information for a fresh campaign.

Of course the Spaniard did not know what object the doctor had in helping him to escape from Ceuta and carrying him off; he did not know that his treachery to Andrea Ferrato was known to him who interrogated him; and he did not know that Luigi was the son of the fisherman of Rovigno. In his casemate he was as strictly guarded as he had been in the penitentiary at Ceuta without being able to communicate with any one until his fate had been decided.

One, then, of the three traitors who had brought about

the sanguinary collapse of the conspiracy of Trieste was in the hands of the doctor. There were the other two still to be seized, and Carpena had just told where they could be found.

As the doctor was known to Toronthal, and Pierre was known to Toronthal and Sarcany, it seemed best for them not to appear until they could do so with some chance of success. But now they were on the track of the accomplices it was important not to lose sight of them until circumstances favoured the attack. And so Point Pescade, to follow them wherever they went, and Cape Matifou, to lend the strong hand when needed, were sent to Monaco, where the doctor, Pierre and Luigi would come in the *Ferrato* as soon as they were wanted.

As soon as they arrived they set to work. They had no difficulty in discovering the hotel in which Toronthal and Sarcany had taken up their quarters. While Cape Matifou walked about the neighbourhood till the evening, Point Pescade kept watch. He saw the two friends come out at about one o'clock in the afternoon. It seemed that the banker was much depressed and spoke little, while Sarcany was particularly lively. During the morning Pescade had heard what had happened the previous evening in the saloons of the Cercle, that is to say, of that extraordinary series which had made so many victims, among the chief of whom were Toronthal and Sarcany. He therefore assumed that their conversation was about that curious piece of bad luck. In addition he had learnt how these two men had been heavy losers for some time, and he also assumed that they had almost exhausted their funds, and that the time was coming when the doctor could usefully intervene.

This information was contained in a telegram which Pescade, without mentioning names, sent off during the morning to Malta, whence it was forwarded by the private wire to Antekirtta.

When Sarcany and Toronthal entered the hall of the Casino, Pescade followed them; and when they entered the gaming saloons he was close behind.

It was then three o'clock in the afternoon. The play was growing animated. The banker and his companion first strolled round the rooms. For a minute or so they stopped at different tables and watched the game, but took no part in it.

Point Pescade strolled about among the spectators, but did not lose sight of them. He even thought it best, so as to disarm suspicion, to risk a few five-franc pieces on the columns and dozens of roulette, and, as was proper, he lost them—with the most exemplary coolness. But he did not avail himself of the excellent advice given him in confidence by a professor of great merit.

"To succeed, sir, you should study to lose the small stakes and win the big ones! That is the secret!"

Four o'clock struck, and then Sarcany and Toronthal thought the time had come for them to try their luck. There were several vacant places at one of the roulette tables. They seated themselves facing each other, and the chief of the table soon saw himself surrounded not only by players, but by spectators eager to assist at the revenge of the famous losers of the night before. Quite naturally Pescade found himself in the front rank of the spectators, and he was not one of those least interested in the vicissitudes of the battle.

For the first hour the chances seemed about equal. To divide them better Toronthal and Sarcany played independently of each other. They staked separately, and won a few large amounts, sometimes on simple combinations, sometimes on multiple combinations, and sometimes on many combinations at once. Luck decided neither for or against them. But between four and six o'clock it seemed to be running in their favour. At roulette the maximum is 6000 francs, and this they gained several times on full numbers.

Toronthal's hands shook as he stretched them across the table to stake his money, or as he snatched from under the rake the gold and notes of the croupiers. Sarcany was quite at his ease, and his countenance gave no sign of his emotions. He contented himself with encouraging his companion with his looks, and it was Toronthal whom chance then followed with most constancy.

Point Pescade, although rather dazzled by the constant movement of the gold and notes, kept close watch on them, and wondered if they would be prudent enough to keep the wealth which was growing under their hands, and if they would stop in time. Then the thought occurred to him that if they had that good sense—which he doubted—they would leave Monte Carlo and fly to some other corner of Europe, where he would have to follow them. If money

did not fail them they would not fall so easily into the power of Dr. Antekirtt.

"Certainly," he thought, "in every way it will be better for them to get ruined, and I am very much mistaken if that scoundrel Sarcany is the man to stop, once he is in the swim!"

Whatever were Pescade's thoughts and fears, the luck did not abandon the two friends. Three times in fact they would have broken the bank, if the chief of the table had not thrown in an additional 20,000 francs.

The strife was quite an event among the spectators, the majority of whom were in favour of the players. Was not this in revenge for the insolent series of rouge by which the administration had so largely profited during the previous evening?

At half-past six, when they suspended their play, Toronthal and Sarcany had realized more than 20,000*l.* They rose and left the roulette table. Toronthal walked with uncertain step, as if he were slightly intoxicated, intoxicated with emotion and cerebral fatigue. His companion, impassible as ever, watched him, thinking if he would be tempted to escape with the money he had won, and withdraw himself from his influence.

Without a word they passed through the hall, descended the peristyle, and walked towards their hotel.

Pescade followed them at a distance.

As he came out he saw Cape Matifou seated on a bench near one of the kiosks in the garden.

Point Pescade stepped up to him.

"Has the time come?" asked Matifou.

"What time?"

"To—to—"

"To come on the stage? No! not yet! You must wait at the wings! Have you had your dinner?"

"Yes."

"My compliments to you! My stomach is in my heels—and that is not the place for a stomach! But I will get it up again if I have time! Do not move from here till I get back!"

And Pescade rushed off down the hill after Toronthal and Sarcany.

When he found that they were at dinner in their rooms he sat down at the *table d'hôte*. He was only just in time and in half an hour, as he said, he had brought back his stomach

to the normal place that that organ occupies in the human machine.

Then he went out with a capital cigar in his mouth and took up his position opposite the hotel.

"Assuredly," he said to himself, "I must have been made for a policeman! I have mistaken my profession!"

The question he then asked himself was: Were these gentlemen going back to the Casino this evening?

About eight o'clock they appeared at the hotel door.

Pescade saw and heard that they were in eager discussion.

Apparently the banker was trying to resist once more the entreaties and injunctions of his accomplice, for Sarcany in an imperious voice was heard to say,—

"You must, Silas! I will have it so!"

They walked up the hill to the gardens of Monte Carlo. Point Pescade followed them, without being able to overhear the rest of their conversation—much to his regret.

But this is what Sarcany was saying, in a tone which admitted of no reply, to the banker whose resistance was growing feebler every minute.

"To stop, Silas, when luck is with us is madness! You must have lost your head! In the 'déveine' we faced our game like fools, and in the 'veine' we must face it like wise men. We have an opportunity, the only one perhaps, an opportunity that may never occur again, to be masters of our fate, masters of fortune, and by our own fault we shall let it escape us! Silas, do you not feel that luck—"

"If it is not exhausted," said Toronthal.

"No! a hundred times, no!" replied Sarcany. "It cannot be explained, but it can be felt, and it thrills you even to your spinal cord! A million is waiting for us tonight on the Casino tables. Yes, a million, and I will not let it slip!"

"You play, then, Sarcany."

"Me! Play alone? No! Play with you, Silas? Yes; and if we have to choose between us I will yield you my place. The 'veine' is personal, and it is manifest that to you it has returned. Play on then and win!"

In fact what Sarcany wished was that Toronthal should not be content with the few hundred thousand francs that would allow him to escape from his power; but that he would either become the millionaire he had been or be reduced to nothing. Rich, he would continue his former

life. Ruined, he would have to follow Sarcany where he pleased. In either case, he would be unable to injure him.

Resist as he might Toronthal felt all the passions of the gambler rising within him. In the miserable abasement into which he had fallen he felt afraid to go, and at the same time longed to go back to the tables. Sarcany's words set his blood on fire. Visibly luck had declared in his favour, and during the last few hours with such constancy that it would be unpardonable to stop.

The madman! Like all gamblers he spoke in the present when he should have spoken only in the past! Instead of saying, "I have been lucky"—which was true—he said "I am lucky"—which was false. And in his brain, as in that of all who trust to chance, there was no other reasoning! They forget what was recently said by one of the greatest mathematicians of France, "Chance has its caprices, it has not its customs."

Sarcany and Toronthal walked on to the Casino, followed by Pescade. There they stopped for a moment.

"Silas!" said Sarcany, "no hesitation! You have resolved to play, have you not?"

"Yes! resolved to risk everything for everything!" replied the banker in whom all hesitation had ceased when he found himself on the steps of the peristyle.

"It is not for me to influence you!" continued Sarcany. "Trust to your own inspiration, not to mine! It will not lead you astray. Are you going for roulette?"

"No—trente-et-quarante!" said Toronthal as he entered the hall.

"You are right, Silas! Listen only to yourself. Roulette has almost given you a fortune! Trente-et-quarante will do the rest!"

They entered the saloons, and walked round them. Ten minutes afterwards Pescade saw them seat themselves at one of the trente-et-quarante tables.

There in fact they could play more boldly, for if the chances of the game are simple, the maximum is 12,000 francs, and a few passes can give considerable differences in gain or loss. Hence it is the favourite game with desperate players, and at it wealth and poverty can be made with a vertiginous rapidity sufficient to raise the envy of all the Stock Exchanges of the world.

CHAPTER XVII.

A CHECK FOR SARCANY.

TORONTHAL lost his fear as soon as he was seated at the trente-et-quarante table. There was no timidity now about his play; he staked his money like a madman. And Sarcany watched his every movement, deeply interested in this supreme crisis, deeply interested in the issue.

For the first hour the alternations of loss and gain almost balanced each other, the advantage being on Toronthal's side. Sarcany and he imagined they were sure of success. They grew excited, and staked higher and higher until they staked only the maximum. But soon the luck returned to the imperturbable bank which by this maximum protects its interests in no inconsiderable measure, and which knows no transports of folly.

Then came blow after blow. The winnings during the afternoon went heap by heap. Toronthal was an awful spectacle; his face became congested, his eyes grew haggard, he clung with the twitchings and convulsions of a drowning man to the table, to his chair, to the rolls of notes, and the rouleaux of gold that his hand would hardly yield over! And no one was there to stop him on the brink of the chasm! Not a hand was stretched out to help him! Not an effort from Sarcany to tear him from the place before he was lost, before he finally sank beneath the wave of ruin!

At ten o'clock Toronthal had risked his last stake, his last maximum. He won! Then he staked again—and again—and lost. And when he rose, dazed and scared and fiercely wishing that the very walls would crumble and crush the crowd around him, he had nothing left—nothing of all the millions that had been left in the bank when the millions of Count Sandorf had poured in to its aid.

Toronthal, accompanied by Sarcany, who acted as his gaoler, left the gaming-room, crossed the hall, and hurried out of the Casino. Then they fled across the square to the footpaths leading to La Turbie.

Point Pescade was already on their traces, and as he passed had shaken up Cape Matifou as he lay half-asleep on his bench with a shout of,—

"Wake up! Eyes and legs!"

And Cape Matifou had come along with him on a trail it would not do to lose.

Sarcany and Toronthal continued to hurry on side by side, and gradually mounted the paths which twist and wind on the flank of the mountain among the olive and orange gardens. The capricious zigzags allowed Pescade and Matifou to keep them in view, although they could not get near enough to hear them.

"Come back to the hotel, Silas!" Sarcany continued to repeat in an imperious tone. "Come back, and be cool again!"

"No! we are ruined! Let us part! I do not want to see you again! I do not want—"

"Part? and why? You will follow me, Silas! To-morrow we will leave Monaco! We have enough to take us to Tetuan, and there we will finish our work!"

"No! No! Leave me, Sarcany, leave me!" said Toronthal.

And he pushed him violently aside as he tried to catch hold. Then he darted off at such speed that Sarcany had some trouble in keeping up. Unconscious of his acts, Toronthal at every step risked falling into the steep ravines above which the winding footpaths lay unrolled. Only one idea possessed him; to escape from Monte Carlo where he had consummated his ruin, to escape from Sarcany whose counsels had led him to misery, to escape without caring where he went or what became of him.

Sarcany felt that his accomplice was at last beyond him, that he was going to escape him! Ah! If the banker had not known those secrets which might ruin him, or at least irretrievably compromise the third game he wished to play, how little anxiety he would have felt for the man he had dragged to the brink of destruction! But, before he fell, Toronthal might give a last cry, and that cry he must stifle at all hazards!

Then from the thought of the crime on which he had resolved to its immediate execution was only a step, and this step Sarcany did not hesitate to take. That which he had intended to do on the road to Tetuan in the solitudes of Morocco might be done here, this very night, on this very spot which would soon be deserted!

But just at present between Monte Carlo and La Turbie a few belated wayfarers were along the slopes. A cry from

Silas might bring them to his help, and the murderer intended the murder to be committed in such a way that it would never be suspected. And so he had to wait. Higher up, beyond La Turbie and the frontier of Monaco, along the Corniche clinging to the lower buttresses of the Alps, 2000 feet above the sea, Sarcany could strike a far surer blow. Who could then come to his victim's help? How at the foot of such precipices as border that road could Toronthal's corpse be found?

But, for the last time, Sarcany tried to stop his accomplice and tempt him back to Monte Carlo.

"Come, Silas, come," said he, seizing him by the arm. "To-morrow we will begin again! I have some money left."

"No! Leave me! Leave me!" exclaimed Toronthal with an angry gesture.

And if he had been strong enough to struggle with Sarcany, if he had been armed, he might not even have hesitated to take vengeance on his old Tripolitan agent for all the evil he had done him.

With a hand strengthened by anger Toronthal thrust him aside. Then he rushed towards the last turn of the path and ran up a few steps roughly cut in the rock between the little gardens. Soon he reached the main road of La Turbie along the narrow neck which divides the Dog's Head from Mont Agel, the old frontier line between Italy and France.

"Go, then, Silas!" exclaimed Sarcany. "Go! but you will not go far!"

Then turning off to the right he scrambled over a stone hedge, scaled a garden wall, and ran on in front so as to precede Toronthal along the road.

Pescade and Matifou, although they had not heard what had passed, had seen the banker thrust Sarcany away and watched him disappear in the shade.

"Eh!" exclaimed Pescade. "Perhaps the best of them has gone! Anyhow Toronthal is worth something! And we have no choice! Come on, Cape; forward away!"

And in a few rapid strides they were close to Toronthal, who was hurrying up the road. Leaving to the left the little knoll with the tower of Augustus, he passed the houses at a run, and at length came out on the Corniche.

Point Pescade and Cape Matifou followed him, less than fifty yards behind.

But of Sarcany they thought no more. He had either taken the crest of the slope to the right, or abandoned his accomplice to return to Monte Carlo.

The Corniche is an old Roman road. When it leaves La Turbie, it drops towards Nice, running in mid-mountain by magnificent rocks, isolated cones, and profound precipices that cleave their ravines down to the railway line along the shore. Beyond, on this starry night by the light of the moon then rising in the east, there showed forth confusedly the six gulfs, the isle of Sainte Hospice, the mouth of the Var, the peninsula of Garoupe, the Cape of Antibes, the Juan Gulf, the Lerins Islands, the Gulf of Napoule, and the Gulf of Cannes, with the mountains of Esterel in the background. Here shone the harbour lights of Beaulieu at the base of the escarpments of Petite-Afrique, there of Villefranche in front of Mont Leuza, and yonder the lamps of the fishing-boats reflected on the calm waters of the open sea.

It was just after midnight. Toronthal, as soon as he had got out of La Turbie, left the Corniche, and dashed down a little road leading directly to Eza, a sort of eagle's nest with a half-savage population, boldly placed on a rock above a mass of pines and carob-trees.

The road was quite deserted. The madman kept on for some time without slackening his pace or turning his head; suddenly he threw himself off to the left down a narrow footpath running close to the high cliff along the shore, under which the railway and carriage-road pass by the tunnel.

Point Pescade and Cape Matifou hurried after him. A hundred paces further on Toronthal stopped. He had jumped on to a rock which overhung a precipice whose base, hundreds of feet below, dropped deep into the sea.

What was he going to do? Had the idea of suicide crossed his brain? Would he then end his miserable existence by hurling himself into the waves?

"A thousand devils!" exclaimed Pescade; "we must have him alive! Catch him, Cape Matifou, and hold him tight!"

But they had not gone twenty yards before they saw a man appear to the right of the path, glide along the slope among the myrtles and lentisks, and clamber up so as to reach the rock on which Toronthal stood.

It was Sarcany.

"Hallo!" exclaimed Point Pescade. "He is going to give his friend something to send him from this world into the next! Hurry up, Matifou. You take one—I'll take the other!"

But Sarcany stopped. He risked being recognized. A curse escaped his lips. Then springing off to the right before Pescade could reach him, he vanished among the bushes.

An instant afterwards, as Toronthal had gathered himself together to jump from the rock, he was seized by Cape Matifou, and pulled back on to the road.

"Let me go! Let me go!"

"Let you make a mistake, Mr. Toronthal? Oh, dear—no!" answered Point Pescade.

He was quite unprepared for this incident, which his instructions had not foreseen. But although Sarcany had escaped, Toronthal was captured, and all that could now be done was to take him to Antekirtta, where he would be received with all the honour that was his due.

"Will you forward this gentleman—at a reduced rate?" asked Point Pescade.

"With pleasure," said Matifou.

Toronthal, hardly knowing what had happened, made but very slight resistance. Pescade found a rough footpath leading to the beach, and down it he was followed by Cape Matifou, who sometimes carried and sometimes dragged his passive prisoner.

The descent was extremely difficult, and without Pescade's extraordinary activity and his friend's extraordinary strength, they would certainly have had a fatal fall. However, after risking their lives a score of times, they gained the rocks on the beach. There the shore is formed of a succession of small creeks, capriciously cut back into the sandstone, shut in by high reddish walls, and bordered by ferruginous reefs tinting the waves bright blood-colour as they curl over them.

Day had begun to break when Point Pescade found shelter at the back of a deep ravine that had been cut down into the cliff in geologic ages. Here he left Toronthal in charge of Cape Matifou.

"You will stop here!" he said.

"As long as you like."

"Twelve hours even, if I am twelve hours away?"

"Twelve hours."

"And without eating?"

"If I do not breakfast this morning I shall dine this evening—and for both of us!"

"And if you do not have dinner for two, you shall have supper for four!"

And then Cape Matifou sat down on a rock so as not to lose sight of his prisoner; and Point Pescade made his way along the shore from creek to creek towards Monaco. He was not away as long as he expected. In less than two hours he came upon the *Electric* moored in one of the deserted creeks. And an hour later that swift vessel had arrived off the ravine in which Cape Matifou seen from the sea looked like a mythological Proteus herding the sheep of Neptune.

A minute or two afterwards he and his prisoner were on board, and without having been noticed by the coast-guard or the fishermen the *Electric* was off, under full power, for Antekirtta.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE EXAMINATION OF TORONTHAL.

AND now we must return to the island.

Toronthal and Carpena were in the doctor's power, and the pursuit of Sarcany would be resumed as soon as opportunity offered. The agents entrusted with the discovery of Madame Bathory's retreat were still unresting in their endeavours—but with no result. Since his mother had disappeared with only old Borik to help her, Pierre's anxiety had been constant. What consolation could the doctor give to that twice-broken heart? When Pierre spoke of his mother how could he help thinking of Sava Toronthal whose name was never mentioned between them?

Maria Ferrato occupied one of the prettiest houses in Artenak. It was close to the Stadthaus. There the doctor's gratitude had endeavoured to ensure her all the comforts of life. Her brother lived near her, when he was not at sea occupied on some service of transport or sur-

veillance. Not a day elapsed without her visiting the doctor, or his going to see her. His affection for the children of the fishermen of Rovigno increased as he knew them better.

"How happy we are!" said Maria very often. "If Pierre could only be so!"

"He cannot be so," Luigi would answer, "until he finds his mother! But I have not lost all hope of that. Maria! with the doctor's means we ought to discover where Borik took Madame Bathory after they left Ragusa!"

"And I also have that hope, Luigi! But if he got back his mother, would he be happy?"

"No, Maria, that would be impossible until Sava Toronthal is his wife!"

"Luigi," answered Maria, "is that which seems impossible to man impossible to God?"

When Pierre had told Luigi that they were brothers he did not then know Maria Ferrato, he did not know what a sister, tender and devoted, he would find in her! And when he had become able to appreciate her, he had confided to her all his troubles! It soothed him a little to talk them over with her. What he could not say to the doctor, what he had been forbidden to say to him, he could say to Maria. He found there a loving heart, open to all compassion, a heart that understood him, that consoled him, a soul that trusted in God and did not know despair.

In the casemates of Antekirtta there was now a prisoner who knew what had become of Sava, and if she were still in Sarcany's power. This was the man who had passed her off as his daughter—Silas Toronthal. But out of respect to his father's memory Pierre would never speak to him on the subject.

Ever since his capture Toronthal had been in such a state of mind, in such physical and mental prostration that he could have told nothing even if it had been his interest to do so. But he would gain no advantage in revealing what he knew of Sava, for he did not know on the one hand that he was Dr. Antekirtt's prisoner, and on the other that Pierre Bathory was alive on this island of Antekirtta, of which the name even was unknown to him.

So that, as Maria Ferrato said, God alone could unravel the mystery!

No sketch of the state of the colony would be complete without mention of Point Pescade and Cape Matifou.

Although Sarcany had managed to escape, although his track was lost, the capture of Toronthal had been of such importance that Point Pescade was overwhelmed with thanks. And when the doctor was satisfied, the two friends were quite satisfied with themselves. They had again taken up their quarters in their cottage, and waited ready for any services that might be required, hoping that they would still be of use to the good cause.

Since their return to Antekirtta they had visited Maria and Luigi Ferrato, and then they had called on several of the notables of Artenak. Everywhere they were warmly welcomed, for everywhere they were esteemed. It was worth a journey to see Cape Matifou under such solemn circumstances, always very much embarrassed at his enormous figure taking up nearly all the room.

"But I am so small that that makes up for it!" said Point Pescade.

His constant good-humour made him the delight of the colony. His intelligence and skill were at every one's disposal. And when everything had been settled to the general satisfaction, what entertainments would he not organize, what a programme of gaiety and attraction would he not keep going in the town and its neighbourhood! Yes! If necessary Cape Matifou and Point Pescade would not hesitate to resume their old profession and astonish their Antekirttian audience with their gymnastic wonders!

Till that happy day arrived Point Pescade and Cape Matifou improved their garden under the shade of the huge trees, and their cottage was hidden beneath its mantle of bloom. The work at the little dock began to grow into shape. To see Cape Matifou lifting and carrying the huge masses of rock was convincing enough that the Provençal Hercules had lost none of his prodigious strength.

The doctor's correspondents had found no trace of Madame Bathory, and they were equally unsuccessful with regard to Sarcany. They could find no trace of his movements since he left Monte Carlo.

Did Toronthal know what had become of him? It was at the least doubtful, considering the circumstances under which they had separated on the road to Nice. And admitting that he knew, would he consent to say? Impatiently did the doctor wait until the banker was in a fit state to be questioned.

It was in a fort at the north-west angle of Artenak that Toronthal and Carpena had been secured in the most rigorous secrecy. They were known to each other but by name only, for the banker had never been mixed up with Sarcany's Sicilian affairs. And so there was a formal order against their being allowed to suspect each other's presence in this fort. They occupied two casemates far apart from each other, and they came out for exercise at different hours in different courts. Sure of the fidelity of those who had charge of them—two of the militia sergeants of Antekirtta—the doctor could be certain that no communication could take place between them.

And there was no indiscretion to fear, for none of the questions from Toronthal and Carpena as to where they were had been replied to or would be replied to. And there was nothing to lead them to suppose that they had fallen into the hands of the mysterious Dr. Antekirtt, whom Toronthal had once or twice met at Ragusa.

But to find Sarcany, to carry him off like his accomplices was now the doctor's object. And on the 16th of October having learnt that Toronthal was now strong enough to reply to any questions that might be put to him, he resolved to proceed with his examination.

To begin with, the subject was talked over by the doctor, Pierre, and Luigi, and Point Pescade, whose advice was not to be despised.

The doctor informed them of his intentions.

"But," said Luigi, "but to ask Toronthal if he knows anything about Sarcany is enough to make him suspect that we want to get hold of him."

"Well," replied the doctor, "what does it matter if Toronthal does know that now he cannot escape us?"

"One thing," answered Luigi, "is that Toronthal might think it to be to his interest to say nothing that might damage Sarcany."

"And why?"

"Because it might damage him."

"May I make an observation?" asked Pescade, who was seated a little apart.

"Certainly, my friend!" said the doctor.

"Owing," said Point Pescade, "to the peculiar circumstances under which these gentlemen parted I have reason to believe that they are not likely to care very much for each other. Mr. Toronthal must very cordially hate Mr.

Sarcany for leading him to his ruin. If then Mr. Toronthal knows where Mr. Sarcany is to be found he will have no hesitation in telling you—at least I think not. If he says nothing it is because he has nothing to say."

The reasoning was at least plausible. It was very likely that if the banker did know where Sarcany had gone to, he would willingly reveal the secret, for his true interest was to break with him.

"We shall know to-day," said the doctor. "And if Toronthal knows nothing, or will tell us nothing, I will see what next to do. But as he must be kept ignorant that he is in the power of Dr. Antekirtt, and that Pierre Bathory is alive, it must be Luigi's task to examine him."

"I am at your orders, doctor," said the sailor.

Luigi then went to the fort, and was admitted into the casemate which served as Toronthal's prison.

The banker was seated in a corner at a table. He had just left his bed. There could be no doubt that he was in much better health. It was not of his ruin that he was now thinking, nor of Sarcany. What was troubling him was why and where he was in prison, and who was the powerful individual that had carried him off.

When he saw Luigi Ferrato enter, he rose; but at a sign he resumed his seat. The following dialogue then ensued:—

"You are Silas Toronthal, formerly a banker at Trieste, and lately living at Ragusa?"

"I have no reply to that question. It is for those that keep me prisoner to know who I am."

"They do know."

"Who are they?"

"You will learn in due time."

"And who are you?"

"A man who has been sent to interrogate you."

"By whom?"

"By those with whom you have accounts to settle."

"Once more, who are they?"

"I shall not tell you."

"In that case, I shall not reply."

"Be it so! You were at Monte Carlo with a man you have known for many years, and who has not left you since your departure from Ragusa. This man is a Tripolitan by birth and his name is Sarcany. He escaped at the moment you were arrested on the road to Nice. Now this is what

I have been sent to ask you: Do you know where that man now is, and if you know, will you tell me?"

Toronthal took a long time to reply. If they want to know, he thought, where Sarcany is, it is obvious that they want to get hold of him as they have got hold of me. Why? Is it for something we have both been concerned in during the years gone by, and particularly for our schemes in the Trieste conspiracy? But how can these things have been found out, and who is there interested in avenging Mathias Sandorf and his two friends who died fifteen years ago? These were the banker's first thoughts. Then, he went on to himself, it cannot be any properly constituted authority that threatens me and my companion—and that is serious. And so, although he had no doubt that Sarcany had fled to Tetuan to Namir, where he was trying his third game and forcing it as much as he could, he resolved to say nothing about it. If later on he could gain anything by speaking, he would speak. Now he would be as reserved as possible.

"Well?" asked Luigi after giving him time to reflect.

"Sir," answered Toronthal, "I could tell you that I know where Sarcany is, and that I will not say. But in reality I do not know."

"That is your only reply?"

"My only reply, and the truth."

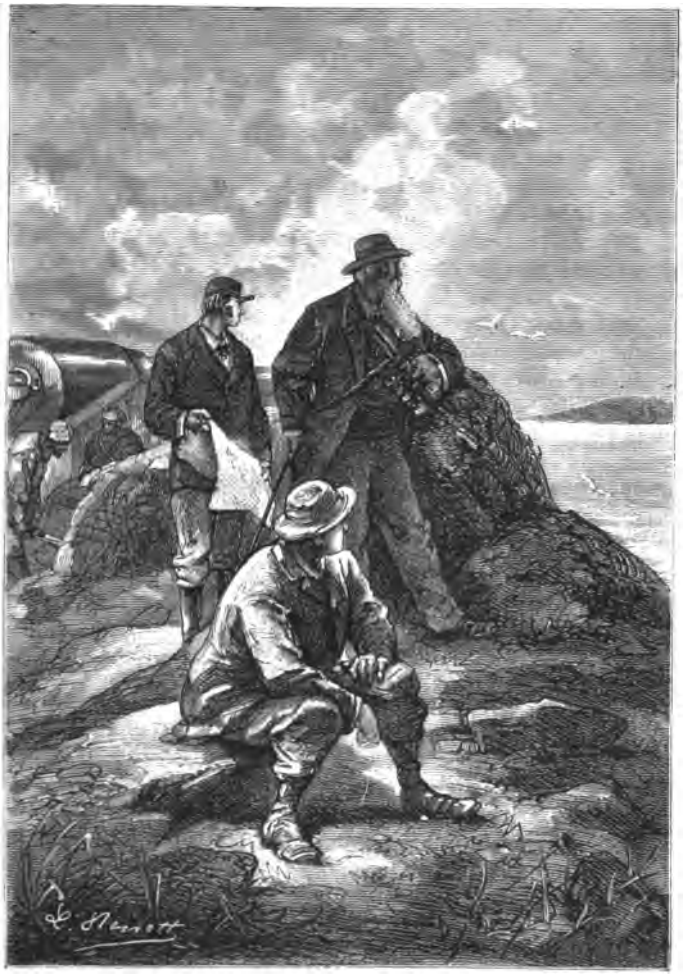
Then Luigi returned to inform the doctor of what had passed. As there was nothing inadmissible in the reply, they had to be content with it. And to discover Sarcany's retreat, all that could be done was to press on the search and spare neither pains nor money.

CHAPTER XIX.

BORIK'S LETTER.

WHILE waiting for some clue to Sarcany's whereabouts the doctor was busy with questions seriously affecting the general safety of Antekirtta.

He had recently had secret information from the Cyrenaic provinces, and had been advised to keep a sharp look-



The defences of the island.

[illegible]

[illegible] result [illegible] the [illegible] and [illegible]

[illegible] accom- [illegible] time at [illegible] in the [illegible]

[illegible] Cyrenaic [illegible] gulf, if it [illegible] name of [illegible] measured about three hundred yards [illegible] from the sea about a couple of miles [illegible] The [illegible] that this islet [illegible] the prison if any [illegible] were sen- [illegible] imprisoned after [illegible] by the regular [illegible] authority of the [illegible] event had not yet happened. And a few buildings had been erected for this purpose.

[illegible] was not fortified, and in case a hostile flotilla came to attack Antekuttu, its very position consti- tuted a danger. In fact the [illegible] become a

solid base of operations. With the facility of landing munitions and food, with the possibility of establishing a battery, it would afford an assailant an excellent centre, and all the more because there was now no time to put it into a proper state of defence.

The position of this island and the advantages it would give to an enemy of Antekirtta made the doctor uneasy. Thinking matters over he resolved to destroy it, but at the same time to make its destruction serve for the complete annihilation of the pirates who risked its capture. The project was immediately put in execution. Galleries were driven in the ground, and Kencraf became an immense mine united to Antekirtta by a submarine cable. All that was wanted was a current through the wire, and not a trace of the island would remain on the surface of the sea.

For this formidable effort of destruction the doctor had not used ordinary powder, nor gun-cotton, nor even dynamite. He knew the composition of a recently discovered explosive whose destructive power is so considerable that it may be said it is to dynamite what dynamite is to gunpowder. More manageable than nitro-glycerine and more portable, for it only requires two isolated liquids whose mixture does not take place until the moment of using them, it is refractory to congelation down to six below zero, while dynamite turns to jelly at ten below freezing, and it is only liable to explode from a violent shock, such as that from a fulminating capsule. How is it obtained? Quite simply by the action of protoxide of nitrogen, pure and anhydrous, in a liquid state on different carburets, mineral oils, vegetable oils, or animal oils derived from fatty bodies. Of these two liquids, which are harmless when apart and are soluble in each other, the explosive can be produced in the desired proportion as easily as a mixture of water and wine, without any danger in manipulation. Such is panclastite, a word meaning smashing everything—and it does smash everything.

This panclastite was buried in the islet in the form of several fougasses. By means of the cable from Antekirtta which led the spark into the charges of fulminate with which each fougass was furnished, the explosion would take place instantaneously. As it might happen that the cable could be cut and put out of action, by excess of precaution a certain number of electric batteries were buried in

the ground and joined by surface wires, so that they had only to be trod upon accidentally to bring the wires in contact, make the current, and cause the explosion. If many assailants landed on Kencraf it would thus be difficult for them to avoid utter destruction.

These different works were well advanced by the early days of November, when something occurred to take the doctor away from the island for some days.

On the 3rd of November, in the morning, the steamer engaged in bringing coals from Cardiff dropped anchor in the harbour of Antekirtta. During the voyage she had had to put in at Gibraltar. There at the post-office, waiting "to be called for," the captain found a letter addressed to the doctor, a letter which the coast offices had been sending after him from time to time without being able to find him.

The doctor took the letter, the envelope of which was crowded with postmarks—Malta, Catania, Ragusa, Ceuta, Otranto, Malaga, Gibraltar.

The superscription—in a large shaky hand—was evidently that of somebody who was not accustomed or perhaps had not the strength to write many words. The envelope bore but the name—that of the doctor—with the following pathetic recommendation :—

"Dr. Antekirtt,
"To the merciful care of God."

The doctor tore open the envelope, opened the letter—a sheet of paper now yellow with age—and read as follows :—

"DOCTOR,—May God bring this letter to your hands! I am very old! I am going to die! She will be alone in the world! In the last days of a life that has been so sorrowful have pity on Madame Bathory! Come and help her! Come!

"Your humble servant,
"BORIK."

In a corner was the word "Carthage," and below it "Regency of Tunis."

The doctor was alone in the saloon in the Stadthaus when he received this letter. A cry of joy and of despair escaped him—of joy at having come on the track of Madame Bathory—of despair, or rather of fear, for the

marks on the envelope showed that the letter was nearly a month old.

Luigi was immediately summoned.

"Luigi," said the doctor, "tell Captain Kostrik to get the *Ferrato* under steam in two hours."

"In two hours she will be ready for sea," answered Luigi. "Is she for you, doctor?"

"Yes."

"Is it to be a long voyage?"

"Three or four days only."

"Are you going alone?"

"No! Find Pierre and tell him to be ready to go with me."

"Pierre is away, but he will be back in an hour from the works at Kencraf."

"I also want your sister to come with us. Let her prepare to do so at once."

"At once."

And Luigi immediately went out to execute the orders he had just received.

An hour afterwards Pierre arrived at the Stadthaus.

"Read," said the doctor.

And he showed him Borik's letter.

CHAPTER XX.

THE APPARITION.

THE steam yacht went out a little before noon. Her passengers were the doctor, Pierre and Maria, who had come to look after Madame Bathory in the event of its being impossible to take her back immediately from Carthage to Antekirtta.

There is no need to say much about what Pierre felt when he knew he was on his way to meet his mother. But why had Borik hurried her off so precipitately from Ragusa to this out-of-the-way spot in Tunis? In what state of misery would they be found? To the anxieties Pierre confided to her Maria did not cease to respond with words of sympathy and hope.

The *Ferrato* was driven at her utmost speed, and attained a mean of at least fifteen knots. The distance between the Gulf of Sidra and Cape Bon, the north-east point of Tunis, is about 620 miles; from Cape Bon to La Goulette, which is the port of Tunis, is only about an hour and a half's run for a steamer. In thirty hours, therefore, barring accidents, the *Ferrato* would reach her destination.

The sea was smooth outside the gulf, but the wind blew from the north-west, but with no signs of increasing. Captain Kostrik steered for a little below Cape Bon, so as to get the shelter of the land, in case the breeze freshened. He did not, therefore, sight the island of Pantellaria half-way between Cape Bon and Malta, for he intended to round the cape as closely as possible.

As it bends out of the Gulf of Sidra, the shore line is much cut into towards the west, and describes a wide curve. This is the coast of Tripoli running up to the Gulf of Gabes, between the Island of Dscherba and the town of Sfax; then the line trends a little to the east towards Cape Dinias, to form the Gulf of Hammamet; and it thence develops south and north to Cape Bon.

It was towards the Gulf of Hammamet that the *Ferrato* was headed. There it was she would make the land and hug it till she got to La Goulette.

During the 3rd of November and the following night the size of the waves increased considerably. It takes but little wind to raise the Syrtic sea, and through it flow the most capricious currents in the Mediterranean. In the morning at eight o'clock land was sighted at Cape Dinias, and under the shelter of the high shore the progress became rapid and easy.

The *Ferrato* ran along two miles away from the beach. Beyond the Gulf of Hammamet, in the latitude of Kelibia, there lies the little creek of Sidi Yussuf, sheltered on the north by a long ridge of rocks. Round the curve is a magnificent sandy beach with a background of low hills covered with stunted bushes that grow in a soil far richer in stones than in vegetable mould. This range of hills joins on to the "djebels," which form the mountains in the interior. Here and there, like white spots in the distant verdure, are a few abandoned marabouts. In front is a small ruined fort, and higher up there is one in better repair built on the hill that shuts in the creek towards the north.

The place was not deserted. Close to the rocks were several Levantine vessels, xebecs and polaccas, anchored in about five or six fathoms; but such was the transparency of the green water that the black rocks and streaked sand beneath them on which the anchors lay and to which refraction gave the most fantastic forms, could be plainly seen.

Along the beach at the foot of the small sand hills with their lentisks and tamarinds, a "douar," composed of some twenty huts, displayed its yellow-striped roofs, and looked like a large Arab mantle thrown in a heap on the shore. Outside the folds of the mantle were a few sheep and goats, seeming at the distance like large black crows that a gunshot would frighten into noisy flight. A dozen camels, some stretched on the sand, others motionless as if turned to stone, ruminated near a narrow strip of rock that served as a landing stage.

As the *Ferrato* steamed past Sidi Yussuf, the doctor noticed that arms, ammunition, and a few field-pieces were being taken ashore; and owing to its remote position on the confines of Tunis, the creek is well fitted for such contraband trade. Luigi pointed out to the doctor what was going on.

"Yes, Luigi," he said, "and if I am not mistaken, the Arabs are the destined owners of those weapons. Are they for the use of the mountaineers against the French troops landed at Tunis? I do not think so, somehow. I think they must be for the Senousists, our land and water pirates now gathering in the Cyrenaic? I fancy those Arabs are more of the type of the tribes in the interior than in the Tunisian province."

"But," asked Luigi, "why do not the authorities of the regency or the French authorities stop that landing of arms and ammunition?"

"At Tunis they hardly know what passes on the other side of Cape Bon, and when the French become masters of Tunisia it will take them a long time to reduce the coast to the east of the djebels into order! At any rate, the unshipment looks very suspicious, and if it were not that the speed of the *Ferrato* prevents their making an attempt, I expect the flotilla would have come out to attack us."

If the Arabs had any notion of doing so, there was nothing to fear from them. In less than half an hour the yacht had passed Sidi Yussuf. Then, having reached the

extremity of Cape Bon, standing out in bold outline from the Tunisian range, she swiftly steamed by the lighthouse which rises on the point with the superbly rugged pile of rocks around it.

The *Ferrato* then at full speed shot across the gulf of Tunis between Cape Bon and Cape Carthage. On the left runs the series of escarpments of the "djebels," Bon Karnin, Rossas and Zaghouan, with a few villages half hidden in their gorges. On the right, in all the splendour of the Arab Kasbah, in the full glare of the sun shone the sacred city of Sibi-Bou-Saïd, which was perhaps one of the suburbs of ancient Carthage. In the background not far from Lake Bahira, lay Tunis, a mere mass of white, a little behind the arm with which La Goulette welcomes its visitors from Europe. Two or three miles from the port lay a squadron of French vessels; then, more in the offing, a few merchant ships were riding at anchor, and with their fluttering flags giving life to the roadstead.

In an hour the *Ferrato* had dropped anchor at about three cable-lengths from the wharf. As soon as the necessary formalities were complied with pratique was given to her passengers. The doctor, Pierre, Luigi and his sister took their places in the gig, which immediately bore them ashore. After rounding the mole they glided into that narrow canal crowded with vessels ranged along both wharves, and reached that irregular square planted with trees, and bordered with villas, shops, and cafés, swarming with Maltese Jews, Arabs, and French and native soldiers, into which runs the main street of La Goulette.

Borik's letter was dated from Carthage, and the name, with a few ruins scattered on the ground, is about all that remains of the old city of Hannibal.

To reach the shore at Carthage there is no need to take the little Italian railway that runs between La Goulette and Tunis, skirting the Lake of Bahira. The hard, fine sand affords excellent walking, or the dusty road across the plain a little behind it gives easy access to the base of the hill on which stand the chapel of Saint Louis and the convent of the Algerian missionaries.

At the time the doctor and his companions landed, several carriages, drawn by pigmy horses, were waiting in the square. To hail one and order it to drive rapidly to Carthage was the work of a minute. The carriage, after traversing the main road of La Goulette at a trot, passed

by the sumptuous villas that the rich Tunisians inhabit during the hot season, and the palaces of Keredin and Mustapha that rise on the shore, close to the outskirts of the Carthaginian city. Two thousand years ago the rival of Rome covered the whole extent between the point of La Goulette and the cape that still bears its name.

The chapel of Saint Louis is built on a knoll about two hundred feet high, on which the King of France died in 1270. It occupies the middle of a small enclosure containing many more remains of ancient architecture and broken statuary, vases, columns, capitals, and stelæ than trees or shrubs. Behind it is the missionary convent, of which Père Delathe, the archæologist, is now the prior. The top of this enclosure commands the stretch of sand from Cape Carthage up to the first houses of La Goulette.

At the foot of the hill are a few palaces of Arab design, with piers in English style, which run out into the sea for the vessels of the roadstead to unload alongside. Beyond is the superb gulf of which every promontory, point and mountain has historic interest.

But if there are palaces and villas on the site of the old harbours, there are on the slopes of the hill among the ruins a few wretched houses inhabited by the poor of the place. Most of these have no other trade beyond searching for more or less precious Carthaginian relics, bronzes, stones, pottery, medals, and coins, which the convent buys for its archæological museum—rather for pity's sake than because they are wanted.

Some of these refuges are merely two or three fragments of wall, such as the ruins of the marabouts which lie whitening in the broiling sun.

The doctor and his companions journeyed from one to the other in search of Madame Bathory, hardly believing she could have been reduced to such misery. Suddenly the carriage stopped before a dilapidated building, with a door that was merely a hole in a wall almost overgrown with bushes.

An old woman in a black cloak was seated before this door.

Pierre had recognized her! He uttered a cry! It was his mother! He rushed towards her, he knelt to her, he clasped her in his arms! But she replied not to his caresses, and did not even seem to recognize him!

"My mother! my mother!" he exclaimed, while the doctor, Luigi and his sister crowded round her.

At the same moment an old man appeared at the angle of the ruin.

It was Borik.

At first sight he recognized Dr. Antekirtt, and his knees shook. Then he caught sight of Pierre—Pierre, whose body he had followed to the cemetery of Ragusa! The shock was too much for him! He fell motionless to the ground, and as he did so these words escaped from his lips,—

"She has lost her reason!"

And so when the son recovered his mother all that was left to him was an inert body. And the sudden appearance of her son, whom she thought to be dead, had not been enough to restore her to any recollection of the past.

Madame Bathory rose; her eyes were haggard, but still there was in them the light of life. Then, without seeing anything, without uttering a single word, she entered the marabout, and Maria, at a sign from the doctor, followed her in.

Pierre remained at the door without daring to move,—without being able to do so.

With the doctor's help Borik began to regain his consciousness.

"You, Mr. Pierre! You! Alive!"

"Yes!" answered Pierre. "Yes! alive! Though it would be better if I were dead!"

In a few words the doctor informed Borik of what had taken place at Ragusa. Then the old servant told him the story of those two months of misery.

"But," asked the doctor at the outset, "was it her son's death that caused Madame Bathory to lose her reason?"

"No, sir, no!" answered Borik.

And this is what he told them.

Madame Bathory, being alone in the world, had left Ragusa and gone to live at the little village of Vinticello, where she had a few relatives. While there she had been planning how to dispose of her house, as she had no further intention of inhabiting it.

Six weeks afterwards, accompanied by Borik, she had returned to Ragusa to arrange all these matters, and when she reached the house in the Rue Marinella she found that a letter had been dropped into the box.

Having read the letter—and the reading seemed to have given her mind its first shock—Madame Bathory screamed

and ran into the road, and down into the Stradone, and knocked at Toronthal's door, which opened immediately.

"Toronthal's?" exclaimed Pierre.

"Yes," answered Borik; "and when I came up to Madame Bathory she did not recognize me. She was—"

"But why did my mother go to Toronthal's? Yes! Why?" asked Pierre, looking at the old servant as if he were quite mystified.

"She probably desired to speak with Mr. Toronthal," answered Borik, "and two days before Mr. Toronthal had left his house with his daughter, and no one knew where he had gone."

"And this letter? this letter?"

"I have not been able to find it, Mr. Pierre," answered the old man. "Madame Bathory must have lost it or destroyed it, or had it taken from her; and I do not know what it was about."

There was some mystery here. The doctor, who had listened without saying a word, could see no reason for this act of Madame Bathory's. What imperious motive had urged her to the house in the Stradone, which everything would have made her avoid; and why, when she learnt that Toronthal had disappeared, had she received so violent a shock as to drive her mad?

Borik's story only took a few minutes. He succeeded in keeping Madame Bathory's mental state secret, and busied himself in realizing her property. The calm, gentle, mania of the unhappy widow allowed him to act without suspicion. His only object, then, was to leave Ragusa, and obtain shelter in some distant town, it mattered not where, provided it was far away from that accursed place. A few days afterwards, he took Madame Bathory on board one of the steamers that trade with the Mediterranean coast, and arrived at Tunis, or rather La Goulette. There he resolved to stop.

And then, in this deserted marabout, he devoted himself entirely to the care of Madame Bathory, who seemed to have lost her speech as well as her senses. But his resources were so slight that he could see the time coming when they would both be reduced to the last misery.

It was then that the old servant thought of Dr. Antekirtt, of the interest he had always taken in the Bathory family. But Borik did not know his usual residence. He, however, wrote, and the letter he trusted, in despair, to

Providence, and it appeared that Providence had brought the letter into the doctor's hands.

There could be no doubt what was next to be done. Madame Bathory, without any resistance on her part, was placed in the carriage with Borik and Pierre and Maria. And then the doctor and Luigi walked back by way of the beach, while the carriage returned along the road to La Goulette.

An hour afterwards they all embarked on the yacht, which was under steam. The anchor was immediately weighed, and as soon as she had doubled Cape Bon the *Ferrato* steered so as to sight the lights of Pantellaria. The day after the next, in the early morning, she ran into harbour at Antekirtta.

Madame Bathory was taken ashore at once, led to Artenak, and installed in one of the rooms at the Stadthaus.

Another sorrow for Pierre Bathory! His mother deprived of reason, become mad under circumstances which would probably remain inexplicable! If the cause of this madness could be ascertained, some salutary reaction might have been provoked, but nothing about it was known and nothing could be known.

"She must be cured! Yes! she must!" said the doctor, who devoted himself to the task.

And the task was a difficult one, for Madame Bathory remained quite unconscious of her actions, and not a remembrance of her past life did she display.

Could the power of suggestion that the doctor possessed in so high a degree be employed to change the mental state of the patient? Could she by magnetic influence be recalled to reason and kept in that state until the reaction took place?

Pierre adjured the doctor to try even the impossible to cure his mother.

"No!" answered the doctor. "That would not do. Mad people are the most refractory subjects for the purpose! For the influence to act, your mother must have a will of her own, for which I can substitute mine! And I assure you I should have no influence over her."

"No! I will not admit it," said Pierre, who would not be convinced. "I will not admit that we shall not see the day when my mother will recognize me—her son she believes to be dead."

"Yes! That she believes to be dead!" answered the

doctor. "But perhaps if she believed you to be alive, or if she saw you coming out of the grave. If she saw you appear—"

The doctor paused at the thought. Why should not a sudden shock, provoked under favourable conditions, have some effect on Madame Bathory?

"I will try it!" he exclaimed.

And when he explained the experiment on which he based his hope of curing his mother, Pierre threw himself into the doctor's arms.

From that day the scenery and surroundings to bring about the success of the attempt were the object of anxious care. The idea was to revive in Madame Bathory the effects of memory, of which her derangement had deprived her, and to revive it under such striking circumstances that a reaction would be caused in her brain.

The doctor appealed to Borik, to Point Pescade, so as to reproduce with sufficient exactness the appearance of the cemetery at Ragusa and the monument which served as the tomb of the Bathory family. And in the cemetery of the island, about a mile from Artenak, under a group of trees they built a small chapel as much as possible like that at Ragusa. Everything was done to produce the most striking resemblance between the two monuments; and on the wall there was placed a slab of black marble bearing the name of Stephen Bathory, with the date of his death, 1867.

On the 13th of November the time seemed come for beginning the preparatory attempt to revive Madame Bathory's reason.

About seven o'clock in the evening, Maria and Borik took the widow's arm, and leading her from the Stadthaus, walked out to the cemetery. There Madame Bathory remained before the threshold of the little chapel motionless and silent as always, although by the light of the lamp which burnt within, she could read the name of Stephen Bathory engraved on the marble slab. Only when Maria and the old man knelt as they went along did she have a faint look of intelligence in her eyes, which almost instantly vanished.

An hour afterwards she was taken back to the Stadthaus followed by a crowd who had come to join the procession at this first experiment.

The next and succeeding mornings the experiments were

continued, but without result. Pierre looked on with poignant emotion and despaired of their success, although the doctor told him that time would be his most useful auxiliary. He did not intend to strike his last blow until Madame Bathory had been sufficiently prepared to feel its full force,

Each time she visited the cemetery a slight but unmistakable change took place in her; and one evening when Borik and Maria were kneeling at the chapel door she had slowly come forward, put her hand on the iron grating, looked at the wall beyond brightly illuminated by the lamp, and hurriedly run back.

Maria, returning to her, heard her murmur a name several times.

It was the first time for months that her lips had opened to speak!

But what was the astonishment—more than the astonishment—the stupefaction of those who heard her!

The name was not that of her son, of Pierre—it was the name of Sava!

If we can understand what Pierre felt, who can describe what passed in the doctor's soul when he heard this unexpected invocation of Sava Toronthal? But he made no observation; he gave no sign of what he felt.

Another evening the experiment was repeated. This time as if she had been led by an invisible hand Madame Bathory went and knelt on the chapel step. She bowed her head, a sigh escaped her, and tears fell from her eyes. But that evening not a name escaped her lips, and it seemed as though she had forgotten Sava.

She was taken back to the Stadthaus and there showed herself a prey to unusual nervous agitation. The calm hitherto characteristic of her mental state gave place to singular exaltation. Some work of vitality was evidently going on in her brain, and this looked hopeful.

The night proved troubled and restless. She several times muttered vague words which Maria could scarcely hear, but it was evident she was dreaming. And if she dreamt, reason was coming back, and she might be cured if her reason would only stay with her till she woke.

Then the doctor decided to make a fresh attempt on the morrow, of which the surroundings should be more striking.

During the whole of this 18th she continued under violent mental excitement. Maria was much struck with

her state, and Pierre, who spent nearly all his time with his mother, felt a presentiment of happy augury.

The night arrived—a night dark and gloomy without a breath of wind, after a day that had been very warm in this low latitude of Antekirtta.

About half-past eight the patient, accompanied by Maria and Borik, left the Stadthaus. The doctor, with Luigi and Point Pescade, followed, a few steps behind.

The whole of the little colony was anxiously expectant of the success of what was going to happen. A few torches beneath the trees threw a fuliginous light on the chapel and its surroundings. Afar at regular intervals the bell in Artenak church sounded a funeral knell.

Pierre was the only one absent from the procession which advanced slowly towards the cemetery. But if he was not there, it was because he was to appear in the closing scene of this final experiment.

It was about nine o'clock when Madame Bathory reached the cemetery. Suddenly she shook herself free from Maria's arm, and walked towards the little chapel. She was allowed to do as she pleased under the influence of this new feeling which seemed to have entire possession of her.

Amid a profound silence, broken only by the tolling of the bell, Madame Bathory stopped, and remained motionless. Then she knelt on the first step, and bent down, and then they heard her weep.

At this moment the railing of the chapel slowly opened. Wrapped in a white shroud, as if he had risen from his grave, Pierre appeared in the light.

"My son! My son!" exclaimed Madame Bathory, who stretched out her arms and fell senseless.

It mattered little. Memory and thought had returned to her! The mother was awakened! She had recognized her son!

The doctor soon revived her, and when she had recovered her consciousness, when her eyes rested on her son,—

"Alive! My Pierre! Alive!" she exclaimed.

"Yes! Living for your sake, mother, living to love you."

"And to love her—her also!"

"Her?"

"Her! Sava!"

"Sava Toronthal?" exclaimed the doctor.

"No! Sava Sandorf!"

And Madame Bathory took from her pocket the crumpled letter which contained the last lines written by the hand of the dying Madame Toronthal, and held it out to the doctor.

The letter left no doubt as to Sava's birth! Sava was the child that had been carried away from the Castle of Artenak! Sava was the daughter of Count Mathias Sandorf!

CHAPTER XXI.

A SQUEEZE FROM CAPE MATIFOU.

COUNT MATHIAS, as we know, wished to remain Dr. Antekirtt to the whole colony except Pierre, until his work had been accomplished. When his daughter's name was suddenly pronounced by Madame Bathory, he had sufficient control over himself to suppress his emotion. But his heart for a moment ceased to beat, and he fell on the threshold of the chapel as if he had been struck by lightning!

And so his daughter was alive! And she loved Pierre, and she was loved! And it was Mathias Sandorf who had been doing everything to prevent the marriage! And the secret which gave Sava back to him would never have been discovered had not Madame Bathory's reason been restored to her as by a miracle!

But what had happened fifteen years ago at the Castle of Artenak? That was obvious enough! This child, the sole heiress of Count Sandorf's wealth, whose death had never been proved, had been stolen by Toronthal. And shortly afterwards when the banker settled at Ragusa, Madame Toronthal had had to bring up Sava Sandorf as her own daughter.

Such had been the scheme devised by Sarcany and executed by his accomplice Namir. Sarcany knew perfectly that Sava would come into possession of a considerable fortune when she reached eighteen; and when she had become his wife, he would then procure her acknowledgment as the heiress of Sandorf's estates. This was to be the crowning triumph of his abominable existence. He would become the master of Artenak!

Had he then foiled this odious scheme? Yes, undoubtedly. If the marriage had taken place Sarcany would already have availed himself of all its advantages.

And now how great was the doctor's grief! Was it not owing to him that there had been brought about this deplorable chain of events; at first in refusing his help to Pierre, then in allowing Sarcany to pursue his plans, then in not rendering him harmless at the meeting at Cattaro, then in not giving back to Madame Bathory the son he had snatched from death? In fact, what misfortunes would have been avoided had Pierre been with his mother when Madame Toronthal's letter had reached the house in the Rue Marinella! Knowing that Sava was Sandorf's daughter, would not Pierre have known how to get her away from the violence of Sarcany and Toronthal?

Where was Sava Sandorf now? In the power of Sarcany, of course! But where was she hidden? How could they get her away? And besides, in a few weeks she would attain her eighteenth year—the limit fixed for the time during which she could be the heiress—and that fact would impel Sarcany to use every effort to make her consent to the marriage!

In an instant this succession of thoughts passed through Dr. Antekirtt's mind. As he built together the past, as Madame Bathory and Pierre were themselves doing, he felt the reproaches, unmerited assuredly, that Stephen Bathory's wife and son might be tempted to assail him with. And now as things had turned out, would he be able to bring together Pierre and her who for all and for himself he must still continue to call Sava Toronthal?

He must before everything find Sava, his daughter—whose name, added to that of the Countess Rena his wife, he had given to the schooner *Savarena*, as he had given that of *Ferrato* to his steam yacht! But there was not a day to lose.

Already Madame Bathory had been led back to the Stadthaus, when the doctor came to visit her accompanied by Pierre, whom he left to his alternations of joy and despair. Much enfeebled by the violent reaction whose effects had just been produced in her, but cured of her illness, Madame Bathory was sitting at the window when the doctor and her son entered.

Maria, seeing it would be better to leave them together, retired to the large saloon.

Dr. Antekirtt then approached her, and laid his hand on Pierre's shoulder.

"Madame Bathory," he said, "I have already made your son my own! But what he is now through friendship I will do all the more to make him through paternal love when he marries my daughter Sava.

"Your daughter!" exclaimed Madame Bathory.

"I am Count Mathias Sandorf."

Madame Bathory jumped up and fell back into her son's arms. But if she could not speak she could hear. In a few words Pierre told her what she did not know, how Mathias Sandorf had been saved by the devotion of the fisherman Andrea Ferrato, why for fifteen years he had passed as dead, and how he had reappeared at Ragusa as Dr. Antekirtt. He told her how Sarcany and Toronthal had betrayed the Trieste conspirators, and related the treachery of Carpena of which Ladislas Zathmar and his father had been the victims, and how the doctor had taken him from the cemetery of Ragusa to associate him in the work he had undertaken. He finished his story by stating that two of the scoundrels, the banker Toronthal and the Spaniard Carpena, were then in their power, but that the third, Sarcany, was still at large—the Sarcany who desired Sava Sandorf for his wife!

For an hour the doctor, Madame Bathory, and her son went over in detail the facts regarding the young lady. Evidently Sarcany would stick at nothing to bring about Sava's consent to the marriage, which would bring him the wealth of Count Sandorf; and this state of affairs was what principally exercised them during their interview. But if the plans of the past had now collapsed, those of the present promised to be even more formidable. Above everything it was necessary to move heaven and earth to recover Sava.

It was in the first place agreed that Madame Bathory and Pierre should alone know that Mathias Sandorf was concealed under the name of Dr. Antekirtt. To reveal the secret would be to say that Sava was his daughter, and in the interest of the new search that was to be undertaken it was necessary to keep this quiet.

"But where is Sava? Where are we to look for her?" asked Madame Bathory.

"We will know!" answered Pierre, in whom despair had given place to an energy that nothing could quench.

"Yes! We will know!" said the doctor. "And in admitting that Silas Toronthal does not know where Sarcany is we cannot suppose that he does not know where my daughter—"

"And if he knows he must tell!" said Pierre.

"Yes! He must speak!" answered the doctor.

"Now!"

"Now!"

The doctor, Madame Bathory, and Pierre would remain in this state of uncertainty no longer.

Luigi, who was with Point Pescade and Cape Matifou, in the large saloon of the Stadthaus, where Maria had joined them, was immediately called in. He received orders to go with Cape Matifou to the fort, and bring back Silas Toronthal.

A quarter of an hour afterwards the banker left the casemate that served him for a prison, and with his hand grasped in the large hand of Cape Matifou, was brought along the main street of Artenak. Luigi, whom he had asked where he was going, had given him no reply, and the banker, who knew not into what powerful person's hands he had fallen, was extremely uneasy.

Toronthal entered the hall. He was preceded by Luigi, and held all the time by Cape Matifou. He just saw Point Pescade, but he did not see Madame Bathory and her son, who had stepped aside. Suddenly he found himself in the presence of the doctor, with whom he had vainly endeavoured to enter into communication at Ragusa.

"You! You!" he exclaimed. "Ah!" he said, collecting himself with an effort. "It is Dr. Antekirtt, who arrests me on French territory. He it is who keeps me prisoner against all law."

"But not against all justice!" interrupted the doctor.

"And what have I done to you?" asked the banker, to whom the doctor's presence had evidently given confidence. "Yes! What have I done to you?"

"To me? You will know soon," answered the doctor. "But to start with, Silas Toronthal, ask what have you done to this unhappy woman—"

"Madame Bathory!" exclaimed the banker, recoiling before the widow who advanced towards him.

"And to her son!" added the doctor.

"Pierre! Pierre Bathory!" stammered Silas Toronthal.

And he would certainly have fallen if Cape Matifou had not held him upright.

And so Pierre, whom he thought dead, Pierre whose funeral he had seen, who had been buried in the cemetery at Ragusa, Pierre was there, before him, like a spectre from the tomb! Toronthal grew frightened. He felt that he could not escape the chastisement for his crimes. He felt he was lost.

"Where is Sava?" asked the doctor abruptly.

"My daughter?"

"Sava is not your daughter! Sava is the daughter of Count Mathias Sandorf, whom Sarcany and you sent to death after having treacherously denounced him and his companions, Stephen Bathory and Ladislas Zathmar!"

At this formal accusation, the banker was overwhelmed. Not only did Dr. Antekirtt know that Sava was not his daughter, but he knew that she was the daughter of Count Mathias Sandorf! He knew how and by whom the Trieste conspirators had been betrayed!

"Where is Sava?" said the doctor, restraining himself only by a violent effort of his will. "Where is Sava, whom Sarcany, your accomplice in all these crimes, stole fifteen years ago from Artenak? Where is Sava, whom that scoundrel is keeping in a place you know, to which you have sent her that her consent to this horrible marriage may be obtained! For the last time, where is Sava?"

So alarming had been the doctor's attitude, so threatening had been his words, that Toronthal did not reply. He saw that the present position of the girl might prove his safety. He felt that his life might be respected so long as he kept the secret.

"Listen," continued the doctor, beginning to recover his coolness, "listen to me, Silas Toronthal. Perhaps you think you can assist your accomplice! Perhaps you think you may betray him. Well, know this: Sarcany, in order to ensure your silence after he had ruined you, tried to assassinate you as he assassinated Pierre Bathory at Ragusa! Yes! at the moment my people seized you on the road to Nice he was going to stab you! And now will you persist in your silence?"

Toronthal, obstinately imagining that his silence would compel them to make terms with him, said nothing.

"Where is Sava? Where is Sava?" said the doctor, getting angry.

"I do not know! I do not know!" replied Toronthal, resolved to keep his secret.

Suddenly he screamed, and writhing with pain he tried in vain to thrust Matifou away.

"Mercy! Mercy!" he cried.

Matifou, unconsciously perhaps, was squeezing his hand in his own.

"Mercy!"

"Will you speak?"

"Yes! Yes! Sava—Sava—" said Toronthal, who could only speak in broken sentences—"Sava—in Namir's house, —Sarcany's spy—at Tetuan!"

Cape Matifou let go Toronthal's arm, and the arm remained motionless.

"Take back the prisoner!" said the doctor. "We know what we wished to know!"

And Luigi took back Toronthal to his casemate.

Sava at Tetuan! Then when the doctor and Pierre, hardly two months before, were at Ceuta capturing the Spaniard only a few miles separated them from Sava!

"This very night, Pierre, we start for Tetuan."

CHAPTER XXII.

THE HOUSE AT TETUAN.

IN those days the railroad did not run from Tunis to the Moorish frontier; and to reach Tetuan as quickly as possible the doctor and his companions had to embark in one of the swiftest boats of the Antekirttian flotilla.

Before midnight *Electric No. 2* had been got ready, and was on her way across the Syrtic Sea.

On board were the doctor, Pierre, Luigi, Point Pescade, and Cape Matifou. Pierre was known to Sarcany, the others were not. When they reached Tetuan they would consult as to their proceedings. Would it be better to act by stratagem or force? That would depend on Sarcany's position in this absolutely Moorish town, on his arrangements in Namir's house, and on the adherents he

could command. Before everything they must get to Tetuan!

From the end of the Syrtis to the Moorish frontier is about two thousand five hundred kilometres—nearly thirteen hundred and fifty nautical miles. At full speed *Electric No.* 2 could do her twenty-seven miles an hour. How many railway-trains there are that are not as fast! That long steel tube, offering no resistance to the wind, could slip through the waves without hindrance and would reach its destination in fifty hours.

Before daybreak the next morning the *Electric* had doubled Cape Bon. Then having crossed the Gulf of Tunis it only took her a few hours to lose sight of Point Bizerte, La Calle, Bone, the Iron Cape, whose metallic mass is said to disturb the compasses, the Algerian coast, Stora, Bougie, Dellys, Algiers, Cherchell, Mostaganem, Oran, Nemours, then the shores of Riff, the Point of Mellelah which, like Ceuta, is Spanish, and Cape Tres Forcas, whence the continent rounds off to Cape Negro,—all this panorama of the African coast-line was unrolled during the 20th and 21st of November without either incident or accident. Never had the machine worked by the currents from the accumulators had such a run. If the *Electric* had been perceived either along the shore or crossing the gulfs from cape to cape, there would have been telegrams as to the appearance of a phenomenal ship, or perhaps of a cetacean of extraordinary power that no steamer in the Mediterranean waters had yet exceeded in speed.

About eight o'clock in the evening the doctor, Pierre, Luigi, Point Pescade, and Cape Matifou landed at the mouth of the small river of Tetuan, in which their rapid vessel had dropped anchor. A hundred yards from the bank, in the centre of a small caravanserai, they found mules and a guide to take them into the town, which was about four miles distant. The price asked was agreed to instantly, and the party set off.

In this part of the Riff, Europeans have nothing to fear from the indigenous population, nor even from the nomads of the district. The country is thinly peopled and almost uncultivated. The road lays across a plain dotted with straggling shrubs—and it is a road made by the feet of the beasts rather than by the hand of man. On one side is the river with muddy banks, alive with the croak of frogs and the chirp of crickets, and bearing a few fishing-boats moored

in the centre or drawn up on the shore. On the other side, to the right, is the outline of the bare hills running off to join the mountain masses of the south.

The night was magnificent. The moon bathed the whole country in its light. Reflected by the mirror of the river the moonlight seemed to soften the sharp outline of the heights on the northern horizon. In the distance, white and gleaming, lay the town of Tetuan—a shining patch in the dark clouds of mist beyond.

The Arab did not waste much time on the road. Twice or thrice they had to pull up before isolated houses, where the windows on the side not lighted by the moon threw a yellow beam across the shadow, and out would come two or three Moors with a lantern, who, after a hurried conference with the guide, would let them pass.

Neither the doctor nor his companion spoke a word. Absorbed in their thoughts, they left the mules to follow the road which here and there was cut through by gullies strewed with boulders, or cumbered with roots which they avoided with sure feet. The largest of the mules was, however, very often in the rear. This might have been expected, for it bore Cape Matifou.

Its difficulties led Point Pescade to reflect,—

"Perhaps it would have been better for Cape Matifou to carry the mule instead of the mule carrying Cape Matifou!"

About half-past nine the Arab stopped before a large blank wall, surmounted by towers and battlements, on that side defending the town. In this wall was a low door, decorated with arabesques in Moorish fashion. Above, through the numerous entrances, pointed the throats of the cannons, looking like crocodiles carelessly sleeping in the light of the moon.

The gate was shut. Some conversation was needed, with cash in hand, before it could be opened. Then the party passed in down the winding, narrow, and often vaulted streets, whose other gates, barred with iron, were successively opened by similar means. At length the doctor and his companions, in a quarter of an hour, reached an inn or "fonda"—the only one in the place—kept by a Jewess, with a one-eyed girl as servant.

The total want of comfort in this fonda, which had the rooms disposed round the central court, was a sufficient explanation as to why strangers so very seldom ventured

into Tetuan. There is actually only one representative of the European powers, among a population of several thousands, with whom the native element predominates—and he is the Spanish consul.

Although Dr. Antekirtt wished exceedingly to ask for Namir's house, and to be taken there at once, he restrained himself. It was necessary to act with great prudence. To carry Sava away under such circumstances was a serious matter. Everything for and against it had been taken into account. Perhaps they might be able to get the girl set free for a consideration? But the doctor and Pierre would have to keep themselves out of sight—more especially from Sarcany, who might perhaps be in Tetuan. In his hands Sava would become a guarantee for the future that he would not easily part with. Here they were not in one of the civilized countries of Europe, where justice and police could easily interfere. In this country of slaves how could they prove that Sava was not Namir's legitimate slave? How could they prove that she was Count Sandorf's daughter, otherwise than by Madame Toronthal's letter, and the banker's confession? The houses in these Arab towns are carefully guarded, and not easily accessible. They are not entered easily. The intervention of a cadi even might be useless, supposing it could be obtained.

It had been decided that at the outset Namir's house should be carefully watched in a way to prevent suspicion. In the morning Point Pescade would go out with Luigi to pick up information. During his stay in Malta, Luigi had learnt a little Arabic, and the two would start to find out in what street Namir lived, to act accordingly. Meanwhile *Electric No. 2* would be concealed in one of the narrow creeks along the coast near the entrance of the Tetuan river, and kept ready for sea at a moment's notice.

The night, whose hours were so long for the doctor and Pierre, was thus passed in the fonda. If Point Pescade and Cape Matifou had any desire to lie on beds encrusted with crockery ware, they were satisfied.

In the morning Luigi and Point Pescade began by visiting the bazaar, in which there had already gathered a large part of the Tetuan population. Pescade knew Namir whom he had a score of times noticed in the streets of Ragusa while she was acting as spy for Sarcany. He would therefore recognize her, and as she did not know

him there was no reason why he should not meet her. And then he could follow her.

The principal bazaar of Tetuan is a collection of sheds, pent-houses, and hovels, low, narrow, and sordid, arranged in sultry lanes. A few cloths of different colours are stretched on lines and protect it from the heat of the sun. Around are dull-looking shops with broidered silk, gorgeous trimmings, slippers, purses, cloaks, pottery, jewels, collars, bracelets, rings, and other common goods such as are found in the shops of the large towns of Europe.

It was already crowded. The people were taking advantage of the coolness of the morning. Moors veiled to the eyes, Jewesses with uncovered faces, Arabs, Kabyles, moved to and fro in the bazaar, elbowed by a certain number of strangers, so that the presence of Luigi Ferrato and Point Pescade did not attract special attention.

For an hour they traversed the motley crowd in search of Namir. In vain! The Moor did not appear, nor did Sarcany.

Luigi then asked one of the half-naked boys—hybrid products of all the African races from the Riff to the Sahara—who swarm in the bazaars of Morocco.

The first he spoke to made no reply. At last one of them, a Kabyle, about twelve years old, said that he knew the house, and offered to take the Europeans there—for a trifle.

The offer was accepted, and the three started through the tangled streets which radiate towards the fortifications. In ten minutes they had reached a part that was almost deserted, in which the houses were few and far between, and had no windows on their outer sides.

During this time the doctor and Pierre were waiting the return of Luigi and Pescade with feverish impatience. Twenty times were they tempted to go out and look for themselves. But they were both known to Sarcany and the Moor. It would perhaps be risking everything to meet them and give them an alarm which might enable them to escape. So they remained a prey to the keenest anxiety. It was nine o'clock when Luigi and Point Pescade returned to the fonda.

Their lugubrious faces proclaimed that they were the bearers of bad news.

In fact, Sarcany and Namir, accompanied by a girl whom nobody knew, had left Tetuan five weeks before, and the house was now in charge of an old woman.

The doctor and Pierre had not expected this; they were in despair.

"Their departure is easily accounted for!" said Luigi. "Sarcany was evidently afraid that Toronthal, for revenge or some other motive, would reveal the place of his retreat."

While he was only in pursuit of his betrayers the doctor had never despaired of success. But he did not feel the same confidence now it was his daughter that he sought to rescue from Sarcany.

However, Pierre agreed with him that they had better go at once to Namir's house. Perhaps they might find some trace or remembrance of Sava. Perhaps the old Jewess who had been left in charge might give, or rather sell, some hint that might prove useful.

Luigi led them there immediately. The doctor, who spoke Arabic as if he had been born in the desert, introduced himself as a friend of Sarcany's. He was passing Tetuan, he said, and would have been glad to see him.

The old woman at first raised difficulties, but a handful of sequins made her much more obliging; and she willingly answered the questions the doctor asked with the appearance of the most lively interest in her master.

The young lady who had been taken away by the Moor was Sarcany's intended wife. That had been arranged for some time, and probably the marriage would have taken place at Tetuan had it not been for the hurried departure. The young lady since her arrival three months before had not been outside the house. They said she was an Arab, but the Jewess thought she was a European. She had seen her very little, and only during the Moor's absence, and she could not find out any more about her.

The old woman could not say where Sarcany had taken them. All she knew was that they went away about five weeks before with a caravan to the eastward, and that since then the house had been in her care and was to continue so until Sarcany found some one to buy it, which showed that he did not intend returning to Tetuan.

The doctor listened coldly to these replies, and as they passed translated them to Pierre.

From them it appeared that Sarcany had not thought it desirable to embark on one of the steamers calling at Tangiers, nor to go by the railway which has its terminus at Oran. He had joined a caravan that had left Tetuan—

bound whither? To some oasis in the desert, or, still farther, to some half-savage country, where Sava would be entirely at his mercy? How could they know? On the roads of Northern Africa it is as difficult to recover the track of a caravan as the track of an individual.

And so the doctor persisted in his questions to the Jewess. He had received important news which was of interest to Sarcany, he said, and they referred to this very house which he wished to dispose of. But do what he could no other information did he get. It was evident that the woman did not know where Sarcany had gone.

The doctor, Pierre and Luigi then asked to be allowed to see the house, which was built in Arab fashion, with the different rooms lighted from a courtyard surrounded by a rectangular gallery.

They soon reached the room that Sava had occupied. It was quite a prison cell. There what hours the unhappy girl must have passed a prey to despair and without hope of help! The doctor and Pierre looked round the room seeking the least indication that might put them on the track.

Suddenly the doctor stepped up to a small brasero which stood on a tripod in a corner of the room. In this brasero were a few fragments of paper that had been destroyed by fire, but the incineration of which had not been completed.

Had Sava written them? And surprised by the hurried departure had she burnt the letter before she left Tetuan? Or rather—and that was possible—had the letter been found on Sava and destroyed by Sarcany or Kumir?

Pierre had watched the doctor's look as he bent over the brasero. What had he found?

On the fragments of paper that a breath would reduce to dust, a few words stood out in black. Among others were these, unfortunately incomplete,—

"Mad— Bath—"

Had Sava attempted to write to her as the only person in the world to whom she could appeal for help, not knowing and not being able to know that she had disappeared from Ragusa?

Then after Madame Bathory's name another could be deciphered—that of her son.

The doctor held his breath, and tried to find some other [illegible] But his look was troubled. He could

But there was one word that might perhaps put them on the girl's track—a word which the doctor found almost intact.

"Tripoli!" he exclaimed.

Was it in the Regency of Tripoli, his native country, where he might be absolutely safe, that Sarcany had sought refuge? Was it thither that the caravan was bound?

"To Tripoli!" said the doctor.

That evening they were again at sea. If Sarcany had already reached the capital of the Regency they were in hopes that they would be only a few days behind him.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE FEAST OF THE STORKS.

ON the 23rd of November the plain of Soung-Ettelate around the walls of Tripoli afforded a curious spectacle. On that day no one could tell if the plain were barren or fertile, for its surface was hidden beneath multi-coloured tents adorned with feathers and flags, miserable gourbis with their roofs so tattered and patched as to give very insufficient shelter from that bitter dry wind the "gibly," which sweeps across the desert from the south; here and there were groups of horses in rich oriental trappings, meharis stretched on the sand with their flat heads like half-empty goat-skin bottles, small donkeys about as big as large dogs, large dogs as big as small donkeys, mules with the enormous Arab saddle that has the cantle and pommel as round as a camel-hump; horsemen were there with guns across their shoulders and knees up to their stomachs, and feet in slipper-like stirrups, and having double sabres at their belt, galloping among a crowd of men, women, and children, careless of whom they might run down as they dashed along; and natives were there almost uniformly clothed in the Barbary "haouly," beneath which the women would be indistinguishable from the men, if the men did not fix the folds to their waist with a brass pin, while the women let the upper part fall

over their faces so that they can only see with the left eye—a costume which varies with the classes, the poor having nothing on but the simple linen mantle, the more affluent having the waistcoat and wide breeches of the Arabs, and the wealthy having splendid patterns in white and blue over a second haouly of gauze or glossy silk above the dead-white of the gold-spangled shirt.

Were they only Tripolitans that had gathered on the plain? No. The environs of the capital were crowded with merchants from Ghadames and Sokna, escorted by their black slaves; Jews and Jewesses of the province with uncovered faces; negroes from the neighbouring villages who had come from their cabins of rushes and palms to assist in the general gaiety, poorer in linen than in jewellery, with large brass bracelets, shell-work collars, strings of teeth, and rings of silver in their ears and their noses; and Benoulies and Awaguirs, from the shores of the Syrtes, to whom the date-palm of their country yielded its wine, its fruit, its bread, and its preserves. Among this agglomeration of Moors, Berbers, Turks, Bedouins, and Muzaffirs, or Europeans, were pashas, sheiks, cadis, all the lords in the land walking through the crowds of raayas which opened humbly and prudently before the drawn swords of the soldiers, or the truncheons of the police of the zapties as there passed in haughty indifference the governor-general of this African cyalet, of this province of the Turkish empire whose administration belongs to the Sultan.

If there are more than 1,500,000 in Tripoli, with 6000 soldiers—1000 for the Djebel and 5000 for the Cyrenaic—the town of Tripoli itself has not more than from 20,000 to 24,000 souls. But on this occasion it appeared as though the population had been at least doubled by the crowd of spectators coming from all parts of the territory. These rurals had not, it is true, entered the capital of the Regency. Within the walls of the fortifications neither the houses, which through the worthlessness of their materials soon fall into ruins, nor the narrow, tortuous, unpaved streets, nor the neighbouring mole with its consulates, nor the western quarter inhabited by the Jews, nor the rest of the town inhabited by the Mussulmans were equal to such an invasion.

But the plain of Soung-Ettelate was large enough for the crowd of spectators attracted to this feast of the storks whose legend always receives due honour in the eastern

countries of Africa. This plain—a small fragment of the Sahara, with its yellow sand often invaded by the sea during the violent winds from the east—surrounds the town on three sides and is about 1000 yards across. In strong contrast is the oasis of Menchie—with its white-walled houses, its gardens watered by the leather-chain pump worked by a skinny cow, its woods of orange-trees, citrons, and dates, its green clumps of shrubs and flowers, its antelopes, gazelles, fennecs and flamingoes—a huge patch of ground in which live not less than 30,000 people. Beyond is the desert, which in no part of Africa comes nearer to the Mediterranean, the desert and its shifting sand hills, and its immense carpet of sand on which, says Baron Krafft, "the wind raises the waves as easily as on the ocean," the Lybian ocean with its mists of impalpable dust.

Tripoli—a country almost as large as France—is bounded by Tunis and Egypt and to the south by the Sahara at a distance of 190 miles from the Mediterranean coast.

It was in this province, one of the least known in Northern Africa, and which will be perhaps one of the last to be thoroughly explored, that Sarcany had taken refuge after leaving Tetuan. A native of Tripoli, he had returned to the country which had been the scene of his earliest exploits. Affiliated to the most formidable sect of Northern Africa, he had sought the powerful protection of the Senousists, whose agent for the acquisition of arms and ammunition in foreign parts he had never ceased to be. And when he arrived at Tripoli he had taken up his quarters in the house of the moqaddem, Sidi Hazam, the recognized chief of the sectaries of the district.

After the capture of Toronthal on the road to Nice—a capture which still remained inexplicable to him—Sarcany had left Monte Carlo. A few thousand francs that he had kept back from his earlier winnings had enabled him to pay his passage, and defray his expenses. He had good reason to fear that Toronthal would be reduced to despair, and urged to seek vengeance on him, either by revealing his past life, or giving information as to the whereabouts of Sava. The banker knew that the girl was at Tetuan in charge of Namir, and hence Sarcany's decision to leave Morocco as soon as possible.

He resolved to take refuge in Tripoli, where he could avail himself, not only of the means of action, but the

means of defence. But to go there by steamer or the Algerian railway would have been too dangerous—as the doctor had suspected. And so he joined a caravan of Senousists, who were on their way to the Cyrenaic, recruiting as they went in the chief villages of Morocco, Algeria, and Tunis. This caravan, which would quickly travel the 500 leagues between Tetuan and Tripoli, following the northern edge of the desert, set out on the 12th of October.

And now Sava was entirely at the mercy of her captors. But her resolution was not shaken. Neither the threats of Namir nor the rage of Sarcany had had any effect on her.

At its departure from Tetuan the caravan already numbered fifty of the brethren, or Khouans, under the leadership of an imam, who had organized it in military fashion. There was no intention of crossing the provinces under French influence, or the journey might give rise to difficulties.

The coast of Algeria and Tunis forms an arc up to the western coast of the grand Syrtes, where it drops abruptly to the south. The most direct road from Tetuan to Tripoli is along the chord of this arc, and that does not run higher than Laghouat, one of the most distant French towns on the borders of the Sahara.

The caravan, on leaving the empire of Morocco, skirted the boundary of Algeria, and in Beni Matan, in Oulad Nail, in Charfat-el-Hamel, secured a goodly number of recruits, so that when it reached the Tunisian coast at the Syrtis Magna it numbered more than 300 men. Then it followed the coast, recruiting Khouans in the different villages, and on the 20th of November, after a six weeks' journey, it reached the frontier of Tripoli. On the day, therefore, that this feast of the storks was taking place, Sarcany and Namir had only been the guests of Sidi Hazam for three days.

The moqaddem's house, which was now Sava's prison, was surrounded by a slender minaret, and with its white walls pierced with loopholes, its embattled terraces, its want of exterior windows, and its low, narrow doorway, had very much the appearance of a small fortress. It was in reality a regular zaouiya, situated beyond the town, on the skirt of the sandy plain and the plantations of Menchie, with its gardens defended by the high wall running up on to the oasis.

Its interior was of the ordinary Arab design, but with three courts instead of one. Around each of these courtyards was a quadrangle of galleries, columns, and arcades, on which opened the rooms of the house, which for the most part were luxuriously furnished. In the second courtyard the visitors or guests found a vast "skifa," a sort of hall or vestibule in which more than one conference had been held by Sidi Hazam.

The house was naturally defended by its high walls, and the defence was further assured by the number of servants who could be summoned in case of an attack from the wandering tribes, or even the recognized authorities of the province whose efforts were directed to keeping the Senousists in check. There were, in fact, fifty of the brethren, well armed and equally ready for the defensive or the offensive.

There was only one door to the zaouiya, but this door was very thick and solid, and bound with iron, and could not be easily forced, and once forced could not be easily entered. Sarcany had thus found a safe refuge in which he hoped to end his work successfully. His marriage with Sava would bring him considerable wealth, and if needed he could count on the assistance of the brotherhood, who were directly interested in his success.

The brethren from Tetuan and the vilayets on the road had been dispersed in the oasis of Menchie, ready for action at the first signal. This feast of the storks, as the Tripolitan police knew well, would be most convenient for the Senousists. On the plain of Soung-Ettelate, the Khouans of Northern Africa could receive their orders from the muftis as to their concentration in the Cyrenaic, where they were to found a regular pirate kingdom under the all-powerful authority of a caliph. And the circumstances were highly favourable, for it was in the vilayet of Ben Ghazi, in the Cyrenaic, that the association already had its greatest number of adherents.

On this day of the feast of storks, three strangers were strolling through the crowd on the plain of Soung-Ettelate. These strangers, these muzaffirs, would not have been recognized as Europeans under their Arab dress. The eldest of them wore his with that perfect ease which only long custom gives. He was Dr. Antekirtt, and his companions were Pierre Bathory and Luigi Ferrato. Point Pescade and Cape Matifou were stopping in the town, where they

were engaged in certain preparations, and probably would not appear on the scene until they were wanted.

The *Electric* had only come in the afternoon before and anchored under shelter of the long-rocks which act as a natural breakwater to the harbour of Tripoli. The passage had been as rapid as the voyage outwards. A three hours' stay at Philippeville, in the little bay of Filfila, had been all that was necessary to procure the Arab dresses. Then the *Electric* had departed immediately, and its presence had not even been detected in the Numidian Gulf.

When the doctor and his companions came ashore, not at the quay, but on the rocks outside the harbour, they were no longer five Europeans entering Tripolitan territory, they were five Orientals whose garb would attract no attention. Pierre and Luigi dressed up in this way might betray themselves to the eyes of a close observer, but Pescade and Matifou, accustomed to the many dresses of the mountebank, were completely at their ease.

When night came the *Electric* moved round to one of the creeks on the other side of the harbour, where she ran little risk of being observed; and there she remained ready for sea at any moment. As soon as they had landed, the doctor and his companions ascended the rocks that skirt the coast until they reached the quay leading to Bab-el-Bahr, the marine gate, and entered the narrow streets of the town. The first hotel they came to seemed good enough for a few days—a few hours perhaps.

They seemed to be respectable people—Tunisian merchants, probably, taking advantage of their journey through Tripoli to be present at the feast of the storks! As the doctor spoke Arabic as correctly as he did all the other Mediterranean languages there was no danger that his speech would betray them.

The innkeeper with great cordiality received the five travellers who did him the great honour of selecting his house. He was a large man and very talkative. And so in encouraging him to talk, the doctor soon learnt certain things that interested him greatly. In the first place he heard that a caravan had recently arrived there from Morocco, that Sarcany, who was well known in the Regency, formed part of this caravan, and that he had availed himself of the hospitality of Sidi Hazam.

And hence that evening the doctor, Pierre, and Luigi taking such precaution as ensured their not been observed,

had mixed with the crowd of nomads encamped in the plain of Soung-Ettelate. As they strolled about they took careful notes of the moqaddem's house on the skirt of the oasis.

There, then, Sava Sandorf was a prisoner. Since the doctor had been at Ragusa, the father and daughter had never been so near together. But now an impassable wall lay between them. To get her away Pierre would have consented to everything, even to agree to Sarcany's terms. Count Sandorf and he were ready to abandon the fortune which the scoundrel coveted! And this, although he did not forget that justice ought to be done on the betrayer of Stephen Bathory and Ladislas Zathmar.

Situated as they were, there would seem to be almost insurmountable difficulties in carrying off Sarcany or getting Sava away from Sidi Hazam's house. Force was not likely to succeed, would stratagem? Would to-morrow's festival in any way assist? Probably it would, and a plan had been suggested by Point Pescade, and had been under the consideration of the doctor, Pierre, and Luigi during the evening. In executing it Pescade would risk his life; but if he could enter the moqaddem's house he might succeed in managing Sava's escape. Nothing seemed impossible with his courage and cleverness.

It was, then, in execution of this plan that the next day the doctor and Pierre and Luigi were on the watch among the crowd on the plain of Soung-Ettelate, while Pescade and Matifou were preparing their parts. There was then no sign of the noise and excitement with which the plain would be full beneath the glare of innumerable torches when the evening arrived. In the compact crowd they had scarcely noticed the Senousists who, in their simple costumes, communicated with each other only by masonic signs.

But it is desirable that we should know the Oriental, or rather African, legend, of which the chief incidents were to be reproduced in the feast of the storks, which is the "great attraction" for the Mohammedans.

There was formerly on the African continent a race of Djins. Under the name of Bou-Chebris, these Djins occupied a vast territory situated on the borders of the desert of Hammada, between Tripoli and the kingdom of Fezzan. They were a powerful people, fearless and feared. They were unjust, perfidious, aggressive, inhuman, and no African monarch had been able to suppress them.

There came a day when the prophet Suleyman attempted, not to attack, but to convert these Djins. And with this object he sent one of his apostles to preach to them the love of good and the hatred of evil. Vain effort! The ferocious horde seized the missionary and put him to death. The Djins showed so much audacity because their country was isolated and difficult of access, and they knew that no neighbouring ruler would dare to venture there with his armies. Besides, they thought that no messenger would carry to the prophet Suleyman the news of what they had done to his apostle. They were mistaken.

In the country were a great number of storks. As we know, storks are birds of good manners, of unusual intelligence, and above all things of great common sense, for the legend affirms that they never inhabit a country the name of which appears on a piece of money—for money is the source of all wickedness and the great power that draws all men to the abyss of their evil passions.

These storks, then, seeing the perverse way in which the Djins lived, mustered one day in deliberative assembly, and decided to despatch one of their number to the prophet Suleyman, so as to procure his just vengeance on the missionary's assassins.

And so the prophet called the hoopoe, his favourite courier, and ordered him to collect in the upper zones of the African sky all the storks on earth. This was done, and when the innumerable flocks of these birds were gathered before the prophet Suleyman the legend says they formed a cloud which put in shadow all the land between Mezda and Mourzouk.

Then each one, taking a stone in its beak, flew towards the country of the Djins. And from above they stoned to death the unhappy race whose souls are now imprisoned for all eternity in the desert of Hammada.

Such is the fable which has given rise to the festival of the day. Many hundreds of storks had been got together under huge nets stretched over the surface of the plain of Soung-Ettelate. And there, for the most part standing on one leg, they waited for the hour of their deliverance, and the clicking of their beaks caused a sound in the air as of the beating of a tambourine. At the given signal they would be set free to fly off, dropping harmless stones of clay among the crowd of the faithful, amid the cheers of the spectators, the uproar of the instruments, the reports of the

musketry, and the light from the torches with coloured flames.

Pescade knew the programme of this festival, and it was from it that he received the suggestion as to the part he intended to play, and by the aid of which he was to obtain admission to Sidi Hazam's house.

As soon as the sun set a gun from the fortress of Tripoli gave the signal so impatiently expected by the people on Soung-Ettelate. The doctor, Pierre, and Luigi were at first almost deafened by the frightful noise which arose on every side, and were then nearly blinded by the thousands of lights that sprang up all over the plain.

When the gun was heard the crowd of nomads were still busy at their evening meal. Here the roast mutton, the pilaw of fowls for those who were Turks and wished it to be seen; there the couscousson for the well-to-do Arabs; farther off a simple bazina, a sort of barley-flour boiled in oil, for the poorer people, whose pockets contained more mahboubs of brass than mictals of gold; and everywhere the "lagby," the juice of the date-palm, which, when it is taken as an alcoholic beer, is productive of the worst excesses of intoxication.

A few minutes after the gun had been heard, men, women, children, Turks, Arabs, and Negroes had finished their meal. The instruments of the barbaric orchestras necessarily rejoiced in alarming sonorousness to make themselves heard above the human tumult. (In places horsemen were leaping about discharging their long guns) and their saddle pistols, while fireworks were thrown about amid an uproar it would be impossible to describe.

Here in the torch-light, to the rattling of the wooden drum and the intonation of a monotonous chant, a negro chief, fantastically dressed, with a rattling belt of bones, and his face hidden beneath a diabolical mask, was exciting to the dance some thirty blacks, grimacing in a circle of convulsionary women who beat them with their hands. And these savage Aissassouas, in the last stage of religious exaltation and alcoholic intoxication, with froth on their faces, and eyes from their orbits, were biting at wood, chewing iron, gashing their skins, juggling with live coals, and wrapping themselves with the long serpents which bit their hands, their cheeks, their lips, and like them devoured their blood.

But soon the crowd hurried with extraordinary eager-

Discharging their long guns. P. 176

ness to the house of Sidi Hazam, as though some new spectacle had attracted them.

Two men were there, one large the other small—two acrobats whose curious feats of strength and agility amid a quadruple row of spectators were calling forth the most noisy cheers that could escape from Tripolitan throats.

They were Point Pescade and Cape Matifou. They had taken up their stand only a few paces from Sidi Hazam's house. Both on this occasion had resumed their characters as foreign artistes. With their dresses devised out of Arab materials, they were again in quest of success.

"You have not got rusty?" Point Pescade had previously asked Cape Matifou.

"No!"

"And you will not shrink from anything that may amuse the imbeciles?"

"Me! Shrink!"

"If even you have to chew pebbles with your teeth and swallow serpents!"

"Cooked?" asked Cape Matifou.

"No, raw."

"Raw?"

"And living!"

Cape Matifou made a grimace, but if necessary he resolved to eat a snake like a simple Aissassou.

The doctor, Pierre, and Luigi mingled in the crowd of spectators, and did not lose sight of the two friends.

No! Cape Matifou was not rusty; he had lost nothing of his prodigious strength. At first the shoulders of five or six robust Arabs, who had risked a fall with him, were laid on the ground.

Then followed the juggling, which astonished the Arabs, above all when the flaming torches were launched from Pescade to Matifou, coming and re-coming in their zigzags of fire.

And the public might well be critical. There were there a goodly number of the admirers of the Touaregs, those semi-savages "whose agility is equal to that of the most formidable animals in these latitudes" according to the astounding programme of the famous Bracco troupe. These connoisseurs had already applauded the intrepid Mustapha, the Samson of the Desert, the "man-cannon, to whom the Queen of England had sent her valet begging him not to continue his performance for fear of accident."

But Cape Matifou was incomparable in his feats of strength, and feared no rivals.

At last came the final exercise which was to raise to the highest pitch the enthusiasm of the cosmopolitan crowd that surrounded the European performers. Although it had done frequent duty in the circuses of Europe it seemed that it was still unknown to the loungers of Tripoli. And the crowd crushed more and more round the ring to look at the two acrobats.

Cape Matifou seized a pole nearly thirty feet long, and held it upright against his chest with his two hands. At the end of this pole Point Pescade, who had climbed up like a monkey, began to balance himself in attitudes of astonishing audacity, and he made it bend alarmingly.

But Cape Matifou remained undismayed, shifting about gradually so as to retain his equilibrium. Then, when he was close to the wall of Sidi Hazam's house, he summoned strength enough to lift the pole at arm's length, while Point Pescade assumed the attitude of a favourite actress throwing kisses to her admirers.

The crowd of Arabs and negroes roared in transports of delight, clapped their hands, and stamped their feet. Never had Samson of the Desert, the intrepid Mustapha, the boldest of the Touaregs, been raised to such a height!

At this moment the report of a gun echoed over the plain from the fortress of Tripoli. At the signal the hundreds of storks, suddenly delivered from the immense nets which kept them prisoners, rose in the air, and a shower of sham stones began to fall on the plain, amid a deafening concert of aerial cries, to which the terrestrial concert gave back an equally noisy reply.

This was the paroxysm of the festival. It seemed as though all the mad-houses in the old continent had been emptied on to Soung-Ettelate!

But, as if it were deaf and dumb, the moqaddem's house had remained obstinately closed during those hours of public rejoicing, and not one of Sidi Hazam's people had shown themselves at the gate, or on the terraces.

But, strange to relate! at the moment the torches were extinguished, after the flight of the storks, Point Pescade had suddenly disappeared, as if he had been borne upwards to the sky by the faithful birds of the prophet Suleyman.

What had become of him?

Cape Matifou did not seem to be at all concerned at the disappearance. He threw the pole into the air, caught it adroitly by the other end, and turned it as a drum-major does his cane. Point Pescade's performance seemed to him to be the most natural thing in the world.

The astonishment of the spectators was unbounded, and their enthusiasm displayed itself in an immense hurrah, which extended far beyond the limits of the oasis. None of them doubted but what the active acrobat had jumped off into space, on his way to the kingdom of the storks.

What most charms the multitude? Is it not that which they are unable to explain?

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE HOUSE OF SIDI HAZAM.

It was about nine o'clock. Musketry, music, shouting, all had suddenly ceased. The crowd had begun to disperse; some went back to Tripoli, others to the oasis of Menchie and the neighbouring villages. In an hour the plain of Soung-Ettelate would be silent and empty. Tents would be folded up, camps would be raised, negroes and Berbers were already on the road to the different Tripolitan districts, while the Senouists were off towards the Cyrenaic, and more specially towards the vilayet of Ben Ghazi to join the concentration of the Caliph's forces.

The doctor, Pierre, and Luigi were the only people that did not leave the place during the night. Ready for all that might happen since the disappearance of Point Pescade, each of them had chosen his post of observation at the base of the walls of Sidi Hazam's house.

Point Pescade had given a tremendous leap, as Matifou held the pole up at arm's length, and fallen on the parapet of one of the terraces at the foot of the minaret which commanded the different courtyards of the house.

On that dark night no one within or without had noticed him. He was not even observed from the skifa in the second courtyard, in which were a few Khouans, some of whom were asleep while others were on the watch by order of the moqaddem.

Point Pescade, be it understood, had really no definite plan. The interior arrangement of the house was unknown to him, and he did not know in what part the girl was detained, nor if she was alone or kept out of sight, nor if he had sufficient strength to help her escape. Hence he must act a little at a venture ; and this is what he thought,—

"Anyhow, by force or stratagem, I must reach Sava Sandorf. If she cannot come with me immediately, if I cannot get her away to-night, she must be told that Pierre Bathory is alive, that he is here at the foot of these walls, that Dr. Antekirtt and his companions are ready to help her, and that if her escape must be delayed she must not yield to any threats! I may of course be found out before I reach her! But then I must take care of that."

Pescade's first care was to unwind a slender-knotted cord that he had hidden under his clown's dress ; then he tied one end of this round the angle of one of the battlements and threw over the other so that it hung down to the ground. This was only a measure of precaution, a good one nevertheless. And when he had finished Pescade, before going farther, lay down on his stomach and remained motionless. If he had been seen the terrace would soon be invaded by Sidi Hazam's people, and then he would have to use the cord on his own account, instead of that of Sava Sandorf, as he intended.

Complete silence reigned in the moqaddem's house. As neither Sidi Hazam nor Sarcany, nor any of their people, had taken part in the feast of the storks, the door of the zaouiya had not been opened since sunrise.

After waiting some minutes Point Pescade moved towards the angle from which arose the minaret. The staircase which led to the upper part of this minaret evidently ran down to the ground in the first courtyard. In fact a door opening on to the terrace gave admission to the stairs leading to the rooms below.

This door was shut from the inside, not with a key, but with a bolt that it would be impossible to slip back from the outside unless a hole were made through the wood. This labour Point Pescade would have attempted, for he had in his pocket a many-bladed knife, a precious present from the doctor, of which he could make good use. But that would be a long, and perhaps noisy, task.

It was unnecessary. Three feet above the terrace a window in the form of a loophole opened in the minaret

wall. If the window was small, Point Pescade was not large. Besides, was he not like a cat who can elongate herself to pass through where there seems to be no passage? And so he tried, and after some squeezing of the shoulders he found himself in the minaret.

"Cape Matifou could not have done that!" he thought.

Then feeling his way round, he returned to the door, and unbolted it, so that it remained unfastened in case he had to return by the same road.

As he went down the winding stairs of the minaret, Point Pescade glided rather than stepped, so that his weight would not cause the wooden stairs to creak. At the bottom he found a second door. It was shut; but he had only to push it for it to open.

The door opened on to a gallery of little columns, by which access was given to a certain number of rooms. After the complete darkness of the minaret, the gallery seemed light to Pescade; but there was no light in the interior, and not a sound.

In the centre of the courtyard was a basin of running water surrounded by large pots of shrubs, pepper-trees, palms, laurel-roses, and cacti, the thick foliage forming a clump of verdure round the edge.

Point Pescade stole round this gallery like a wolf, stopping before each room. It seemed they were inhabited. Not all of them however; but behind one of the doors he distinctly heard the murmur of a voice he knew.

He stepped back. It was Sarcany's voice! The voice he had often heard at Ragusa; but although he kept his ear to the door, he could hear nothing of what was going on.

At this moment there suddenly came a loud noise, and Point Pescade had only just time to slip behind one of the flower-pots round the water.

Sarcany came out of the room. An Arab of tall stature accompanied him. They continued their conversation, walking up and down the gallery of the courtyard.

Unfortunately Point Pescade could not understand what Sarcany and his companion were saying, for they were talking in that Arab tongue which he did not know. Two words he frequently heard, or rather two names. One of these was Sidi Hazam, for it was the moqaddem himself who was talking with Sarcany; the other was Antekirtta, which was mentioned several times during the conversation.

"That is strange," thought Pescade. "Why are they talking about Antekirtta? Are Sidi Hazam, Sarcany, and all the pirates of Tripoli thinking of a campaign against an island? Confound it! And not to know the lingo those two rascals are using!"

And Point Pescade tried hard to catch another suspicious word, keeping himself well hid behind the flower-pots when Sarcany and Sidi Hazam came near. But the night was too dark for them to see him.

"And yet," said he to himself, "if Sarcany was alone in this courtyard I might have jumped at his throat and put it out of his power for him to damage us! But that would not help Sava Sandorf, and it was for her I made that risky jump! Patience! Sarcany's turn will come some day."

The conversation between Sidi Hazam and Sarcany lasted about twenty minutes. The name of Sava was mentioned several times, with the qualification "arroueh," and Point Pescade remembered that he had already heard the word, and that it meant "betrothed" in Arabic. Evidently the moqaddem knew of Sarcany's projects, and was assisting him.

Then the two men retired through one of the doors in the angle of the courtyard which put this gallery in communication with the other parts of the house.

As soon as they had disappeared Point Pescade glided along the gallery and stopped at this door. He had only to push it to find himself in a narrow corridor whose wall he felt his way along. At its end was a double arcade supported by a central column and giving access to the second courtyard. A few bright lights from between the bays by which the skifa obtained its light from the court were thrown in luminous sectors on the ground, and at the moment it would not be prudent to cross them, for a noise of many voices was heard behind the door of this room.

Point Pescade hesitated. What he sought was the room in which Sava was living, and he could only trust to chance to find it.

Suddenly a light appeared at the other end of the courtyard. A woman carrying an Arab lantern had just come out of the room in the far angle and turned along the gallery on to which the door of the skifa opened.

Point Pescade recognized her as Namir.

As it was possible that the Moor was going to the girl's

room it was necessary to find the means of following her, and in order to follow her to let her go by without her seeing him. The moment was decisive of the audacious attempt of Point Pescade and the fate of Sava Sandorf.

Namir came on. Her lantern swinging almost on the ground left the upper part of the gallery in as deep a gloom as the lower part was brightly lighted. And as she passed along the arcade Point Pescade did not know what to do. A ray from the lantern, however, showed him that the upper part of the arcade was ornamented with open arabesques in Moorish fashion.

To climb the central column, seize hold of one of these arabesques, draw himself up by main force, and crouch in the central oval, where he remained as motionless as a saint in a niche, was the work of a second.

Namir passed along the arcade without seeing him, and crossed to the opposite side of the gallery. When she reached the door of the skifa she opened it. A bright light shot across the courtyard, and was instantly extinguished as the door was shut.

Point Pescade set himself to reflect, and where could he find a better position for reflection?

"That is Namir who has just gone into that room," he said to himself. "It is evident she is not going to Sava Sandorf! But perhaps she came from her, and in that case her room will be the one in the angle over there—I will go and see!"

He waited a few minutes before he left his post. The light inside the skifa seemed to grow less, and the voices died out to nearly a murmur. Doubtless the hour had come when Sidi Hazam's household retired to rest. The circumstances were therefore more favourable for him, for that part of the habitation would be plunged in silence when the last light had gone out. And that was exactly what happened.

Pescade glided along the columns of the arcade, crept across the flags of the gallery, passed the door of the skifa, went round the end of the courtyard, and reached the angle near the room from which Namir had come. He opened the door, which was unlocked, and then by the light of an Arab lamp, placed like a night-light beneath its shade, gave a rapid glance round the room.

A few hangings suspended from the walls, here and there a stool of Moorish pattern, cushions piled in the

angles, a double carpet on the mosaic floor, a low table with the fragments of a meal, a divan covered with linen cloth—that was what he first saw.

He entered, and shut the door.

A woman, dozing rather than sleeping, was reclining on the divan, half-covered in one of those burnouses with which the Arabs wrap themselves from head to feet.

It was Sava Sandorf.

Point Pescade had no hesitation in recognizing the young lady he had met so many times in the streets of Ragusa. How changed she seemed to be! Pale as she had been when in her wedding carriage she had met the funeral procession of Pierre Bathory, her attitude, and the expression of her face all told what she had had to suffer.

There was not an instant to lose.

And in fact, as the door had not been locked, was not Namir coming back? Perhaps the Moor guarded her night and day? And if the girl could leave her room, how could she escape without help from the outside? Sidi Hazam's house was walled like a prison!

Point Pescade bent over the divan. What was his astonishment at a resemblance which had never struck him before—the resemblance between Sava Sandorf and Dr. Antekirtt!

The girl opened her eyes.

At seeing a stranger standing near her in the fantastic dress of an acrobat, with his finger on his lips and an appealing look in his eyes, she was bewildered rather than frightened. But she arose, and had sufficient coolness to make no sound.

"Silence!" said Point Pescade. "You have nothing to fear from me! I have come here to save you! Behind those walls your friends are waiting for you, friends who will give their lives to get you out of Sarcany's hands! Pierre Bathory is alive—"

"Pierre—alive?" exclaimed Sava, restraining the beatings of her heart.

"Read!"

And Point Pescade gave the girl a letter, which contained these words,—

"Sava, trust him who has risked his life to reach you! I am alive! I am here!

"PIERRE BATHORY."

Pierre was alive! He was at the foot of these walls!

By what miracle? Sava would know later on! But Pierre was there.

"Let us escape!" she said.

"Yes! Let us escape," answered Pescade. "But let us have all the chances on our side! One question, Is Namir accustomed to spend the night in this room?"

"No," answered Sava.

"Does she take the precaution of locking you in when she is away?"

"Yes."

"Then she will come back?"

"Yes! Let us go!"

"Now," answered Pescade.

And first they must reach the staircase of the minaret to gain the terrace. Once they got there the rope that hung down outside would render escape easy.

"Come!" said Point Pescade, taking Sava's hand.

And he was going to open the door when he heard steps coming along the gallery. At the same time a few words were pronounced in an imperious tone. Point Pescade recognized Sarcany's voice. He stopped at the threshold.

"It is he!" whispered the girl. "You are lost if he finds you here!"

"He will not find me!" answered Pescade.

And throwing himself to the ground he then, by one of those acrobatic contortions he had often performed in sight of an audience, wrapped himself up in one of the carpets on the floor and rolled himself into the darkest corner of the room.

As the same moment the door opened to admit Sarcany and Namir, who shut it behind them.

Sava resumed her seat on the divan. Why had Sarcany come to her at that hour? Was this a new attempt to overcome her refusal? But Sava was strong now! She knew that Pierre Bathory was alive—that he was waiting outside!

Beneath the carpet which covered him Point Pescade, although he could not see, could hear everything.

"Sava," said Sarcany, "to-morrow morning we are going to leave this for another place. But I do not wish to leave here until you have consented to our marriage, until it has been celebrated. All is ready, and it is necessary that now—"

"Neither now nor later!" replied the girl, in a voice as cold as it was resolute.

"Sava," continued Sarcany, as though he had not heard this reply, "in the interest of both of us, it is necessary that your consent should be free. In the interest of both of us; you understand?"

"We have not, and we never shall have, any interest in common!"

"Take care! I may remind you that you gave your consent at Ragusa."

"For reasons which no longer exist!"

"Listen to me, Sava," said Sarcany, whose apparent calm hid the most violent irritation; "this is the last time I shall ask you for your consent."

"And I shall refuse it as long as I have strength to do so!"

"Well, that strength we will take away from you," exclaimed Sarcany. "Do not drive me to extremes! Yes! the strength which you use against me, Namir will take from you, and in spite of you, if necessary! Do not resist me, Sava! The imam is here, ready to celebrate our marriage according to the custom of my own country! Follow me then!"

Sarcany advanced towards the girl, who quickly rose and stepped back to the end of the room.

"Scoundrel!" she exclaimed.

"You will come with me! You will come with me!" exclaimed Sarcany.

"Never!"

"Ah! Take care!"

And Sarcany, having seized the girl's arm, was, with Namir's help, violently dragging her towards the skifa, where Sidi Hazam and the imam were waiting.

"Help! Help!" screamed Sava. "Help me—Pierre Bathory!"

"Pierre Bathory!" exclaimed Sarcany. "You are calling a dead man!"

"No! He is alive! Help me—Pierre!"

The answer was so unexpected by Sarcany that he could not have been more frightened had he seen Pierre's ghost. But he was soon himself again. Pierre alive! Pierre, whom he had stabbed with his own hand, and seen buried in the cemetery at Ragusa! In truth, it could only be the idea of a mad woman, and it was possible that Sava, in the excess of her despair, had lost her reason!

Point Pescade had heard all that passed. In telling Sarcany that Pierre was alive, Sava had staked her life, that was certain. And in case the scoundrel offered any violence, he so disposed his carpet as to be ready to appear on the scene instantly, knife in hand,—and those who thought he would hesitate to strike did not know Point Pescade.

There was no necessity for him to do so. Sarcany abruptly dragged Namir out of the room. Then the key was turned in the lock while the girl's fate was being decided.

At a bound Pescade had thrown off the carpet, and was by her side.

"Come!" said he.

As the lock was inside the room, to unscrew it by means of his knife was neither a long, a difficult, nor a noisy job.

As soon as the door was opened, and then shut behind them, Pescade led the way along the gallery round the courtyard wall.

It was about half-past eleven. A few beams of light filtered through the skifa's bays. Pescade avoided crossing them on his way to the passage that led to the first courtyard.

They reached the passage, and went along it; but when they were only a few yards from the minaret staircase, Pescade suddenly stopped and held back Sava, whose hand his had never left.

Three men were talking in this first courtyard by the side of the water. One of them—it was Sidi Hazam—was giving orders to the others. Almost immediately they disappeared up the minaret staircase, while the moqaddem went into one of the lateral chambers. Pescade perceived that Sidi Hazam had sent the men to watch the neighbourhood. And that when he and the girl appeared on the terrace it would be occupied and guarded.

"We must risk it, however!" said Point Pescade.

"Yes. Everything!" replied Sava.

Then they crossed the gallery and reached the staircase, which they mounted with extreme care. Then when Point Pescade had reached the upper landing, he stopped.

No sound on the terrace, not even a sentinel's step!

Point Pescade quietly opened the door, and followed by Sava he glided along the battlements.

Suddenly a shout came from the minaret above from one of the men on guard. At the same moment the other

jumped on Pescade, while Namir rushed on to the terrace, and the whole household came hurrying out of their rooms.

Would Sava allow herself to be retaken? No! To be retaken by Sarcany was to be lost! A hundred times would she prefer death!

With a prayer to God the brave girl ran to the parapet and without hesitation leapt from the terrace.

Pescade had not even time to interfere; but throwing off the man that held him, he caught hold of the rope and in a second was at the foot of the wall.

"Sava! Sava!" he shouted.

"Here is the young lady!" said a familiar voice, "and no bones broken! I was just in the way—"

A shout of fury, followed by a heavy thud, cut short Cape Matifou's speech.

Namir in a movement of rage, unwilling to abandon the prey that was escaping her, had leapt and been smashed to pieces as Sava would have been smashed if two strong arms had not caught her as she fell.

Doctor Antekirtt, Pierre, and Luigi, had rejoined Cape Matifou and Point Pescade who were running towards the shore. Although Sava had fainted she weighed almost nothing in the arms of her rescuer.

A few minutes afterwards Sarcany with a score of armed men came out in pursuit of the fugitives.

When he reached the creek where the *Electric* had been waiting, the doctor and his companions were already on board, and in a few turns of the screw the swift vessel was out of range.

Sava, alone with the doctor and Pierre, soon regained her consciousness. She learnt that she was the daughter of Count Mathias Sandorf! She was in her father's arms!

CHAPTER XXV.

ANTEKIRTTA.

FIFTEEN hours after leaving the coast of Tripoli the *Electric* was signalled by the look-out at Antekirtta, and in the afternoon she came into harbour.

We can easily imagine the reception given to the doctor and his companions.

Now that Sava was out of danger it was decided to still keep secret her relationship to Dr. Antekirtt.

Count Mathias wished to remain unknown until the accomplishment of his work. But it was enough that Pierre, whom he had made his son, was the betrothed of Sava Sandorf for signs of rejoicing to be shown on all sides—in the Stadthaus as well as in the town of Artenak.

We may judge what were Madame Bathory's feelings when Sava was given back to her after so many trials. And Sava herself soon recovered her health—a few days of happiness were sufficient for her complete re-establishment.

That Point Pescade had risked his life there could be no doubt. But as he seemed to think it quite a natural thing to do there was no possibility of rewarding him—except with a few simple words. Pierre Bathory had clasped him to his breast, and the doctor had given him such a look of gratitude that he would hear of no other recompense. According to his custom he gave the whole credit of the adventure to Cape Matifou.

"He is the man that should be thanked," he said. "He did it all! If old Cape had not been so clever with that pole I should never have been able to jump into Sidi Hazam's house, and Sava Sandorf would have been killed by her fall if Cape Matifou had not been below to receive her in his arms!"

"Look here! Look here!" answered Cape Matifou. "You are going too far, and the idea of—"

"Be quiet!" continued Pescade. "I am not strong enough to receive compliments of that calibre, while you—. Come, let us look after the garden!"

And Cape Matifou held his peace, and returned to his pleasant villa, and finally accepted the felicitations that were thrust upon him "so as not to disoblige his little Pescade."

It was arranged that the wedding of Pierre and Sava should take place on the 9th of December. When Pierre was Sava's husband he could claim his wife's rights in the inheritance of Count Sandorf. Madame Toronthal's letter left no doubt as to the girl's birth, and if necessary they could obtain a formal statement from the banker. And this statement would be obtained in time, for Sava

had not yet reached the age at which she would enter into her rights. She would not be eighteen until six months later.

It should be added that in the fifteen years a political change had taken place favourable to the Hungarian question, and this had considerably modified the situation—particularly with regard to the conspiracy of Trieste.

It was not intended to come to any decision as to the fate of Carpena and Toronthal until Sarcany had joined them in the casemates of Antekirrta. Then, and not till then, would the work of justice be completed.

But while the doctor was still scheming how to attain his object, it was absolutely necessary that he should provide for the safety of the colony. His agents in the Cyrenaic and Tripoli had informed him that the Senousist movement was attaining great importance, particularly in the vilayet of Ben Ghazi, which is that nearest to the island. Special messengers were continually on the move to the minor chiefs of the province from Jerhboûb, "the new pole of the Islamic world," as Dr. Duveyrier calls it, the metropolitan Mecca where lived Sidi Mohammed El-Mahedi, grand master of the order; and as the Senousists are the worthy descendants of the old Barbary pirates and bear a mortal hate to everything European, the doctor had to take steps to be very carefully on his guard.

In fact, is it not to the Senousists that we can attribute the massacres in African necrology during the last twenty years? The sanguinary brotherhood has put in practice the Senousistic doctrines against our explorers, and we have seen Beurman killed at Kanem in 1863, Von der Decken and his companions on the Djouba River in 1865, Madame Alexine Tinné and her people in Wady Abedjouch in 1865, Dournaux-Dupeiré and Joubert at the wells of In-Azhar in 1874, Fathers Paulmier Bouchard and Menoret beyond the In-Calah in 1876, Fathers Richard Morat and Pouplard of the Ghadames mission in the north of Azdjer, Colonel Flatters, Captains Masson and Dianous, Dr. Guiard, and Engineers Beringer and Roche on the road to Wargla in 1881.

On this subject the doctor often talked with Pierre Bathory, Luigi Ferrato, the captains of the flotilla, the chiefs of the militia and the principal notables of the island. Could Antekirtta resist an attack from the pirates? Yes, doubtless, although the fortifications were

not complete, but on condition that the number of assailants was not too great. On the other hand, had the Senousists any interest in capturing it? Yes, for it commanded all the Gulf of Sidra, which formed the coast of Tripoli and the Cyrenaic.

It will not have been forgotten that south-west of Antekirtta, at a distance of some two miles, there lay the islet of Kencraf. This islet, which there was no time to fortify, would constitute a serious danger if a hostile flotilla made it its base of operation, and so the doctor had taken the precaution to mine it extensively. And now a terrible explosive agent filled the fougasses amid its rocks. It would suffice for an electric spark to be sent through the cable from Antekirtta, and the island of Kencraf would be annihilated with everything that was on it.

With regard to the other defences of the island this is what had been done. The flanking batteries had been completed, and only waited for the militia assigned to them to move to their stations. The fortress on the central cone was ready with its long-range pieces. Numerous torpedoes had been sunk in the channel, and defended the entrance to the harbour. The *Ferrato* and three *Electrics* were ready for all eventualities either in awaiting the attack or advancing on a hostile flotilla.

But in the south-west of the island there was a vulnerable spot. A landing might take place there sheltered from the guns of the fortress. There was the danger, and it might be too late to become sufficiently advanced with the works of defence.

After all, was it quite certain that the Senousists intended to attack Antekirtta? It was a big affair, a dangerous expedition which would require a good deal of material. Luigi still doubted, and he said so one day while the doctor and Pierre were inspecting the fortifications.

"That is not my opinion," said the doctor. "Antekirtta is rich, it commands the Syrtic Sea; and those are sufficient reasons for the Senousists sooner or later to attack it."

"Nothing can be more certain," added Pierre, "and it is an eventuality against which we should be prepared."

"But what makes me fear an immediate attack is that Sarcany is one of the brotherhood of these Khouans, and I know that he has always been in their service as an agent in foreign parts. Do you not remember that Point P[illegible] overheard in the moqaddem's house a conv[illegible]

him and Sidi Hazam? In that conversation the name of Antekirtta was mentioned several times, and Sarcany knows that this island belongs to the Dr. Antekirtt, the man he fears, the man whom he made Zirone attack on the slopes of Etna. As he did not succeed in Sicily there is little doubt he will try to succeed here under better circumstances."

"Has he any personal hate against you?" asked Luigi. "And does he know you?"

"It is possible that he has seen me at Ragusa," replied the doctor. "In any case he would not be ignorant that in that town I was in communication with the Bathory family. Besides, the existence of Pierre was revealed to him when Sava was carried off by Pescade from the house of Sidi Hazam. In his mind he would see the association and would have no doubt but what Pierre and Sava had taken refuge in Antekirtta. He will therefore urge on against us the whole Senousistic horde, and we shall have no quarter if he succeeds in getting possession of our island."

The argument was quite plausible. That Sarcany did not know that the doctor was Count Sandorf was certain, but he knew enough to wish to get away from him the heiress of the Artenak estate; and there was nothing surprising in his attempt to excite the caliph to undertake an expedition against the Antekirttian colony.

However, they had reached the 3rd of December and there had been no sign of an imminent attack.

Besides, the thought of the approaching marriage of Pierre Bathory and Sava Sandorf occupied everybody. And the colonists tried to persuade themselves that the evil days had passed and would not return.

Point Pescade and Cape Matifou of course shared in the general sense of security. They were so happy in the happiness of others that they lived in a state of perpetual enchantment with everything.

"I can hardly believe it!" repeated Point Pescade.

"What can you hardly believe?" asked Cape Matifou.

"That you are to become a big fat annuitant, my Cape! I must think of marrying you."

"Marrying me?"

"Yes, with some nice little woman!"

"Why little?"

[redacted]ould be only just! A large one would never do.

Eh! We should have to look for Mrs. Cape Matifou among the Patagonians!"

But pending the marriage of Cape Matifou which might end satisfactorily if he could find only a companion worthy of him, Point Pescade busied himself about the marriage of Pierre and Sava. With the doctor's permission he was thinking of organizing a public festival, with foreign games, songs, and dances, discharges of artillery, a grand banquet in the open air, a serenade, and a torch-light procession and fireworks. That just suited him! He was in his element! It would be splendid! They would talk of it for long afterwards! They would talk of it for ever!

All this excitement was nipped in the bud.

During the night of the 3rd and 4th of December—a calm night, but a very cloudy one—an electric bell sounded in Dr. Antekirtt's room in the Stadthaus.

It was ten o'clock.

At the call the doctor and Pierre left the saloon in which they had passed the evening with Madame Bathory and Sava Sandorf. On entering the room they saw that the call was from the look-out on the central cone. Questions and answers immediately passed by means of the telephone.

The look-outs signalled the approach of a flotilla to the south-west of the island, the vessels appearing very confusedly in the thick mist.

"We must summon the Council," said the doctor.

In less than ten minutes afterwards the doctor, Pierre, Luigi, Captains Narsos and Kostrik, and the chiefs of the militia were at the Stadthaus, considering the information sent down from the cone. A quarter of an hour afterwards they were all at the harbour, at the end of the main jetty, on which the bright light was burning.

From this point, which was very little above sea-level, it would be impossible to distinguish the flotilla that the look-outs on the central cone could clearly see. But in brightly illuminating the horizon towards the south-west it would doubtless be possible to make out the number of the ships, and their plan of attack.

Was it not unwise to thus disclose the position of the island? The doctor did not think so. If it was the enemy expected that enemy was not coming as a blind man. He knew the position of Antekirtta, and nothing could keep him away from it.

The machinery was put into action, and with the aid of the two electric beams projected into the offing, the horizon was suddenly illuminated over a vast sector.

The look-outs were not mistaken. Two hundred boats, at the least, were advancing in line, xebecs, polaccas, trabacolos, saccolevas, and others of less importance. There was no doubt that this was the flotilla of the Senousists, recruited by the pirates in every port along the coast. The wind failing, they had had recourse to their sweeps. The passage between Antekirtta and the Cyrenaic was not a long one. The calm night even helped them, for it would allow of a landing taking place under favourable conditions.

At the moment the flotilla was about four or five miles off, in the south-west. It could not reach the coast before sunrise.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE BATTLE.

AFTER the first reconnaissance the lights were extinguished. The only thing to do was to wait for day.

However, by the doctor's orders, the militia were mustered and sent to their stations.

It was necessary to be in a position to strike the first blow, on which perhaps the issue of the enterprise would depend.

It was now certain that the assailants could no longer hope to take the island by surprise, inasmuch as the projection of the light had allowed of their course and numbers being known.

A most careful watch was kept during the last hours of the night. Many times was the horizon again illuminated, so as to permit of the exact position of the flotilla being noted. That the assailants were numerous there could be no doubt. That they were sufficiently armed to have a chance against the Antekirtta batteries was doubtful. They were probably without artillery. But the number of men that the chief could land at once would make the Senousists really formidable.

Day at last began to break, and the first rays of the sun dissipated the mists on the horizon. Every eye was turned seaward towards the east and south of Antekirtta. The flotilla was advancing in a long curved line. There were over two hundred vessels, some of them of thirty or forty tons. Altogether they could carry from 1500 to 2000 men.

At five o'clock the flotilla was off Kencraf. Would the enemy stop there and take up their position before attacking the island? If they did so, it would indeed be fortunate. The mines laid by the doctor would seriously damage their attack, if they did not entirely settle it.

An anxious half-hour elapsed. It seemed as though the vessels, as they reached the islet, were about to land—but they did nothing of the sort. Not one stopped. The line curved farther off to the south, leaving it to the right, and it became evident that Antekirtta would be directly attacked, or rather invaded, in an hour.

"The only thing now is to defend ourselves," said the doctor to the chief of the militia.

The signal was given, and those on the island hastened into the town to take the posts that had been assigned them beforehand. By the doctor's orders Pierre Bathory took command of the fortifications to the south, Luigi of those to the east. The defenders—five hundred at the most—were posted so that they could face the enemy wherever he attempted to force the walls. The doctor held himself ready to go where his presence might be necessary. Madame Bathory, Sava Sandorf, Maria Ferrato remained in the hall of the Stadthaus. The other women, should the town be carried, were ordered to take shelter with their children in the casemates where they would have nothing to fear even if the assailants possessed a few landing guns.

The question of Kencraf being settled—unfortunately to the doctor's disadvantage—there remained the question of the harbour. If the flotilla attempted to force an entry, the forts on the two jetties, with their cross-fires, the guns of the *Ferrato*, the torpedoes of the *Electrics*, and the torpedoes sunk in the channel would have something to say in the matter. It would, in short, be fortunate if the attack were made on that side.

But—as was only too evident—the chief of the Senousists was perfectly acquainted with Antekirrta's means of defence.

To attempt a direct attack on the harbour would have been to run to complete and immediate annihilation. A landing in the southern part of the island, where the operation would be an easy one, was the plan he adopted. And so having passed by the harbour, as he had passed by Kencraf, he took his flotilla, still rowing towards the weak point of Antekirtta.

As soon as he saw this, the doctor took such measures as circumstances demanded. Captains Kostrik and Narsos each took command of a torpedo boat, and slipped out of harbour.

A quarter of an hour afterwards the two *Electrics* had rushed into the midst of the flotilla, broken the line, sunk five or six of the vessels, and stove in more than a dozen others. But the numbers of the enemy was so great that, to avoid being boarded, the *Electrics* had to retreat to the shelter of the jetties.

But the *Ferrato* had now come into position and begun firing on the flotilla. Her guns and those of the batteries that could be brought to bear were, however, insufficient to prevent the pirates landing. Although a great number had perished, although twenty of their vessels had been sunk, more than a thousand scrambled on to the rocks in the south, to which the calm sea rendered the approach so easy.

It was then found that the Senousists were not without artillery. The largest of the xebecs had several field-pieces on wheeled carriages, and these were landed on the shore, which was out of range of the guns either of the town or the central cone.

The doctor, from his position on the nearest salient, had seen all this, and with his much fewer men could not attempt to stop it. But as they were sheltered by the walls, the assailants, numerous as they were, would find their task a difficult one.

The Senousists, dragging their light guns with them, formed up into two columns, and came marching along with all the careless bravery of the Arab and the audacity of the fanatics, who glory in their contempt of death, their hope of pillage, and their hate of the European.

When they were well within range the batteries opened on them. More than a hundred fell, but the others still kept on. Their field-pieces were brought into position, and they began to breach the wall in the angle of the unfinished curtain towards the south.

Their chief, calm amid those who were falling at his side, directed the operation. Sarcany, close by, was exciting him to deliver the assault, and hurl several hundred men at the falling wall.

From the distance, Dr. Antekirtt and Pierre had recognized him, and he had recognized them.

And now the mass of besiegers began their advance to the wall, which had been beaten in sufficiently to let them through. If they succeeded in clearing this breach, they would spread themselves over the town, and the besieged, too weak to resist, would have to abandon it, and, with the sanguinary temperament of the pirates, the victory would be followed by a general massacre.

The hand-to-hand struggle at this point was terrible. Under the doctor's orders, who stood as impassible in the danger as he was invulnerable amid the bullets, Pierre and his companions performed prodigies of valour, and Point Pescade and Cape Matifou lent their assistance, and displayed the most brilliant audacity.

The Hercules, with a knife in one hand, and an axe in the other, kept clear the space around him.

"Go it, my Cape, go it! Down with them!" shouted Point Pescade, whose revolver, incessantly recharging and discharging, was going like a Gatling.

But the foe would not yield. After being many times driven out of the breach, they had again swarmed on to the attack, and were slowly fighting their way through, when they suddenly found themselves attacked in the rear.

The *Ferrato* had managed to get into a commanding position within three cable-lengths of the shore, and with her carronades all brought to the one side, her long chaser, her Hotchkiss cannons, and her Gatling-mitrailleuses, she opened such a fire on the assailants that they were mown down as the grass before the scythe. She attacked them in the rear and cannonaded them on the beach at the same time so as to destroy and sink the boats which had been moored round the rocks.

The blow was a terrible one, and was quite unexpected by the Senousists. Not only were they taken in the rear, but all means of escape would be cut off if their vessels were knocked to pieces by the guns of the *Ferrato*. The assailants hesitated in the breach that the militia were defending so obstinately. Already more than five hundred had met their deaths, while the besieged had lost but few.

The leader of the expedition saw that he must immediately retreat to sea or expose his companions to certain and complete destruction. In vain Sarcany demanded that they might continue the attack on the town. The order was given to return to the shore; and the Senousists drew off as if they would be killed to the last man, were the orders given them to die.

But it was necessary to give these pirates a lesson they would never forget.

"Forward! my friends! forward!" shouted the doctor.

And under the orders of Pierre and Luigi, a hundred of the militia threw themselves on to the fugitives as they retreated to the beach. Between the fire from the *Ferrato* and the fire from the batteries, the Senousists had to give way. Their ranks broke in disorder, and they ran in a crowd to the seven or eight vessels that still were left to them.

Pierre and Luigi, amid the confusion, endeavoured above all things to take one man prisoner. That man was Sarcany. But they wished to have him alive, and it was only by a miracle that they escaped the revolver-shots the scoundrel fired at them.

It seemed, however, that fate would again withdraw him from their hands.

Sarcany and the leader of the Senousists, followed by a dozen of their companions, had managed to regain a small polacca, which they had cast off and were preparing to get under way. The *Ferrato* was too far off for them to signal her to pursue, and it looked as though she would escape.

At the moment Cape Matifou saw a field-gun dismounted from its carriage and thrown on the beach.

To hurl himself on the still loaded gun, to lift it with superhuman force on to one of the rocks, to steady it by the trunnions, and in a voice of thunder to shout, "Come here, Pescade! Here!" was the work of a moment.

Pescade heard Matifou's shout, and saw what he had done; instantly he understood, ran up, pointed the gun at the polacca, and fired.

The shot went clean through the hull. The recoil hardly shook the living gun-carriage. The leader of the Senousists and his companions were pitched into the water and, for the most part drowned. Sarcany was struggling with the surf when Luigi threw himself into the sea.

A minute afterwards Sarcany was safe in the huge hands of Cape Matifou.

The victory was complete. Of the two-thousand assailants who had landed on the island, only a few hundred escaped to the Cyrenaic to tell the story of the disaster.

Antekirtta would, it could be hoped, for many a year be free from another attack from pirates.

CHAPTER XXVII.

JUSTICE.

COUNT MATHIAS SANDORF had paid his debt of gratitude to Maria and Luigi Ferrato. Madame Bathory, Pierre, and Sava were at last reunited. After the reward came the punishment.

For some days following the defeat of the Senousists the colonists were actively employed in repairing damages. With the exception of a few trifling scars, Pierre, Luigi, Point Pescade and Cape Matifou—that is to say all those who had been most intimately connected with the events of this drama—were safe and sound. That they had not spared themselves, however, needs no affirmation.

Great, therefore, was the rejoicing when they met together in the Stadthaus with Sava Sandorf, Maria Ferrato, Madame Bathory, and her old servant Borik. After the funeral of those who had fallen in the battle, the little colony resumed its happy existence. Its future would be free from trouble. The defeat of the Senousists had been disastrous, and Sarcany, who had persuaded them to undertake this campaign against Antekirtta, would no longer be with them to fan the flame of hatred and vengeance.

The doctor proposed completing his system of defence without delay. Not only would Artenak be promptly rendered secure from a sudden surprise, but the island itself would nowhere afford a landing-place. And it was intended to invite thither a few more colonists to whom the fertility of the soil would prove an attraction and a guarantee of prosperity.

Meanwhile no further obstacle existed to the marriage of

Pierre and Sava. The ceremony had been fixed for the 9th of December; and it would take place on that date. And so Point Pescade was particularly busy with the preparations that had been interrupted by the invasion of the pirates from the Cyrenaic.

And now without delay the fate of Sarcany, Toronthal, and Carpena was to be decided.

On the 6th of December, two days after the retreat of the Senousists, the doctor ordered them to be brought to the Stadthaus. The prisoners were unaware of each other's presence in the island, and for the first time found themselves together, when under a guard of a detachment of militia, they came before the tribunal of Artenak, consisting of the chief magistrates of Antekirtta.

Carpena appeared uneasy; but having lost nothing of his sneakish look, he merely threw furtive glances to the right and left of him, and dared not lift his eyes to his judges.

Toronthal seemed quite cast down, and bowed his head, and instinctively avoided the touch of his old accomplice.

Sarcany had only one feeling—he was furious at having fallen into the hands of this Dr. Antekirtt.

Luigi advanced towards the judges, and began by addressing the Spaniard.

"Carpena," said he, "I am Luigi Ferrato, the son of the fisherman of Rovigno, whom you informed against and sent to prison at Stein, where he died."

Carpena drew himself up for an instant. A paroxysm of anger sent the blood to his eyes. Then it was indeed Maria whom he had recognized in the lanes of the Manderaggio, and it was her brother Luigi who thus accused him.

Pierre then advanced, and at first pointing to the banker he said,—

"Silas Toronthal, I am Pierre Bathory, the son of Stephen Bathory, the Hungarian patriot, whom you, with your accomplice Sarcany, most shamefully betrayed to the Austrian police at Trieste, and sent to death!"

Then to Sarcany he said,—

"I am Pierre Bathory, whom you tried to assassinate in the road at Ragusa. I am the intended husband of Sava, the daughter of Count Mathias Sandorf, whom you stole fifteen years ago from the Castle of Artenak!"

Neither Toronthal nor Sarcany said a word in reply, And what could they say to their victim, who seemed to have risen from the tomb to accuse them?

But it was quite another thing when Dr. Antekirtt rose in his turn, and said in a grave voice,—"And I, I am the companion of Ladislas Zathmar and Stephen Bathory, whom your treachery caused to be shot in the donjon of Pisino! I am the father of Sava, whom you stole to get possession of her fortune! I am Count Mathias Sandorf!"

This time the effect of the declaration was such that the knees of Silas Toronthal bent to the ground, while Sarcany crouched as if he would sink into himself. Then the three accused were examined one after the other. Their crimes they could not deny, and for their crimes no pardon was possible. The chief magistrate reminded Sarcany that the attack on the island, undertaken in his own personal interest, had made many victims whose blood cried out for vengeance. Then having given the accused full liberty to reply, he gave sentence conformably to the right given him by this regularly-constituted jurisdiction.

"Silas Toronthal, Sarcany, and Carpena, you have caused the deaths of Stephen Bathory, Ladislas Zathmar, and Andrea Ferrato! You are sentenced to death!"

"Whenever you like!" replied Sarcany, whose impudence again asserted itself.

"Pardon!" cried Carpena.

Toronthal had not the strength to speak. The three were taken away to the casemates and there kept under guard.

How were these scoundrels to die? Were they to be shot in some corner of the island? That would be to defile the soil of Antekirtta with the blood of traitors! And it was decided that the execution should take place at Kencraf. That evening one of the *Electrics*, commanded by Luigi Ferrato, took the prisoners on board, and bore them off to the island, where they were to wait till sunrise for the firing party.

Sarcany, Toronthal, and Carpena saw that their time had come; and when they had been landed, Sarcany went up to Luigi, and asked him, "Is it to be this evening?"

Luigi made no reply. The three doomed men were left here all alone, and night had fallen when the *Electric* returned to Antekirtta.

The island was now free from the presence of the traitors. That they could escape from Kencraf, which was twenty miles away from the mainland, was impossible.

"Before to-morrow," said Point Pescade, "they will have eaten each other!"

"Pouah!" said Cape Matifou in disgust.

That night Count Sandorf had not a moment's repose. Locked in his room, he did not leave it until four o'clock in the morning, when he descended to the hall to meet Pierre and Luigi, who were immediately summoned.

A file of militia was waiting in the courtyard of the Stadthaus under orders to embark for Kencraf.

"Pierre Bathory, Luigi Ferrato," said Count Sandorf, "have these traitors been justly condemned to die?"

"Yes, they deserve it," answered Pierre.

"Yes," replied Luigi; "the scoundrels deserve no mercy."

"Then let justice be done, and may God give the pardon that man cannot—"

He had scarcely finished speaking when a fearful explosion shook the Stadthaus, and the whole of the island, as if an earthquake had taken place. Count Sandorf and his companions rushed out, and the whole population in terror came streaming into the streets of Artenak.

An immense sheaf of flame, with enormous masses of rock and showers of stones, was blazing to a prodigious height towards the sky. Then the masses fell back round the islet, raining huge waves in the sea; and a thick cloud remained suspended in space. Not a trace was left of the islet of Kencraf, nor of the three men whom the explosion had annihilated. What, then, had happened?

It will not have been forgotten that the island had been mined in preparation for the landing of the Senousists, and that in case the submarine cable which united it to Antekirtta was put out of action, certain electrical batteries had been buried in the ground, so that the wires had only to be pressed by the feet to be brought in contact and fire the fougasses of panclastite.

What had happened was this. By chance one of the doomed men had trodden on these wires. And hence the complete and instantaneous destruction of the islet.

"Heaven has spared us the horrors of an execution!" said Count Sandorf.

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Three days afterwards the marriage of Pierre and Sava was duly celebrated at the church at Artenak. On that occasion Dr. Antekirtt signed his real name of Mathias Sandorf; which he would never again lay down now justice had been done. A few words will suffice us to finish our story.

Three weeks afterwards Sava Bathory was recognised as the heiress of the Sandorf property. The letter from Madame Toronthal and a declaration obtained from the banker, in which the circumstances and the report of her being stolen were duly set forth, proved sufficient to establish her identity. As Sava was not yet eighteen all that remained of the Carpathian estates in Transylvania came back to her. Count Sandorf himself could if he had chosen have entered into possession of this property under an amnesty which had been issued in favour of political prisoners. But if he returned to public life as Mathias Sandorf he could not remain chief of the great family of Antekirtta. And he wished to pass his life among those who loved him.

The little colony, thanks to his renewed efforts, began to flourish exceedingly. In less than a year it had doubled its population. Scientists and inventors, invited thither by Count Sandorf, had come to make good use of discoveries that would have remained barren without his advice and the wealth of which he was the master. And so Antekirtta would soon become the most important place in the Syrtic Sea, and with the accomplishment of its defensive system its security would be absolute.

Of Madame Bathory, Maria, and Luigi Ferrato, and of Pierre and Sava, we need say no more; who does not feel that their lives were happy? Nor need we say more about Point Pescade and Cape Matifou, who are now, perhaps, the most famous colonists of Antekirtta.

Count Sandorf had accomplished his task, and, had it not been for the remembrance of his two companions, Stephen Bathory and Ladislas Zathmar, he would have been as happy as a generous man can be on this earth when he is doing good around him.

In the whole Mediterranean, in all the other seas of the globe—even in the Fortunate Islands—we may seek in vain for an island whose prosperity rivals that of Antekirtta!

And when Cape Matifou, in the exuberance of his good fortune, thinks fit to say,—

"Do you think we deserve to be so happy?"

Point Pescade replies, "No, my Cape! I don't! But what can you do? Shall we resign?"

THE END.