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A

Autobiograph

AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

A Collection

OF THE

MOST INSTRUCTIVE AND AMUSING

LIVES

EVER PUBLISHED,

WRITTEN BY THE PARTIES THEMSELVES.

WITH BRIEF INTRODUCTIONS, AND COMPENDIOUS SEQUELS, CARRYING ON THE NARRATIVE TO THE DEATH OF EACH WRITER.

VOLUME XXVII.—VIDOCQ.

LONDON:
WHITTAKER, TREACHER, AND ARNOT,
AVE-MARIA-LANE.

MDCCCXXIX.

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MEMOIRS

OF

Eugène François VIDOCQ,

PRINCIPAL AGENT OF THE FRENCH POLICE

UNTIL 1827:

AND NOW PROPRIETOR OF

THE PAPER MANUFACTORY AT ST MANDÉ.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

"Que l'on n'accuse pas ces pages d'être licencieuses, ce ne sont pas là ces récits de Pétrone, qui portent le feu dans l'imagination et font des prosélytes à l'impureté. Je décris les mauvaises mœurs, non pour les propager, mais pour les faire haïr. Qui pourrait ne pas les prendre en horreur, puisqu'elles produisent le dernier degré de l'abrutissement?"
MÉMOIRES, VOL. III.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:
WHITTAKER, TREACHER, AND ARNOT.
AVE-MARIA-LANE.

MDCCCXXIX.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

CHAPTER XL.

CHAPTER XLI.

CHAPTER XLII.

CHAPTER XLIII.

CHAPTER XLIV.

CHAPTER XLV.

...tes and bug hunts
...the green cur-

MEMOIRS OF VIDOCQ.

CHAPTER XXXII.

M. de Sartines and M. Lenoir—The thieves before the Revolution—The occupation of a lieutenant-general of police—Formerly and now—The dumb pupils of the abbé Sicard and the cutpurses—The death of Cartouche—Robbers formerly agents of police—The voluntary enrolments and colonial battalions—The hump-backed made straight, and the lame made to walk—The celebrated Flambard and the beautiful Jewess—History of a chauffeur become spy; his advancement in the Parisian national guard—It is compatible to be a patriot and a prigger—I trip Gaffré—The best friends in the world—I mistrust myself—Two hours at Saint-Roch—I have no eyes in my pocket—An old man in an embarrassment—The spoils of the faithful- Thief and spy two trades too many—The danger of passing before a *corps de garde*—Another trip for Gaffré—Goupil takes me for a dentist—An attitude.

I KNOW not what species of individuals they were whom MM. de Sartines and Lenoir employed to constitute the police, but I know very well that under their administration thieves were privileged, and there were a great number of them in Paris. Monsieur the lieutenant-general took little care about checking their enterprises, that was not his business; he was not sorry to know them, and from time to time, when he found them to be clever, he amused himself with them.

If a stranger of distinction came to the capital, M. the lieutenant-general sought the most expert robbers

Assisted by a child—A [illegible] compense was object of my search [illegible] them who should be sufficiently [illegible] watch or any valuable trinket.

The theft effected, M. the lieutenant-general was instantly informed of it, and when the stranger presented himself to give his statement of it, he was struck with amazement, for scarcely had he described the missing valuable when it was instantly restored to him.

M. de Sartines, of whom so much has been spoken and so much is still spoken, wrong or right, took no other pains to prove that the police of France was the best in the world. As well as his predecessors, he had a singular predilection for thieves, and all those whose talents had once met with his approbation were sure of being allowed to go on with impunity. He sometimes flung out defiances to them; he commanded them into his presence, and thus addressed them: "Gentlemen, the honour and reputation of the thieves is at stake, it is said that you cannot effect a certain robbery, —the proprietor is on his guard, therefore form your plans, and remember that I have pledged myself to your success."

In these times of happy memory, M. the lieutenant-general of police assumed no less vanity from the skill of his thieves than did the late abbé Sicard of the intelligence of his dumb pupils; great lords, ambassadors, princes, the king himself, were present at their exercises. Now-a-days we bet upon the fleetness of a horse, then people betted on the adroitness of a cutpurse; and if persons wished to amuse themselves in society, they borrowed a thief from the police in the same way as they now have the services of a gendarme. M. de Sartines always had at his elbow some score of the most skilful, whom he kept for the private pleasures of the court; they were generally marquisses, counts, knights, or at least people who had all the fine airs of the courtiers, with whom it was so much more easy to confound them, as at play a similar inclination to cheat established a certain parity between them.

Good company, whose manners and habits did not essentially differ from those of these thieves. could,

without compromising themselves, admit them into their society. I have read, in the memoirs of the reign of Louis XV. that they besought them " to give them an evening," as, in our time, we pray, cash in hand, for a similar favour from M. Comte, the celebrated *Prestidigitateur* (sleight-of-hand man), or some first rate prima donna of the Opera.

More than once, at the solicitation of a duchess, a renowned robber was released from the cells of Bicêtre; and if, when put to the proof, his talents equalled the utmost expectation which the lady had formed of them, it was seldom that M. the lieutenant-general (whether to keep up his credit or to aid his gallantry) refused freedom to so valuable a member of society. At a period in which there were pardons and lettres de cachet in every person's pocket, the gravity of a magistrate, however severe, was not opposed to the knavery of a scoundrel, if he were at all comical or adroit. As soon as he had excited admiration or astonishment he was pardoned. Our ancestors were indulgent and much more easily amused than ourselves; they were also much more simple and much more candid; this is no doubt the reason why they thought so much of whatever was neither simple nor candid. In their eyes, a man who for his exploits was condemned to the wheel, was the *ne plus ultra* of all that was admirable, they felicitated, they exalted, they loved him, and related or listened with pleasure to the relation of his deeds of prowess. Poor Cartouche, when he was led to the Grève (place of execution) all the ladies of the court shed tears,—it was a perfect desolation.

Under the *ancien régime*, the police had not thought of all the benefits they might reap from robbers; it only considered them as a species of amusement; and it was only at a subsequent period that a plan was devised for placing in their hands a portion of the charge of watching for the common security. Naturally the preference was due to the most famous robbers, because they were most probably the most intelligent.

Some were selected as private agents: they were not required to give up their lucrative profession of plundering, but only expected to denounce their comrades who seconded them in these expeditions: on these terms, they were to remain possessors of all the booty they obtained, and never brought to justice for the crimes in which they had participated. Such were the conditional agreements made by the police; as to salary they had none, it was a sufficient favour to be allowed to give themselves up to rapine with impunity. This impunity was only terminated by the commission of some flagrant crime, when the judicial authority intervened, which was but rare.

For a long period none were admitted to the police of safety but robbers not sentenced or liberated: about the year six of the Republic, a certain number of fugitive galley-slaves were added, who solicited the employment of secret agents, whereby they could support themselves in the metropolis. They were edgetools to handle, and, as such, used with much distrust; and the moment they ceased to be useful, they were got rid of. They usually set some other agent to watch them, who, leading them on by false manœuvres, compromised them, and thus furnished a pretext for their arrest. The Richards, Cliquets, Mouille-Farine, Beaumonts, and many others who had been police spies, were all conducted again to the Bagne, where they terminated their career, broken down by the ill usage of their ancient companions whom they had betrayed; again, it was customary for agent to plot against agent, and the most crafty was left in possession of the field.

A hundred of these individuals, whom I have already cited, Compère, Cesar Viocque, Longueville, Simon, Bouthey, Goupil, Coco-Lacour, Henri Lami, Doré, Guillet, called Bombance, Cadet Pommé, Mingot, Dalisson, Edouard Goreau, Isaac, Mayer, Cavin, Bernard Lazarre, Lanlaire, Florentin, Cadet, Herries, Gaffré, Manigant, Nazon, Levesque, Bordarie, were, in a measure, the purveyors to the prisons, to which they sent

each other by turns, mutually accusing each other, and certainly not unjustly; for they all robbed, and they were all privy to the deeds each performed: for how could they have lived without robbery, as the police allowed them nothing for subsistence?

In the beginning those robbers, who wished to have two strings to their bow, were very few in number; the reception given by the other prisoners to any one that had turned *nose*, (informer,) was a cause why the numbers did not increase. To suppose that they were actuated by any feeling of loyalty, would be to form a wrong estimate of these robbers: if the majority of them did not denounce others, it was from a fear of assassination. But it was with this dread as with the apprehension of every danger which must be faced, it gradually disappeared. At a later period the necessity of escaping the arbitrary power with which the police was armed, contributed to render the custom of informations more common amongst the robbers.

When, without any other form of process, and only because it was the gracious pleasure of the police, they put into the *stone jug* (prison) the individuals reputed incorrigible robbers, (a ridiculous denomination in a country in which nothing was ever tried to amend them,) many of these wretched beings, worn out by a detention which had no prospect of termination, devised a singular expedient for obtaining their liberty. These incorrigibles were also in their generation in some way suspected: reduced to a state which made them even envy the fate of the condemned, since they were at least freed at the expiration of their sentence; that they might be brought to trial they resolved to have themselves denounced for some petty robbery which they had oftentimes never committed; sometimes the crime for which they wished to be betrayed was allowed to them for a small payment by their comrade the denouncer, and happy even they who had crimes to sell! They emptied more than one can at the tap-room to the health of the doer of their crime. It was

a lucky day for the voluntary *dénoncé* when he was led from Bicêtre to La Force, but not so fortunate as that in which, when led before the judge, he heard the sentence pronounced, by virtue of which his term of incarceration was limited to a few months only. This period having elapsed, his liberation, which he awaited with the utmost impatience, was at length announced to him; but between the two gates tipstaffs were placed, who seized on his person; and he fell, as before, under the jurisdiction of the préfet of police, who sent him again to Bicêtre for an indefinite term.

The women were not better treated, and the prison of St. Lazare was crammed with these unfortunates, whom illegal rigour reduced to despair.

The préfet was never tired with these incarcerations; but a moment did arrive, when, from absolute want of room, it was necessary to think of thinning the dungeons, those at least in which the prisoners were literally piled in heaps. He, in consequence, had it suggested to these "incorrigibles," that it depended on themselves to put a termination to their captivity, and that they would deliver immediately lines of route to all those who would volunteer into the colonial battalions. All were persuaded that they were to be allowed to join freely: it had been promised them; but what was their surprise, when the gendarmerie appeared to conduct them in separate brigades to their point of destination. Thenceforward the prisoners did not appear over anxious to put on the uniform; the préfet, perceiving that their zeal had marvellously cooled, ordered the gaoler to solicit them to enter, and if they would not, to have recourse to compulsory measures. It may be relied on that a jailor, under such circumstances, would even exceed his orders. He of the Bicêtre not only solicited the prisoners who were in health, but even those who were not so; no infirmity, however severe, was a ground of exemption in his eyes: they were all fitting, in his opinion,—hump-backed, one-eyed, lame, and old. In vain did they remonstrate; the préfet had

decided that they were soldiers, and, willing or unwilling, they were transported to the isles of Oleron or Ré, where officers, selected from amongst the most brutal in the army, treated them like negroes.* The atrocity of this measure was the cause that many young men, who would not submit to such treatment, offered themselves to the police as auxiliaries: Coco-Lacour was one of the first to try this path of safety, the only one open to him. At first, some difficulties were raised against his admission; but at length, persuaded that a man who had dwelt amongst robbers from his earliest infancy would be an admirable acquisition, the préfet consented to enrol him amongst the secret agents. Lacour made a formal engagement to become an honest man, but could he keep such an undertaking? He was without pay, and when the appetite is keen, the stomach sometimes prevails over the conscience.

To be a spy without pay, what a situation! it is to be a spy and thief at the same time; and thus, the evidence of the necessity established against the secret agents a prejudice which always told against them, whether innocent or guilty. If a brigand, to be revenged upon them, should determine to inculpate them as his accom-

* The colonial battalions, at a period when France had no colonies, were destined to be the scum of our land force. The officers were almost all swindlers and cheats, dishonoured from misconduct, and rather intended to carry a constable's staff than a soldier's sword. When imperial despotism existed in all its vigour, the colonial battalions recruited amongst a crowd of respectable citizens, military or otherwise, whom Fouché, Rovigo, Clarke, &c. immolated to their caprices, or those of the master whose slaves they were. Generals, colonels, adjutant-commanders, magistrates, and priests, were used as common soldiers in the isles of Ré and Oleron. The police had united in this exile royalists and patriots with grey hairs, who were compelled to submit to the same discipline as the incorrigible robbers. The Commandant Latapie made them march side by side without distinction.

plices, with or without proof it was impossible for them to clear themselves.

I could state a volume of circumstances, in which, although strangers to the crimes with which they are charged, secret agents have been condemned by the tribunals, but I shall confine myself to the two following facts.

M. Hémart, the first president, went into the country; on alighting from his carriage, he saw that the portmanteau containing his property was carried off. Enraged with the authors of this deed he determined to use all means to detect them, and bring down on their heads all the severity of the laws. They had only incurred a correctional punishment, but M. Hémart could not resolve on considering as a simple larceny a robbery which was effected to his individual loss; chastisement would be too lenient, it was a crime which he wished to make it, and, with this intent, he presented a petition to the chief judge, that he might decide the question, if the breaking open after committing the robbery did not constitute an aggravation of the case?

M. Hémart sought an affirmative decision, and as he desired so was the judge's sentence. Thereupon the robbers, whose audacity had roused the anger of the president, were discovered and apprehended. They had been found with the property, and it was difficult to deny it; but they suspected an old *pal* of having denounced them, named Bonnet, a secret agent; they pointed him out as their accomplice, and Bonnet, although innocent, was sentenced with them to twelve years' imprisonment and fetters.

At a subsequent period two other secret agents, Herricz the younger, and Ledran, his brother-in-law, had stolen some portmanteaus, and having emptied them to divide the spoil, deposited them with two colleagues, Tormel the father and son, who, afterwards denounced by them, were tried and convicted of a robbery of which the perpetrators alone had the booty. Whether at the Bicetre or La Force, not a day arrived

that I did not see some of these worthies arrive, and hear them mutually reproach each other with their bad conduct. From morn till eve these supernumerary spies were quarrelling, and their violent debates unfolded to me how perilous was the path which I had chalked out for myself. But I did not despair of avoiding the dangers of the profession, and all the mishaps of which I was witness were so many examples to me, from which I formed my own line of conduct, which would render my fate less precarious than that of my predecessors.

In the second volume of these memoirs I have spoken of the Jew Gaffré, under whose control I was, in some measure, placed at the moment of my entering the police. Gaffré was the only secret agent with a salary. I was no sooner united with him than he tried to get rid of me; I pretended not to see through his intention, and if he contemplated my destruction, I resolved, on my side, to defeat his plans. I had a dangerous game to play: Gaffré was wily as a snake. When I knew him he was called the high-priest of thieves. He had begun at eight years of age, at eighteen he was whipped and marked on the Place du Vieux-Marché, at Rouen. His mother, who was mistress of the famous Flambard, chief of the police in that city, had endeavoured to save him: but although one of the handsomest Jewesses of her time, the magistrates would grant nothing to her charms: Gaffré was too culpable; Venus in person could not have prevailed upon his judges. He was banished. However, he did not quit France, and when the revolution burst forth, he was not slow in resuming the old course of his exploits in a band of chauffeurs, amongst whom he figured under the name of Caille.

Like the majority of his confederates, Gaffré had completed his education in the prisons, and then he had become an universal genius, that is to say, there was no species of *prigging* in which he was not fully expert. Contrary to custom, he adopted no special

or peculiar line of conduct; he was essentially the man of the moment; nothing came amiss to him, from *cutting a weasand, to drawing a wipe* (assassination to pocket-picking). This general aptitude, this variety of contrivance, had enabled him to amass a small sum. He had, as they say, *shot in the locker*, and could live without working; but people of Gaffré's profession are industrious, and although he was liberally paid by the police, he kept on adding to his accumulations the produce of some unlawful exactions, which did not prevent him from being much considered in his quarter, (then the Martin,) when, with his acolyte Francfort, another Jew, he had been named captain of the national guard.

Gaffré was afraid that I should supplant him, but the old fox was not cunning enough to hide his apprehensions; I watched him, and was not slow in discovering that he was manœuvring to get me into a snare. I appeared to be blindly led by him, and he chuckled internally at his anticipated victory; when, wishing to catch me in a plot which I saw through, he was himself taken in the net, and in the end shut up for eight months in the depot.

I never allowed Gaffré to surmise that I had suspected his treachery, and he continued to dissemble the hatred which he bore towards me, and that so well, that we were apparently the best friends in the world. I was on the same terms with many robbers who were secret agents, and with whom I had associated during my detention. These latter detested me heartily, and although we kept smiling countenances towards each other, they flattered themselves that they should pay me off some day. Goupil, the Saint George of pugilism, was amongst those who afforded me their friendship, and, constantly attached to my person, filled the office of tempter; but he was not more fortunate nor more adroit than Gaffré. Compère, Manigant, Corvet, Bouthey, Leloutre also tried to catch me tripping: but I was invulnerable, thanks to the advice of M. Henry.

Gaffré having recovered his liberty, did not renounce his design of ruining me. With Manigant and Compère he plotted to get me condemned; but, persuaded that having once defeated him he would not leave me, but return to the charge with vigour, I was incessantly on my guard. I awaited him firmly, when one day that a religious solemnity had attracted a vast crowd to Saint Roch, he announced to me that he had orders to attend there with me. "I shall take Compère and Manigant with us," he added, "as we learn that at this moment there are many strange robbers in Paris, and they will point out to us all they know." "Take whom you please," I answered, and we set out. When we reached our destination, there was a considerable crowd; the service we were upon did not require that we should all unite at one point. Manigant and Gaffré went first. Suddenly, in the place they were, I remarked an old man, who, by being pressed against a pillar, did not know where to put his head; he did not cry out, from respect to the sacred place, but his whole person was disarranged and his wig knocked awry; he lost his footing; his hat, which fell off, and which he anxiously followed with his eyes, was rolled from place to place, sometimes from and sometimes towards him. "Gentlemen, I beseech you, I beg of you," were the only words which he pronounced in a most piteous tone; and holding in one hand a gold-headed cane and in the other his snuff-box and pocket handkerchief, he shook his hands in the air, as if he would have reached the ceiling with them. I found he had lost his watch, but what could I do? I was too far distant from the old gentleman; besides, my advice would be too late; and then Gaffré, was he not also a witness of the scene? and although he said nothing, he doubtless had some motive for it. I adopted the wisest plan, and was silent to see what would ensue, and during the space of two hours, the duration of the ceremony, I had an opportunity of observing five or six of these concerted squeezes, and saw Gaffré and Manigant always in

them. The latter, who is now in the Bagne at Brest, under a sentence of twelve years' fetters, was at this period the most expert pick-pocket in the capital; he excelled in extracting the money from a person's pocket and transferring it into his own; with him the transmutation of metals was reduced to a simple displacing, which he effected with incredible talent.

The short stay in the church of St. Roch was not particularly productive; however, without including the old man's watch, he had stolen two purses and some other articles of value.

After the ceremony had terminated, we went to dine at a coffee-house; the worthies paid the expenses, and nothing was spared; we drank deeply, and at the dessert they confided to me what I could not fail to have known. At first they only mentioned the purses, in which they found a hundred and seventy-five francs in hard cash. The bill paid, there remained a surplus of one hundred francs, of which they handed me over twenty as my portion, counselling me to be silent and discreet. As money has no name, I thought there was no reason for a refusal.

The party appeared enchanted at having thus initiated me, and two flasks of Beaune were emptied to celebrate the occasion. No mention was made of the watch, nor did I allude to it; not only that I might appear ignorant of it, but I was also all eyes and ears, and was not slow in learning that it was in Gaffré's possession. I then began to assume the appearance of a drunken man, and shamming a call of necessity, I desired the waiter to lead me where I wished to go. He conducted me out, and when alone I wrote with a pencil this note:—

"Gaffré and Manigant have just stolen a watch in the church of Saint Roch; in an hour, unless they change their intention, they will cross the market of St. Jean. Gaffré carries the spoil."

I hastily descended, and whilst Gaffré and his confederate thought me engaged up five pair of stairs,

I got into the street and despatched a messenger to M. Henry. I went back again without loss of time, and my absence had not been of long duration. When I entered I was out of breath, and as red as a turkey cock. They asked me if I felt better!

"Yes, a great deal," I stammered out, and falling nearly under the table.

"Steady boys, steady," says Manigant.

"He sees double," observed Gaffré.

"He is done up," added Compère, "quite done up, but the air will revive him."

They gave me some sugar and water. "Go to ——" I cried out, "What! water for me, water for me!"

"Yes, it will do you good."

"Do you think so?"

I extended my hand, but instead of seizing the glass I upset and broke it. I then played a few silly drunken tricks which amused the party, and when I judged that M. Henry had received my despatch, and taken measures accordingly, I insensibly came to myself.

On going out, I saw with pleasure that our route was not changed. We went towards the market of St. Jean, and there saw a file of soldiers. When I saw them sitting at the door, I did not doubt but that they were there in consequence of my message, and the less so as I observed Ménager the inspector following us. When we passed they approached us, and, taking us politely by the arm, invited us to enter the guard-house. Gaffré could not imagine what this meant, but supposed the soldiers were in error. He wished to argue the point. They desired him to obey, and he was compelled quietly to submit. They began with me, but found nothing; when it came to Gaffré's turn he was not at all easy. At length the fatal watch was produced from his fob: he was a little disconcerted, but at the moment of his examination, and particularly when he heard the commissary say, "Write: *a watch set with brilliants*," he turned pale and looked at me.

Had he any suspicion of what had passed? I do not think so, for he was convinced that I did not know of the robbery of the watch; and, besides, he was sure that, if I had known it, as I had not left them, I could not have turned *nose*.

Gaffré, on being questioned, pretended that he had bought the watch; they were persuaded that this was a lie, but the person who was robbed not being present to claim his property, it was not possible to condemn it. He was, however, confined for a time in Bicêtre, and then sent under *surveillance* to Tours, whence at a later period he returned to Paris. This villain died there in 1822.

At this period, the police had so little confidence in their agents, that there was no kind of expedient to which they had not recourse to prove them. One day Goupil was let loose upon me, and came with a singular proposal.

"You know François, the publican," said he to me.

"Yes, and what of that?"

"If you will help me, we will draw a tooth or two from him."

"How?"

"Why he has very frequently addressed the prefecture, to obtain permission to keep open house during part of the night, which request has always been denied; and I have given him to understand that it only depends on you to procure what he is so anxious to have."

"You are wrong, for I can do nothing."

"You can do nothing! very true, certainly! Oh you can do nothing, but you can buoy him up with the hope that you can do it."

"That is true, but wherein would be the benefit to him?"

"Say the benefit to us. François, if well managed, would *bleed* well. He is already told that you are the man who is 'all in all' in the administration: he has a good opinion of you, and so no doubt he will *tip* freely on the first requisition."

"Do you think he will part with the *blunt* ?"

"I am sure, my boy, he will *shell out* six hundred francs as easily as a penny; we shall handle the ready, that is the main thing, and we can afterwards leave him to his reflections."

"Well, but he will be enraged."

"Never mind, let him do his worst; but give yourself no trouble, I will provide for all. No *black and white work* (writing) mind; you know the proverb, 'Writings are men, words but women.'"

"True as gospel; no receipt for cash in hand, and yet we can safely pocket."

"Certainly, he who sows should reap; and no labour no profit. Meanwhile I will go and see how the land lies, and sound the old boy."

Goupil then took my hand, and, shaking it heartily, added, "I am now going straight to François, I will tell him you will call in the evening; I shall fix the hour for eight o'clock, but do not you come till eleven, because (as you must say) you will have been delayed; at midnight we shall be told to go out, you must appear to comply with this formality, and François will seize the opportunity of urging his request. You are a man of experience, and know how to play your cards. Farewell for the present."

"Adieu," I replied, and we separated. Scarcely, however, had we turned our backs on each other than Goupil returned.

"Oh!" said he, "you know that very frequently the feathers are more valuable than the bird; I want a pluck at the feathers, otherwise ————" and he assumed a peculiar attitude, opening his enormous mouth, holding his hands about six inches from the ground, as if he was about to scrape the pavement, and completing the menace by drawing back his body and advancing his legs, in which the mobility of his feet were not the least comical part of his attitude.

"All's right," said I to Goupil, "you shall not swallow me. We will divide,—it is a bargain."

"On the word of a thief."

"Yes, make yourself easy."

Goupil immediately took the road to the Courtille, where he very frequently went, and I that of the prefecture of police, when I informed M. Henry of the proposal made to me. "I hope," said he, "that you will not lend yourself to the plot." I protested that I was not at all inclined to do so, and he evinced his pleasure at my free communication. "Now," he added, "I will give you a proof of the interest that I take in you;" and he arose to reach from his chest a packet of papers, which he opened. "You see it is full, and they are all reports against you: they are in abundance, but yet I employ you, because I do not believe one word of what they say."

These reports were the production of the inspectors and peace officers, who, through a spirit of jealousy, continually accused me of robbery. That was the burden of their song, as well as that of the robbers whom I had detected in the very act: they denounced me as their accomplice, but when I was on every side exposed to unfavourable representations, I defied calumny, I braved its assaults, and its teeth were broken against the brazen buckler of truth, which, by the means of incontestable *alibis,* or impossibilities of another nature, became resplendent by the evidence of facts. Accused daily for sixteen years, I was never betrayed by it: once only I was interrogated by M. Vigny the judge. The complaint laid before him had some colouring of truth, but I had only to appear before him and the whole was proved false, and I was instantly freed from all suspicion.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

The biter bit—Provocation—Wolves, lambs, and robbers—My profession of faith—*The band of Vidocq* and the old man of the mountain—No morality in the police—My calumniated agents—"*A cat in gloves catches no mice*"—The fishing rod—Put on gloves—Desplanques, or the love of independence: or where the devil has he hid himself?—The regulation of MM. Delaveau and Duplessis—The movable roulette tables and the *ultra philanthropist*—Proper manners, proper bearing, proper studies—Long and short gowned Jesuits—The reign of under petticoats—Obstinacy of robbers called reformed—Coco-Lacour, and *an old friend—Castigat ridendo mores.*

Gaffré and Goupil having failed in their plans for my destruction, Corvet resolved to try his success in the same way. One morning, when I was in want of some particular information, I went to the house of this agent, whose wife was also attached to the police. I found both man and wife at their lodging, and although I only knew them from having once or twice cooperated with them in some unimportant discoveries, they gave me the information I required with so much good will, that, like a man who has the feelings of good fellowship towards those with whom he is associated, I offered to regale them with a bottle of wine at the nearest *cabaret.* Corvet alone accepted the proffer, and we went together and seated ourselves in a private room.

The wine was excellent; we drank one, two, three bottles. A private room and three bottles of wine leads on to confidence. About an hour afterwards, I thought I perceived that Corvet had some proposal to make, and at length he somewhat suddenly said, "Listen, Vidocq, (and he knocked his glass on the table with some emphasis,) you are a jolly lad, but you are not open amongst friends; we know well enough that you are a fellow *workman,* but you're a *deep file:* we two might do a fine stroke of business."

I pretended not to comprehend him.

"Nonsense, come, come," he replied, "no *gammon,* that will not go down with me, I know you are a

cunning fellow although I don't know your *place of work* I will speak to you as I would to my own brother, if I think I may depend upon you. It is all very well to serve the police, but there is nothing to be made out of it, and a crown changed is a crown spent and gone. Now if you will keep counsel, there is a job or two which I have in my eye which we will do together, and which will not hinder us from doing our friends a good turn."

"How," said I, "would you abuse the confidence placed in you? that is not right, and I am sure that if it were known at the prefecture they would give you two or three years of it at Bicêtre."

"Ah! you are like all the rest," replied Corvet, "you are going to be mealy-mouthed and squeamish; you are delicate, are you; come, come, we know one another.

I testified much astonishment at his holding such language to me, and added that I was fully persuaded that he only said so to try me, or perhaps lay a snare for me.

"A snare!" cried he, "a snare! I bring you into trouble, I had rather put my own neck in jeopardy; you must be mad to suppose it. I do not beat about the bush; when I say anything it is blunt and straightforward; with me there is no back door, and as a proof that all is not as you believe, I will tell you that no later than this evening I am going to work. I have already laid my plan, the keys are made, and if you will come with me, you shall see how I will do the job."

"I doubt you have either lost your senses, or you wish to entangle me in your net."

"What, do you not give me any credit for better feelings? (Elevating his voice.) I tell you then you shall not have a finger in the pie. What more would you have? I shall take my wife with me, it will not be the first time, but it will be the last if you choose to make it so. With two men there is always a resource at hand. The business of to-day regards you nothing;

you will wait for us in the coffee-house at the corner of the Rue de la Tabletterie. It is almost facing where we are going to work, and as soon as you see us come out do you follow; we will sell the booty, and we will go snacks. After that you will no longer distrust us. What think you?"

There was so much appearance of sincerity in this discourse, that I really hardly knew how to act with Corvet. Did he want an accomplice, or did he seek a means of destroying me? I have still my doubts on this point; but in either case Corvet was a manifest rogue.

By his own confession, his wife and he committed robberies. If he had spoken the truth, it was my duty to deliver him up to justice; if, on the contrary, he had lied, in the hope of entrapping me into a criminal action to denounce me, it was only right to prosecute the plot to its termination, that I might show to the authorities that to tempt me was labour in vain.

I had endeavoured to dissuade Corvet from his design, but when I saw that he persisted, I feigned to allow myself to be seduced.

"Well then," I said, "since it must be so, I accept the proposal."

He instantly embraced me, and the rendezvous was fixed for four o'clock, at a vintner's. Corvet returned home, and as soon as he had left me I wrote to M. Allemain, commissary of police, in the Rue Cimetière St. Nicolas, to inform him of the robbery which was to be perpetrated in the evening. I gave him, at the same time, all the necessary information for seizing on the culprits in the very commission of their crime.

I was at my post at the agreed hour; Corvet and his wife were not long after me, and after drinking a bottle or two of wine to cheer them in their work they proceeded on their enterprise. A moment afterwards, and I saw them enter a court-yard in the Rue de la Haumerie. The commissary had so well contrived that he apprehended the two at the moment when, laden

with booty, they left the apartment they had ransacked. This couple were condemned to ten years' confinement.

During the trial Corvet and his wife asserted that I had tempted them to the robbery. Certainly in the line I had pursued, there was nothing that could be construed into such a temptation; besides in a robbery I do not see how there can be any provocation possible. A man is honest or he is not: if he be honest, no consideration can be sufficiently powerful to determine him on committing a crime: if he be not, he only wants the opportunity, and is it not evident that it will offer itself sooner or later?

And if this opportunity makes a rogue, may not the robber become an assassin? Certainly he who labours to demoralize a frail being, and to inculcate pernicious principles, for the horrid pleasure of ultimately delivering him up afterwards to the executioner, must be the most infamous of scoundrels. But when a man is perverted, when he declares himself in a state of hostility with his equals, to draw him into a snare; to attract him by hopes of booty which yet he is prevented from gaining; to hold out to him the bait, which eventually takes him;—is not this rendering a real service to society? It is not the sheep which is placed in the wolf's trap which creates his depredatory instinct. He has the same inclination for robbing; he is predisposed to the action, and the action will be infallibly accomplished; for, at one time or other, the robber will go any lengths to perfect his crime. What is important is, when an attempt is made and the authors detected, the eye of the police is upon them, and the body of society thus guarded and benefitted. In fact I see no harm, but quite the reverse, in casting before the viper the piece of cloth on which he may exhaust his venom.

In a large city like Paris, gangrened hearts are never wanting, nor minds criminally perverted; but every robber who infests the metropolis has not the mark of crime upon his brow. Some are skilful enough to go on a long career of guilt before they are detected.

They are culpable, and should be brought to justice and convicted, that is to say, if taken with booty in hand. Well, when individuals of this kind have been pointed out to me, whether because their connections and habits rendered them suspected, or because they led a free life without any ostensible means of existence, to cut short their exploits I held out a snare for them; and, I confess it without shame, I did not make the least hesitation in doing so. Robbers are persons whose nature is to appropriate to themselves the property of another, just as the wolves are voracious animals whose nature is to attack the herds. We can scarcely confound the wolves with the lambs; but if it were possible that the one was concealed in the skin of the other, would a shepherd, when he saw the mark of their teeth, be to blame, if, to prevent future attempts, he tempted the voracity of all those whom he thought capable of biting? We may be certain that the one that bites is the one who has always been inclined to bite. If Corvet and his wife have robbed, it is that already, by fact or intent, they were robbers. On the other hand, I had never provoked them; I had only simply adhered to their proposition. It may be objected towards me, that by threatening them I could prevent them from committing the robbery which they had premeditated; but to threaten them was not to correct them: to-day they might have abstained, to-morrow they would have carried off a new booty: and certainly to have done so, they would not have called for my aid. What would have been the result? That the moral responsibility of the crime committed would have fallen on me with all its onus. And then if Corvet had any intention of implicating me in an affair of the kind, with any kind of promise from the préfet of police, after the event, did not my own personal safety prescribe the necessity of precaution, so as to undermine any trap which might be laid to ensnare me, and thus defeat those who invented and those who were the agents of it. This was the result I arrived at by denouncing Corvet to the

commissary of the quarter in which his operations were to be carried on, instead of denouncing him to the préfet. By following this plan, I was assured that if he had been set on they would disavow it, and justice would be done.

If I have insisted on the fact of provocation in this affair, it is because it was the general assertion and means of defence of the majority of those whom I was the cause of apprehending in the actual commission of robbery. We shall find, in the next chapter, that the idea of resorting to so pitiful an excuse was often suggested to them by my enemies. The recital of a plot of four agents of my brigade, Utinet, Chrestien, Decostard, and Coco-Lacour, will show how contemptible were the strongest imputations against me.

I will not here repeat what I have elsewhere said on the provocation of political measures. The discontent, legitimate or not, the superciliousness, the exasperation, nay, the fanaticism, do not constitute a state of perverseness; but they may produce a sort of momentary blindness, under the influence of which the most honourable man, the most virtuous citizen, will be easily misled. Captious reasonings, perfidious combinations, an intrigue to which he has no clue, may lead him to the abyss. Satan comes and carries him to the top of a mountain, whence he shows him the kingdoms of the world; he shows him the whole of a chimerical arsenal of armies, cannons, soldiers, and people ready to rise against oppression. He seduces him by impossibilities, and for impossibilities salutes him by the title of liberator; and the wretch, whose imagination gives birth to speculative ideas, thinks that he has at last found a point of strength and a lever to shake the world. Impelled by the most execrable of demons, he dares to utter his dreams: hell has its witnesses, its judges, and the delirium terminates at the scaffold's foot: such is, in a few words, the history of the *patriots* of 1816, excited by the infamous Schilkin. But let us return to the "brigade de sûreté."

After the formation of this brigade, the peace-officers and their agents, who bore me no love, cried out, "shame on't:" it was they who spread about the most absurd tales of me; they coined the phrase of the "band of Vidocq," which was applied to the persons composing the police of safety: they said that it consisted only of freed galley-slaves, or of skilful old pick-pockets, who knew all the *rigs* of *prigging a reader* or *fogle*.

"Can," said they, "such a man be allowed to have such a band? Is it not placing at his control the life and money of the citizens?" At another time they compared me to the Old Man of the Mountain; "When he likes he will cut all our throats," said the respectable M. Yvrier; "has he not his Seids? It is infamous; in what times do we live!" he added, "there is no morality, not even amongst the police." The worthy old fellow, with his morality! But it was not that which disquieted him; these gentlemen, vulgarly called peace-officers, would willingly have forgiven us for having been at the galleys, if the préfet had not, when he wished to detect or apprehend a robber, had more reliance on us than on them. Our address and our experience had the preference with the magistracy: and thus, when it was shown to them that all their efforts to effect my disgrace were useless, they changed their batteries; they did not attack me more directly, but they assailed my agents, and all the means possible of making them odious to the authorities seemed good. If a robbery were committed, either at the doors of the theatre or within the walls, they drew up a report, and the members of the terrible brigade were designated as the presumed authors of it. It was the same every time there was any large meeting, the peace-officers did not allow one occasion to escape of attacking the brigade. Not a cat was lost but they were accused of the robbery.

Fatigued at last with these perpetual inculpations, I determined to put an end to them. To reduce these

respectable gentlemen to silence, I could not cut off the arms of my agents, for they were absolutely needful to them: but to conciliate all, I told them that in future they must constantly wear leather gloves, and I declared that if I met any one of them ungloved I would instantly dismiss him.

This entirely disconcerted the malevolents; henceforward it was impossible to reproach my agents for *working* in the crowd. The peace-officers, who well knew that the hand cannot act adroitly when covered, kept their mouths closed, remembering the proverb, "*a cat in gloves catches no mice.*" One morning I gave this order to my agents as one which I had hit upon to put a stop to all the tattle of which they were the object.

"Gentlemen," said I, "they will no more credit your probity than they will the chastity of priests. Well, then, to prove how wrong they are, I have thought that nothing would be so natural as, in any case, to paralyze the limb which is the instrument of sin; in this instance, gentlemen, it is your hands; I know you are incapable of making improper use of them, but to avoid a shadow of suspicion, I expect that henceforward you will not appear abroad without gloves."

This precaution, I must say, was not called for by any conduct of my agents, for no robber, or galley-slave, whom I employed ever compromised himself as long as he formed one of my brigade; some have fallen again into evil ways, but their return to guilt was after having been dismissed from my band. Knowing the former course and situation of these men my power over them was arbitrarily exercised; to keep them to their duty, a will of iron and most determined resolution was required. My ascendancy over them arose from their not having any acquaintance with me previous to my entering into the police service: many had seen me at La Force or Bicêtre; but I had never been otherwise than a brother prisoner, and I could defy them to produce one affair in which I had participated, either with others or with themselves.

It must be stated that the majority of my agents were freed convicts, whom I had myself apprehended when they had been sinning against justice. At the expiry of their sentence they came to beg me to enrol them, and when I found them intelligent, I made use of them in my brigade of safety. Once in the brigade they became instantly reformed, but only in one particular,—they robbed no more: as to the rest, they were always debauched, addicted to wine, women, and play; many of them lost their monthly pay at gaming instead of paying their lodging, or the tailor who provided them with clothes. In vain did I devise means of giving them the least possible leisure, they always contrived to find time enough to indulge in their vicious habits. Compelled to devote eighteen hours per day to the police they were less debauched than if they had been entirely at leisure, but yet they committed various follies, which, when they were but trifling, I usually overlooked. To treat them with less indulgence would have been to show my ignorance of the old adage, which says, "it is impossible to stop the flow of the river." So long as their excesses were not connected with their duties, I confined myself to a reprimand, and those reprimands were frequently but so many strokes of a sword in water, but yet sometimes, according to the men I had to deal with, the due effect was produced. Besides, all the agents under my orders were persuaded that I watched them closely and incessantly; and they were not mistaken, for I had my spies, and through them learnt all they did: in fact, whether far or near, I never lost sight of them, and any infraction of the rules and regulations laid down for them was immediately punished. What will appear surprising is, that under every circumstance in which the service required it, these men, so ill disciplined in other respects, conformed to my will, even when there was a matter of danger to be performed. No man but myself, I may say, could have commanded equal devotion.

I insert my regulations for the information of my readers, who may see that without mingling in politics I had occupation enough.

PREFECTURE OF POLICE.

Regulations for the private brigade de sûreté.

Art. 1. "The private brigade de sûreté is divided into four detachments. Each of the agents commanding one detachment receives his instructions from his chief, and he receives his orders of surveillance and manœuvre from the chief of the second division of the prefecture of police; with whom he must consult every day, and whenever it may be necessary for the maintenance of order and the security of persons and property. He shall make a return to him every morning of the result of the surveillance of the preceding evening and night of his brigade, and every chief of a detachment shall bring his private report.

2. "The private agents shall exercise a severe and active surveillance to prevent offences; they shall arrest, as well on the public way as at the cabarets, and other public places, persons escaped from fetters and prisons; the freed galley-slaves who cannot show any permission for residing in Paris; those who have been sent away from the capital to their own homes, to remain there under the surveillance of the local authorities, conformably to the penal code, and who have returned to Paris unauthorized; as well as those apprehended in the very act of robbery. They shall conduct these latter before the commissary of police of the quarter, to whom they shall make their report, to inform him of the reasons for apprehending these suspected persons. In case this public functionary should be absent, they shall leave them at the nearest station, and carefully search them in presence of the commandant then on duty, that it may be correctly stated as to what property was found upon them. They shall always ask of these suspected persons their abode, to verify subsequently, and

in case of a false residence being given, they shall inform the commissary of police, who will testify concerning the same. They shall point out also the witnesses who may be heard, and of whom they shall take care to procure the names and residences.

3. "The private agents can only confine in the stations the individuals before mentioned. They shall not take them thence without an order from the chief of the brigade, to whom they must give an account of their operations, or by virtue of a superior order.

4. "The police agents may not enter any private house to apprehend a person suspected of crime without being provided with an order, and without being accompanied by a commissary of police, if there be a search to be made in the house.

5. "The police agents must always walk alone, that they may the more easily observe the persons passing on the public way, and shall make occasional halts in the most populous thoroughfares.

6. "Circumspection, veracity, and discretion, being indispensable qualities for every police agent, any defection in these will be severely punished.

7. "The police agents are prohibited, day or night, from extending their surveillance to any other quarter of the city than that appointed for them by their chief, unless some extraordinary event shall imperatively summon them, and of which they shall give an exact report.

8. "The police agents are also forbidden from entering the cabarets and other public places, to sit at table and drink with common women, or other individuals who may compromise them. Those who tipple, have secret and habitual connections with female thieves or common women, or live with one of them, shall be severely punished.

9. "Gaming, being the vice which most particularly leads a man to commit base actions, is expressly forbidden to the police agents. Those who are found

playing for money in any place shall be instantly suspended from their station.

10. "The police agents are required to give in to their chief of brigade an account of how their time is passed.

11. "The first infringement of the regulations herein laid down will be punished by a mulct of two days' pay: in case of a recurrence of the offence this mulct shall be doubled, besides the addition of a severe punishment should that be judged requisite.

12. "The chief of the brigade is especially charged to watch over the execution of these regulations. This is also particularly recommended to the chiefs of detachments who receive his orders, and should make their reports daily, as to what they have done conformably therewith, as well as of those they may have given to those agents under them.

"*Given at the prefecture of police.* 1818.

"The Minister of State and Préfet of Police.

(Signed) "COMTE ANGLES."

"By his Excellency, the Secretary-general of the Prefecture.

(Signed) "FORTIS."

Under M. Delaveau, I wished to add a few articles to the above; but the rigid préfet, who filled Paris and the suburbs with his ambulatory roulette tables, refused to give his sanction to a regulation which anathematized gambling. I had also classed amongst the duties of my agents, the right of sending away from the Quai de l'Ecole, the Champs Elysées, and all public places, those herds of wretches, of all ranks and ages, who abandon and prostitute themselves to a shameful and disgusting purpose, which seems to have in some measure emigrated with the jesuits. I often begged for the repression of these disorders, but Messrs. Delaveau and Duplessis constantly turned a deaf ear to it; in

fact it was impossible for me to make them understand that the law which punishes the offence against good manners is applicable to these *ultra philanthropists*, whenever they sin so grossly. I have not yet been able to explain why such hideous depravities were in some measure privileged; perhaps there existed a sect who, to detach itself from the world on the one hand, and to withhold itself from its most delicious influences, had sworn hatred to the loveliest half of the human species; perhaps, like the society of *bonnes lettres*, and that of *bonnes études*, they formed a society of *bonnes mœurs*—jesuitical manners. I know nothing of it, but in a few years the crime has made so much progress that I counsel our ladies to be on their guard; if it continue, farewell to the empire of the petticoat, the long or short gown; the jesuits only love their own.

I have generally found that amongst the members composing the brigade, those who went heart and hand into its duties became at length tolerable members of society, that is to say, that leaving one trade to enter upon another, they pursued their path steadily. Those, on the contrary, who did not go readily to work, fell into irregular habits, which invariably led to an unhappy termination. I had particularly occasion to make an observation of this nature with reference to a man named Desplanques, who was my secretary.

This Desplanques was a well-bred young fellow; he had talent, good style in writing, was a fine penman, and had several other qualifications which might have led him to an honourable rank in the world. Unfortunately he had an addiction to robbery, and to perfect his disgrace he was most superlatively idle. He was a robber with the soul of a pick-pocket, which is tantamount to saying, that he was unfitting for anything requiring assiduity and energy. As he was not punctual, and acquitted himself very ill in his department, it happened that I frequently scolded him: "You are always complaining of my negligence," he replied, "with you one must be a slave: on my faith, I am

not accustomed to be so used." Desplanques had just left the Bagne, where he had passed six years.

In admitting him into the brigade, I thought I had made an admirable acquisition, but I was not slow in being convinced that he was incorrigible, and I found myself compelled to dismiss him. Being then without resource, he betook himself to the only mode of existence which in such a situation can be reconciled with the love of ease. Passing one evening through the Rue du Bac, he broke a square of glass in a money changer's shop, and ran off with a wooden bowl full of money. At the same moment he heard a cry of "stop thief," and was warmly pursued. At the words "stop, stop," officiously repeated from all quarters, Desplanques redoubled his speed, and would soon have been out of reach, but at a turning in the street, he fell completely into the arms of two agents, his old comrades: the rencontre was fatal. He tried to escape, but his efforts were useless; the agents fastened on him and dragged him to the commissary, where the positive commission was immediately sworn to. Desplanques was an old offender, and condemned to the galleys for life: he is now at Toulon, where he is undergoing his sentence.

People who judge of all without having any knowledge of individual facts, have asserted that agents who have been originally robbers, must, necessarily, have an understanding with them, or at least temporize with them as long as they are sufficiently adroit as not to expose themselves. I can attest that robbers have no more cruel enemies than the freed convicts who have assembled under the banner of the police; and that they, following the usual examples in such cases, never exert more zeal than when they are serving a friend; that is to say, seeking to apprehend an ex-comrade. In general, a robber who thinks himself reformed is without pity for his ancient comrades; the more he has been intrepid in his time, the more implacable he will be.

One day, Cerf, Macolein, and Dorlé were brought

to the bureau charged with robbery. On seeing them, Coco-Lacour, who had long been their companion and intimate friend, was apparently overpowered with indignation; he rose and apostrophized Dorlé in these terms.

Lacour. Well, sir, what are you still incorrigible?

Dorle. I do not understand you, M. Coco, with your morality!

Lacour (*in a rage.*) Who do you call Coco? Learn that that name is not mine; I call myself Lacour; yes, Lacour, do you hear?

Dorle. Ah! my God! I know it too well, you are Lacour; but you have not, I dare say, forgotten that when we were comrades you had no other name but Coco, and all the *friends* you have call you by that name, and no other. I say, Cerf, have you ever seen a *cocoa* of such strength?

Cerf (*shrugging his shoulders.*) There are no children left, all the world is mingled, monsieur Lacour!

Lacour. It is good, good, very good, other times, other manners; *castigat ridendo mores;* I know that in my youth I may have committed some little venial offences, but ——

Lacour tried to arrange some words, in which the word *honour* was distinguishable; but Dorlé who was not in a humour to listen to his remonstrance, closed his mouth by recalling to him all the various times when they had *worked* together. A thousand times Lacour has experienced disagreeables of this kind: and if ever he reproached the robbers with their tenacity for *sticking to business,* his good intentions were always recompensed by similar impertinences.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

God bless you!—The conciliabules—The inheritance of Alexander—The rumours and prophecies—Grand conspiracy—Inquiry—Discoveries on the subject of a *Monseigneur le dauphin*—I am innocent—The fable often reproduced—The Plutarch of the literary pillar, and Tiger the printer—The wonderful and well authenticated history of the famous Vidocq—His death in 1875.

Once attaining the post of chief of the police of safety, I no longer cared for the snares with which they so often sought to encompass me. The time of trial was past; but still I was compelled to keep on my guard against the base jealousies of some of my subalterns, who envied my appointment, and did their utmost to endeavour to supplant me. Coco-Lacour was a leader amongst the malcontents, who endeavoured to caress and injure me at the same time. At the moment when this rogue was at fifty paces from me and would have overturned all the chairs in a church to come and salute me with a honeyed "God bless you," when, by chance he heard me sneeze, I was well assured that he was a snake in the grass. No one despises more than myself those petty attentions of a man who is servile, even when civility is scarcely requisite. But as I had a conscience which told me that I had done my duty, I cared very little as to whether these demonstrations were false or true. Scarcely a day passed without my spies informing me that Lacour was the soul of certain meetings, (*conciliabules,*) where all matters relating to me were discussed. They said that he projected my downfall; that there was a party formed against me, the aim of whose conspiracy was to destroy the tyrant Vidocq. At first, the conspirators contented themselves with clamours; and as they had my destruction perpetually in perspective, that they might mutually please each other, they universally predicted it, and each of

them partook beforehand of the inheritance of Alexander. I am ignorant whether the inheritance devolved on "the most *worthy*," but I know very well that my successor did not hesitate to have recourse to every stratagem, more or less skilful, to succeed in getting it adjudged to him previously to my abdication.

From clamours and scandal-meetings Lacour and his partisans passed to more decided measures; and on the approach of the sitting, during which Peyois, Leblanc, Berthelet, and Lefebvre, who were accused of robbery, by the aid of a crow-bar, or monseigneur le dauphin, they spread a report that I was on the eve of a catastrophe, and that, in all probability, I should not get off with clean hands.

This prophecy, delivered at all the vintners in the environs of the palace of justice, was soon brought to me, but I did not disquiet myself any more than at so many others which were not realized; only, I thought I perceived that Lacour redoubled his attentions and suppleness towards me; he saluted me more respectfully and with more ceremony than usual; his eyes, aided by the spiral movement of his head, when he sought to give himself the graces of a man of good breeding, sedulously avoided all contact with mine. At the same time, I remarked with three other of my agents, Chrestien, Utinet, and Decostard, an increase of zeal for the service, and a complaisance which astonished me. I was instructed that these gentlemen had frequent conferences with Lacour; as for myself, without thinking the least in the world of watching their steps for my personal interest, I had surprised them chattering and talking of me. One evening, particularly, passing into the court of la Sainte-Chapelle, (for they had plotted even in the sanctuary,) I had heard one of them rejoicing that I should not *parry the thrust about to be made at me.* What did this mean? I had not the least idea. When Peyois and his accomplices had been tried, the judicial examination developed a most atrocious machination, tending to

prove that I was the instigator of the crime which had led them to the galleys.

Peyois said, "that having addressed me, to ask me if I knew a recruiter who wanted a substitute, I had proposed that he should rob on my account, and that I had even given him three francs to buy the crow-bar, with which he had been taken when forcibly entering the house of Sieur Labatty." Berthelet and Lefebvre confirmed Peyois's statement; and a vintner named Leblanc who, implicated as well as they, appeared to have been the real provider of funds for procuring the instrument, encouraged them to persevere in a system of defence, which, if allowed, would have the effect of clearing him. The advocates who pleaded in this cause, did not fail to draw all possible argument from this imputation against me, and as they spoke from conviction, if they did not determine the jury to come to a decision favourable to their clients, at least they contrived to insinuate into the minds of the judges and the public most terrible prejudices against me. I therefore felt it incumbent on me to exculpate myself, and, sure of my innocence, I begged M. the préfet of police to grant me an inquiry, that the truth might be made evident.

Peyois, Berthelet, and Lefebvre were condemned, and I imagined that not having henceforward any motive for persisting in falsehood, they would confess that they had calumniated me; I presumed, besides, that in case their conduct should have been the result of suggestion, they would not make much difficulty in naming the advisers of the imposture which they had so impudently supported in the presence of justice. The préfet allowed the inquiry I solicited, and at the moment when he confided the care of directing it to M. Fleuriais, commissary of police for that quarter of the city, a previous document, on which I had not counted, preceded my justification; it was a letter of Berthelet to the vintner Leblanc, who had been declared not guilty; I transcribe it here, because it shows to what are reduced the accusations which were perpetually made

against me, the whole time I was attached to the police, and since I have belonged to it. It follows, and I have preserved even the exact orthography.

" A Monsieur,

" Monsieur *le Blanc*, maître marchand de vin, demeurant barrière du Combat, boulvard de la Chopinette, au signe de la Crois, à proche Paris.

" Monsieur, je vous Ecris cette lettre Cest pour m'enformer de l'état de votre santée Et an même teimps pour vous prevenir que nous sommes pourvus an grace de notre jugement. Vous ne doutez pas de ma malheureuse position. C'est pourquoi que je vous previens que si vous m'abandonné je ferais de nouvelle Revelation de la peince que vous avez fourny et qui a deplus été trouvée chez vous, dont vous n'ignores pas ce que nous avons caché a la justice a cette Egard, et dont un chef de la police a été cités dans cette affaire qui était innocent Et qu'on a cherché a rendre victime, vous n' ignores pas les promesse que vous m'aves faite dans votre chambre pour vous soutenir dans le tribunal, vous n' ignores pas que j'ai vendu le suc et de la chandelle a votre femme C'est pourquoi si vous m'abandonne je ne vous regarderes pas pour un nomme dapres toutes vos belles promesses.

" Rappeles vous que la justice ne pert pas ces droit et qui je pourés vous faire appelles en ————

" Vous navés Rien à craindre cette a passer secrettement.

" Berthelet."

And lower down, " j'aprouve l'ecriture ci desus."

(translation.)

" To Monsieur,

" Monsieur le Blanc, master vintner, living at the barriere du Combat, boulevard de la Chopinette, at the sign of the Cross, near Paris.

" Sir,

" I write you this letter to inform myself of the state

of your health, and, at the same time, to let you know that we are about to seek a reversal of our sentence. You cannot doubt my wretched situation. I therefore warn you that if you forsake me, I will make a fresh discovery of the crow-bar which you furnished, and which has been found at your house, which you well know we have not told to justice, and with which a chief of police has been charged in this affair, who is entirely innocent, and who has been singled out as a victim; you are not ignorant of the promises that you made in your room, on condition that we supported you before the tribunal; you are not ignorant that I sold the sugar and candles to your wife, and, therefore, if you abandon me, I shall think no more of you and your fine promises.

" Remember that justice will not lose her rights, and that I can have you summoned to ———.

" You have nothing to fear, this passes out secretly.

" BERTHELET."

" I approve the above."

According to custom, this letter, which was to pass so secretly, was given up to the jailor, who, having read it, forwarded it to the prefecture of police. Leblanc, consequently, being unable to reply or come to Berthelet, he lost his patience, and to put in execution the menaces he had held out, he wrote to me from the Conciergerie another letter thus conceived :—

" *Ce* 29 *Septembre*, 1823.

" MONSIEUR,

" Dapres les debats de la cour d'assise et le resumée du president qui porte a charge Dapres la Declaration du Nommé Peyois qui par une Fosse declaration faite par lui au tribunal d'un Ecul de 3 fr. que vous lui aviez donnés pour acheté linstrument qui a Casses la porte a Monsieur Labbaty.

" Moi Berthelet En presence des autoritées veux

faire Reconnoitre la veritée Et votre innocence je declare 1°. savoir ou la peince a été achetée. 2°. de la maison doù elle est sorty. 3°. et le nom de celui qui la fourny avec veritée.

" BERTHELET."

And lower down, " J'approuve lecriture ci Dessus."

Still lower, the seal of the house of justice and the notice from the hand of the chief of the employés of the Conciergerie.

" *L'écriture ci-dessus et la signature est celle de Berthelet.* " EGLY."

(TRANSLATION.)

" 29*th September*, 1823.

" SIR,

" After the examination of the Court of Assize and the sentence of the president after the declaration of Peyois, who, by a false declaration made by him at the tribunal, of a three franc piece that you had given him, to buy the instrument which broke open M. Labatty's door.

" I, Berthelet, in presence of the authorities, wish to confess the truth and your innocence. I declare, *first*, when the crow-bar was bought; *secondly*, the house whence it came; *thirdly*, the name of him who furnished it, with truth.

" BERTHELET."

" I approve the above."

Berthelet, being interrogated by M. Fleuriais, declared that the crow-bar had cost forty-five sous; that it was bought at the faubourg du temple, at a broker's, and that Leblanc, knowing the use to which it was to be applied, had advanced the money to pay for it. " The bargain concluded," continued Berthelet, " Leblanc, who was a little behind, said to me; " If any person should ask you what you are going to do with the crow-bar, you must say that you are a stone-cutter, and that you want the

bar to work your turning-wheel. If they ask for your papers, come to me, and I will say that you are my apprentice." I went on with the crow-bar in my hand, and he told me to give it to him, that he might carry it under his great coat, lest I should meet any of the agents. Leblanc then conducted me to his house, and on arriving, his first care was to go down into his cellar to hide the crow-bar. I went up stairs and found Lefebvre there, to whom I said that I had bought the tool. The same evening, after having sat drinking till ten o'clock, Lefebvre, Peyois, and myself went round the temple to a small street, the name of which I forget; Peyois, whilst I and Lefebvre were on the watch, made thirty-three holes by means of a centre-bit, in the shutter of a milliner's shop. The knife he used to enlarge the holes having broken, and our attempt thus failing, we retired, and went then to the market at the corner of St. Eustache, when Peyois, using the crow-bar, tried to force the door of a silk-mercer. Some one within having asked what we wanted, we fled; it was then half-past two o'clock in the morning. We went all then to the hôtel d'Angleterre, when Perjois left with the woman of the house, whom he knew, an umbrella which he had with him.

"Before he entered, Peyois had left the crow-bar, which was wrapped up, with a coffee-seller in the street. We left the hôtel d'Angleterre about five o'clock, and Peyois again took the bar from the woman in whose charge he had left it. I must say that woman knew nothing of what it was. Peyois went then to Leblanc's, and carried the bar with him. Lefebvre and I did not part company, but returned to Leblanc's at five o'clock in the evening, and remained there till tea. Leblanc gave me a phosphorus light-box in case we should need one, and also a piece of candle. I amused myself with tracing on this light-box, which was of lead, with my knife, the letter L, which is Leblanc's initial. Peyois, Lefebvre, and I went out together. Peyois, having taken the bar with him, passed the bar-

rier with it, and then left it with us. He stopped on the road, to call at a house with Victoire Bigan, and Lefebvre and I went to commit (at Labatty's) the robbery for which we were subsequently apprehended. The crow-bar and a part of the booty stolen were conveyed to Leblanc's by Lefebvre.

"Leblanc, who was tried with us, had engaged us not to accuse him, and not to contradict Peyois, who was to say that it was M. Vidocq who had given him three francs to buy the crow-bar; and he has promised to give me a sum of money if I would consent to assert the same thing. I did consent, fearing that if I told the truth my situation would be still worse."

(*Declaration of 3d October*, 1823.)

Lefebvre, who afterwards confessed, without having any communication with Berthelet, confirmed his confession, as far as concerned Leblanc. "If I did not say," he added, "that it was he who furnished Berthelet with the money for the purchase of the crow-bar, it is because Peyois had engaged me to say that it was he, Peyois, who had bought it. Peyois being compromised in this robbery, was unwilling to charge Leblanc, who was friendly to him and would serve him again." A Monsieur Egly, chief of the employés at the Conciergerie, and Lecomte and Vermont, confined in that prison, having been heard by M. Fleuriais, related many conversations, in which Berthelet, Lefebvre, and Peyois had arranged, in their presence, how they would inculpate me. In their evidence all the convicts agreed that I had endeavoured to dissuade them from doing wrong. Vermont related, besides, that one day he having blamed them because they had compromised me without any motive, they replied: "Stuff! we will do the trick; we would have compromised the eternal Father to save ourselves; but it has not turned out so well as might be."

Peyois, who was the youngest of the party, was less free in his replies: his friendship for Leblanc induced

him to conceal a part of the affair, but he confessed that I knew nothing of the purchase of the crow-bar.

"During," said he, "all the time that preceded our trial, and before the court of assizes, I have affirmed and declared that M. Vidocq gave me the three francs to buy the crow-bar, by the aid of which the robbery has been committed, which caused the apprehension of myself, Berthelet, Leblanc, Lefebvre, and others. I have persisted in saying the same thing, hoping that it might defer or diminish my term of sentence. I had thought of this plan because some prisoners had told me that it might be of use to me. I will now truly declare that M. Vidocq gave me no money to buy the crow-bar, and I purchased it with my own money: this bar cost me forty-eight sous, and I bought it at a smith's shop in the first street on the right hand, on entering the Rue des Arcis on the side of the bridge of Notre-Dame. I do not know the name of the smith, but I could easily point out the shop, which is the second on the right on going down the street. It was on the eighth or ninth of March last that I made the purchase; the smith and his wife were in the shop; it was the first time I ever bought any thing of them."

Three days afterwards Peyois, having been transferred to Bicêtre, wrote to the chief of the second division of the prefecture of police a letter, in which he confessed that he had constantly imposed on justice, and testified a wish to make sincere disclosures: this time the whole truth did really come to light. Utinet, Chrestien, Decostard, and Coco-Lacour, who had come to the court to depose in favour of the imposture, were at once dragged to light: it became evident that Chrestien had planned the whole intrigue, which was to lead to my expulsion from the police. A declaration which the mayor of Gentilly received, exposed the whole infamy of the machination, from which Lacour, Chrestien, Decostard, and Utinet, had promised themselves the greatest success. This declaration, to which I could add a great many

others, comprises a complete justification, and I here subjoin it word for word.

DECLARATION

Of Peyois and Lefebvre, relative to Sieur Vidocq, falsely accused of having furnished money to buy a crow-bar, by help of which a robbery was committed.

"*Second Division, First Office, No.* 70,466.

"This day, the 13th of October, 1823, at ten o'clock in the morning, we, Guillaume Recodere, mayor of the commune of Gentilly, after the order of M. the councillor of state, préfet of police, we went to the central house of detention of Bicêtre, when we caused to appear before us, in the room of the said prison, André Peyois, detained under a sentence condemning him to confinement in irons, whom, after having presented a letter addressed to the chief of the second division of the prefecture of police, beginning with these words, '*pardon the liberty*,' and finishing with these, '*of which my mother has informed me*,' the said letter, dated the tenth current, and signed Peyois, we asked to tell us if he knew it to be that which he had subscribed and signed, and if he avowed the whole contents.

"His reply was, that he perfectly knew this letter to be the same which he addressed to M. Parisot, chief of the second division of the prefecture of police, it was signed by him. The body of the letter was not written by him, as he could not write well enough for that, but that what it contained had been dictated by him to the writer, (named Lemaitre, a fellow-prisoner,) and as a proof of what he stated, he is ready to declare to us orally all the facts and circumstances contained in the same, without requiring to have his memory assisted by any hints from us, by reading its contents: he, consequently, declared, that after the affair which led to his condemnation and sentence to fetters, when he publicly stated that the Sieur Vidocq had given him the sum of three francs to buy the crow bar, by aid of which he committed the robbery which led to his condemnation,

he told a thing not only incorrect but actually untrue, for no such offer or suggestion was made to him by that functionary, and that never, at this or any other time, did he receive money from this individual: he stated this falsehood in public court; he did it from the bad advice given to him by Utinet and Chrestien, who persuaded him that by this means only his affair would take a favourable turn, and that he would not be condemned; and so much the more, as if he called on them as witnesses of what he stated they would support his assertion, and they would depose exactly as he did, and that they would even say that they had seen the sum of three francs given; they went even further, they persuaded him that they had much influence with some powerful personage whose authority would secure him from condemnation, or, if a sentence was past, would exercise his influence in reversing his judgment.

"It was also by the advice of these two individuals that he called Lacour and Decostard as witnesses, who deposed the same facts as himself, declaring that Sieur Vidocq had done so, although such statement was positively false.

"After his sentence these same individuals required of him that he should appeal, promising to pay the expenses of a counsel and all the costs of such appeal. As to the latter circumstance, the mother may be examined, who received from Lacour and Decostard the same promises and same advances: they were made to her at a vintner's, in the place du Palais de Justice, named M. Bazile. His mother lives with her husband, Rue du Faubourg Saint Denis, No. 143, at a M. Restauret's.

"Thus he must, for the satisfaction of his conscience, and to pay homage to justice and truth, disavow what he said in open court to the prejudice of Sieur Vidocq, against his morality and his honour, and he humbly asks his pardon.

"To corroborate this confession he requests us to examine Lefebvre, his accomplice, sentenced with him-

self in the same affair, who is in this prison, and knows by whom and with whose money the crow-bar was bought, which he said had been paid for by the money of Vidocq.

"This was read over to him, and he confirms the truth of it, in which he persists, and has signed it.

(Signed) "PEYOIS."

"Afterwards, having summoned before us Lefebvre, who was above alluded to as a prisoner in the same prison, we asked him if he knew Peyois, and how he procured the crow-bar, by the aid of which the robbery was effected, which led to their mutual conviction.

"He answered, that two or three days before the robbery was committed he had seen this instrument in the hands of Peyois, who, before the affair, had always told him that he bought it for three francs, but never said that M. Vidocq had given him the money. It was on the trial, and during the arraignment previously, that he learnt that it was M. Vidocq who had supplied the funds which bought it.

"Which is all he knew of the matter, and his declaration being read over to him, he said that it was all true, he persisted in the assertion, and signed it.

(Signed) "LEFEBVRE."

"From which, and of all which, the present *procès verbal* has been drawn, to be transmitted to M. the councillor of state, préfet of police, on the day, month, and year, above-mentioned.

(Signed) "RECODERE."

It was these four agents (Lacour, Chrestien, Decostard and Utinet) who had sent Peyois to me, when he came under pretence of asking me if I could not tell him of some recruits who wanted a substitute: it was also they who persuaded Berthelet to come to my office, to give me information on a certain robbery about to be perpetrated. They had thus prepared to support the accusation, under the weight of which they hoped to

crush me, an assemblage of apparent truths resulting from my intercourse with robbers previously to their apprehension. According to all appearances it was not impossible but that they had, for some time, winked at the exploits of Peyois and his gang, on condition that if they were apprehended in the act, they should adopt a system of defence conformable to their interest. Not a trace of such an understanding could be made out, but it is most probable; and the measures of my agents, both during the proceedings and after the conviction of the culprits, do not allow any doubt on the point. Peyois is arrested, and instantly Utinet and Chrestien go to La Force and have a conversation with him, in which they persuade him that it is only by accusing me that he can give a favourable turn to his affair: that if he would escape a sentence he must call them both as witnesses of what they agreed that he should assert: that they will support his assertion, and will depose exactly the same as he did: that they will even state that they have seen me give him the sum of three francs.

The two agents do not confine themselves to this only; but to make assurance doubly sure of the non-retraction of Peyois, they tell him that they have a powerful protector at their disposal, whose influence will preserve them from every kind of sentence, and who, if by chance a sentence was inevitable, would still have arms long enough to overturn the sentence.

The pleadings opened, Utinet, Chrestien, Lacour, and Decostard hastened to attest the facts which were imputed to me by Peyois. But this young man, to whom they promised impunity, was overwhelmed by the verdict: then apprehending that, now seeing his fate, he would make them repent having deceived him, by exposing their treachery, they hastened to animate his hope, and not only required of him that he should appeal to the court of cassation, but, still more, they offered to give him a counsel at their own expense, and engaged to pay all expenses of the appeal. The mother of Peyois was equally assailed by these intrigues:

they made her the same offers of service, the same promises; Lacour, Decostard, and Chrestien took her to M. Bazile's, the vintner's, place du Palais de Justice; and there, in the presence of Leblanc's wife and a bottle of wine, exerted all their eloquence to prove to the mother of Peyois that if she seconded them, and her son was obedient to their orders, it would be easy to save him: "Be quiet," said Chrestien, "and we will do all that is requisite."

Such were the facts elucidated by the inquiry; it became evident to the magistrates that the incident of the crow-bar furnished by Vidocq was an invention of my agents; and, subsequently, on this foundation, a thousand and one tales were made more or less ridiculous; which the Plutarchs of the literary pillar will not fail to give as authentic, if ever Tiger, the printer, or his successor, should take a fancy to add to their collection of wonderful books, "*The wonderful, but yet most true history of the deeds, actions, and adventures, memorable, extraordinary, and surprising, of the celebrated Vidocq; with a portrait of that great spy, as he appeared when living, just before his death, which happened without accident, on the day of his decease, in his house at Saint Mandé, at midnight, on the 22d July, in the year of grace,* 1875."

CHAPTER XXXV.

The newsmongers of mishaps—The echo of the street of Jerusalem and the circumjacent places—Nothing but "Vidocq"—The Athenians and Aristides—Ostracism and shells—The cat's-paw—I create robbers—The two Guillotins—The cloaca of Desnoyers—Chaos and creation—Monsieur Double-croche and the chicken-coop—A genteel appearance—The supreme bon ton—War with the greenhorns—Le Cadran bleu de la Canaille—A well-compacted society—The Orientalists and the Argonauts—The mutton of the salt-marshes—The cat's tail—The quids and the Chahut—Riboulet and Manon la Blonde—The triumphal entry—The little black father—Two ballads—Hospitality—The college friend—The Children of the Sun.

I ASK pardon of the reader for having expatiated at so much length on my own tribulations and the petty spite of my agents: I could well desire to have spared him a chapter which only concerns my reputation; but, before I proceeded, I was anxious to show that it is not always right to give ear to the tales of enemies. What have not the spies, the robbers, and the pick-pockets endeavoured by every means in their power, as well as many others, to get me dismissed from the police?

"Such a one is *grabbed*," said a knight of the post to his wife, on returning at evening to his lair.

"Impossible!"

"No, by heaven 'tis as I tell you."

"By whom?"

"Why need you ask? by that ——— Vidocq."

Two of those gossips so numerous on the *pavé* o Paris meet;—

"Have you heard the news? Poor Harrison is at La Force."

"Monsieur, you are joking."

"I wish it was a joke; he was just ready to receive a quantity of merchandise. I should have had my

commission; well! the devil mingled in the dance, just as he had received the notice of delivery he was apprehended."

"And by whom?"

"By Vidocq."

"The wretch!"

A capture of the highest importance was announced at the police-office; If I had seized any great criminal, of whom the most cunning agents had a hundred times lost scent, instantly all the flies began buzzing, "It is that cursed Vidocq who has *nabbed* him at last." It was then that recrimination followed recrimination without end: along the streets of Jerusalem and Sainte-Anne, from cabaret to cabaret, echo repeated in the accents of malice, "Vidocq again! always Vidocq!" and this name sounded more harshly in the ears of the cabal, than did that of the Just on the ears of the ancient Athenians, as applied to Aristides.

How great would have been the happiness of the gangs of robbers, vagabonds, and spies, if, expressly to offer them a chance of getting rid of me, they had revived the old law of Ostracism! How shells would then have accumulated! But, except by plots like those from which M. Coco and his accomplices expected so fortunate a result, what could they do? In the hive they silenced the drones. "Look at Vidocq," said the chief, "take example from him; what activity he exerts! always on the alert, day and night, he never sleeps; with four such men as he, the safety of the capital would be ensured."

These encomiums irritated the sluggards, but they did not follow the advice given: if they were awake, they always had a glass in their hands; and instead of going on wings to the place where duty summoned, they formed themselves into small parties, and amused themselves by picking my coat to pieces.

"No, it is not possible," said one, "to take these expert *cracksmen*, unless he has some understanding with them."

" Parbleu!" replied another, " he sets them on, and makes a cat's-paw ——"

" Oh, he is a malicious brute," added a third.

Then a fourth, placing a copestone upon the whole, cried out with a stentorian voice, " When there are no robbers, he makes them."

Now, see how I made robbers.

I do not think that amongst the readers of these Memoirs one will be found who, even by chance, has set foot at Guillotin's.

" Eh! what?" some one will exclaim, " Guillotin!"

> Ce savant médecin
> Que l'amour du prochain
> Fit mourir de chagrin.

" You are mistaken, we all know the celebrated doctor, who——;" but the Guillotin of whom I am speaking is an unsophisticated adulterator of wines, whose establishment, well known to the most degraded classes of robbers, is situate opposite to the Cloaque Desnoyers, which the raff of the Barrière call the drawing-room of la Courtille. A workman may be honest to a certain extent and venture in, *en passant*, to papa Desnoyers'. If he be *awake*, and keep his eye on the company, although a row should commence, he may, by the aid of the gendarmes, escape with only a few blows, and pay no one's scot but his own. At Guillotin's he will not come off so well, particularly if his *toggery* be over spruce, and his *pouch* has *chink* in it.

Picture to yourself, reader, a square room of considerable magnitude, the walls of which, once white, have been blackened by every species of exhalation. Such is, in all its simple modesty, the aspect of a temple consecrated to the worship of Bacchus and Terpsichore. At first, by a very natural optical illusion, we are struck by the confined space before us, but the eye, after a time, piercing through the thick atmosphere of a thousand vapours which are most inodorous, the extent becomes visible by details which escape in the

first chaotic glimpse. It is the moment of creation, all is bright, the fog disappears, becomes peopled, is animated, forms appear, they move, they are agitated, they are no illusory shadows, but, on the contrary, essentially material, which cross and recross at every moment. What beatitudes! what a joyous life! Never, even for the Epicureans, were so many felicities assembled together. Those who like to wallow in filth, can find it here to their heart's content: many seated at tables, on which, without ever being wiped away, are renewed a hundred times a day the most disgusting libations, close in a square space reserved for what they call the dancers. At the further end of this infected cave there is, supported by four worm-eaten pillars, a sort of alcove, constructed from broken-up ship-timber, which is graced by the appearance of two or three rags of old tapestry. It is on this chicken coop that the music is perched: two clarinets, a hurdy-gurdy, a cracked trumpet, and a grumbling bassoon—five instruments whose harmonious movements are regulated by the crutch of Monsieur Double-Croche, a lame dwarf, who is called the leader of the orchestra. Here all is in harmony—the faces, costumes, the food that is prepared; a genteel appearance is scouted. There is no closet in which walking-sticks, umbrellas, and cloaks are deposited; the women have their hair all in confusion like a poodle dog, and the kerchief perched on the top of the head, or in a knot tied in front, with the corners in a rosette, or, if you prefer it, a cockade, which threatens the eye in the same manner as those of the country mules. As for the men, it is a waistcoat with a cap and falling collar, if they have a shirt, which is the regulated costume; breeches are not insisted on; the supreme bon ton would be an artillery-man's cap, the frock of an hussar, the pantaloon of a lancer, the boots of a guardsman, in fact the cast-off attire of three or four regiments, or the wardrobe of a field of battle; and there is LO *out and outer* thus attired but is the *fancy man* of these ladies, who

adore the cavalry, and have a decided taste for the dress of the whole army; but nothing so much pleases them as mustachios, and a broad red cap adorned with leather of the same colour.

In this assembly, a beaver hat, unless napless and brimless, would be very rare; no one ever remembers to have seen a coat there, and should any one dare to present himself in a great coat, unless *a family man*, he would be sure to depart skirtless, or only in his waistcoat. In vain would he ask pardon for those flaps which had offended the eyes of the noble assembly; too happy would he be if, after having been bandied and knocked about with the utmost unanimity as a greenhorn, only one skirt should be left in the hands of these youthful beauties, who, in the fervour of gaiety, rather roar out than sing these characteristic words:—

Laissez-moi donc, j'veux m'en aller
Tout débiné z'a la Courtille.
Laissez-moi donc, j'veux m'en aller
Tout débiné chez Desnoyers!

Desnoyers' is the Cadran bleu de la Canaille, (the resort of the lower orders;) but before stepping over the threshold of the cabaret of Guillotin, even the canaille themselves look twice, as in this repository are only to be seen prostitutes with their bullies, pick-pockets and thieves of all classes, some *prigs* of the lowest grade, and many of those nocturnal marauders who divide their existence into two parts, consecrating it to the duties of theft and riot. It may be supposed that slang is the only language of this delightful society: it is generally in French, but so perverted from its primitive signification, that there is not a member of the distinguished "company of forty" who can flatter himself with a full knowledge of it, and yet the "dons of Guillotin's" have their purists: those who assert that slang took its rise in the East, and without thinking for a moment of disputing their talent as Orientalists, they take that title to themselves without any ceremony;

as also that of Argonauts, when they have completed their studies under the direction of the galley-serjeants, in working, in the port of Toulon, the dormant navigation on board a vessel in dock. If notes were pleasing to me, I could here seize the opportunity of making some very learned remarks. I should, perhaps, go into a profound disquisition, but I am about to paint the paradise of these bacchanalians; the colours are prepared,—let us finish the picture.

If they drink at Guillotin's they eat also, and the mysteries of the kitchen of this place of delights are well worthy of being known. The little father Guillotin has no butcher, but he has a purveyor; and in his brass stewpans, the verdigrise of which never poisons, the dead horse is transformed into beef à-la-mode; the thighs of the dead dogs found in Rue Guénegaud become legs of mutton from the salt-marshes; and the magic of a piquant sauce gives to the *staggering bob* (dead born veal) of the cow-feeder the appetizing look of that of Pontoise. We are told that the cheer in winter is excellent, when the rot prevails; and if ever (during M. Delaveau's administration) bread were scarce in summer during the "massacre of the innocents," mutton was to be had here at a very cheap rate.

In this country of metamorphoses the hare never had the right of citizenship; it was compelled to yield to the rabbit, and the rabbit—how happy the rats are!

"*O fortunati nimium—si nôrint.*"

It was the Domine of St. Mandé who taught me this quotation; he told me it was Latin, perhaps it may be Greek or Hebrew;—no matter, I leave it, come what may, to the will of God; but still, if the rats could ever have seen what I have seen, unless they had been an ingrate and perverse race, they would have opened a subscription for the erection of a statue to the *Liberator*, little father Guillotin.

One evening, led by my inclination, which a good

Frenchman always follows, I went out; in my road I accidentally pushed against a door, it gave way, and, by the freshness of the air, I found I was in a court; the place was propitious, and I groped along, until I made a trip over some paving stones which had been left in the way. I stretched out my arms to recover myself, and whilst with one hand I grasped hold of a post, I seized with the other something very soft and very long. I was in darkness, but fancied I saw several sparks shining, and by the touch I thought I recognised a certain velvet appendage of a quadruped's vertebral column. I kept hold of a bunch of it, and drawing it through my hand, there remained a packet of spoils, with which I entered the room at the very moment when M. Double-Croche, pointing out the figures to the dancers, was howling out "*la queue du chat.*"

It needs not to be asked how very à propos this was; there was throughout the assembly a general mewing, but it was only a joke; the lovers of fricassee mewed like the rest, and, after having taken their caps off, they said, "Come on, here is the good stuff! Covered by cat-skin, and fed on cats, we shall not soon be in want; the mother of tom-cats is not yet dead."

Father Guillotin consumed generally more oil than cotton, but I can, nevertheless, affirm, that, in my time, some banquets have been spread at his cabaret, which, subtracting the liquids, could not have cost more at the café Riche or at Grignon's. I remember six individuals, named Driancourt, Vilattes, Pitroux, and three others, who found means to spend 166 francs there in one night. In fact, each of them had with him his favourite *bella.* The citizen no doubt pretty well fleeced them, but they did not complain, and that quarter of an hour which Rabelais had so much difficulty in passing, caused them no trouble; they paid like grandees, without forgetting the waiter. I apprehended them whilst they were paying the bill, which they had not even taken the trouble of examining. Thieves are generous when they are caught "i' the vein." They had just committed

many considerable robberies, which they are now repenting in the bagnes of France.

It can scarcely be believed that in the centre of civilization, there can exist a den so hideous as the cave of Guillotin; it must be seen, as I have seen it, to be believed. Men or women all smoked as they danced, the pipe passed from mouth to mouth, and the most refined gallantry that could be offered to the nymphs who came to this rendezvous, to display their graces in the postures and attitudes of the indecent Chahut, was, to offer them the *pruneau*, that is, the quid of tobacco, submitted or not, according to the degree of familiarity, to the test of a previous mastication. The peace-officers and inspectors were characters too greatly distinguished to appear amongst such an assemblage, they kept themselves most scrupulously aloof, to avoid so repugnant a contact; I myself was much disgusted with it, but at the same time was persuaded, that to discover and apprehend malefactors it would not do to wait until they should come and throw themselves into my arms; I therefore determined to seek them out, and that my searches might not be fruitless, I endeavoured to find out their haunts, and then, like a fisherman who has found a preserve, I cast my line out with a certainty of a bite. I did not lose my time in searching for a needle in a bottle of hay, as the saying is; when we lack water, it is useless to go to the source of a dried-up stream and wait for a shower of rain; but to quit all metaphor, and speak plainly,—the spy who really means to ferret out the robbers, ought, as much as possible, to dwell amongst them, that he may grasp at every opportunity which presents itself of drawing down upon their heads the sentence of the laws. Upon this principle I acted, and this caused my recruits to say that I made men robbers; I certainly have, in this way, made a vast many, particularly on my first connection with the police.

On a particular afternoon of the winter of 1811, I had a presentiment that a visit to Guillotin's would not be

without its results. Without being superstitious, I know not why, I have always followed these inspirations; I put my wardrobe in requisition, and, after having suited myself so as not to bear any appearance of being a greenhorn, I left my house with another secret agent, named Riboulet, *a downy cove*, (arsouille consommé,) whom all the houris of the *boozing ken* (quinche) claimed as their chevalier, as did also the milliners' girls, who considered him as a complete *kiddy*. For such an excursion, a woman was an indispensable portion of the baggage, and Riboulet had one who just suited us; she passed as his mistress, and was a common woman, called Manon la Blonde, on whom he assured me that reliance could be placed. In two seconds she rent her woollen stockings in twenty places, tore the edges of her red cloak, begrimed her shawl, trod her shoes down at heel, dishevelled her locks, and gave to the kerchief with which she graced her brows that indescribable appearance which was necessary. She was highly delighted with the character she had to perform.

Thus attired and prepared, we set out together, arm-in-arm, towards la Courtille. On reaching the cabaret, we seated ourselves at a table in the corner, that we might the more easily watch whatever should pass. Riboulet was one of those men whose very appearance commanded instant attention: he had not spoken nor had I, but yet we were instantly attended to.

"You see," said he, "the *cove* knows the time o'day, the *lush* (wine), meat, and salad."

I asked if we could not have a matelote of eels.

"Snakes," cried Manon, "do you want; *cag-mag and snivellers* (stinking meat and onions) would be as good."

I said no more, and we began to eat with as much appetite as if we had never been initiated into the mysteries of papa Guillotin's cookery.

During the repast, a noise at the door attracted our attention. It proceeded from some conquerors who made their triumphal entry: men and women six in

number, forming three couples of individuals whose "human face divine" was most tremendously disfigured: they all had scratched countenances and black eyes; by the bloody disorder of their attire, and the freshness of their dilapidations in face and garments, it was easy to perceive that they were the heroes of some spree, in which on both sides the quarrel had been decided by fisty-cuffs. They approached our table.

ONE OF THE HEROES. "By your leave, my trumps, is there room for us on this here seat?"

I. "We shall be squeezed a little, but never mind." (*making room.*)

RIBOULET (*addressing me.*) "Come, my covey, make room for the gentlemen."

MANON (*to the fresh arrivals.*) "Are these ladies with you?"

ONE OF THE HEROINES. "Vat is it you say? (*turning to her friends,*) vat does she say?"

HER PAL. "Hold your jaw, Titine, (Celestine,) the lady said nothing to affront you."

The whole party seated themselves.

A HERO. "Halloo! come here daddy Guillotin; a *little black father*, four year old, for eight *mag*." (A four quart jug for eight sous.)

GUILLOTIN. "Coming, coming."

THE WAITER (*with the jug in his hand.*) Thirty-two *mag*, if you please."

"I'll give you two and thirty kicks of the ——, you're chaffing us my rum 'un.

WAITER. "No, my knowing ones, but it's the custom, or, if you like, the way of this here house."

The wine was poured into all the glasses, and they also filled ours. "Excuse the liberty," said the Ganymede of the party.

"Oh, there's no harm done," replied Riboulet.

"You know one politeness requires another."

"But you are too polite."

"Oh no, drink away, nunky pays for all."

"You are right, my boys, so push the wine about."

We did push it about, and so well that about ten o'clock in the evening all the sympathy left between us was manifested by protestations, sight being lost; and by those explosions of drunken tenderness which develope all the infirmities of the human heart.

When the hour of parting had arrived, our new acquaintances, and particularly the softer sex, were completely drunk. Riboulet and his mistress were only somewhat elevated, as well as myself; they had preserved their senses, but to appear all in unison we pretended to be so tipsy as to be unable to walk; formed into a phalanx, because in that way the gusts of wind are less to be feared, we left the theatre of our pleasures. Then, that we might neutralize, by the aid of a *chant*, the reeling tendencies of our troop, Riboulet, with a voice whose echoes vibrated in every court and alley, began to sing, in the most finished slang of his time, one of those ballads with a chorus, which are as long as to-day and to-morrow.

En roulant de vergne en vergne *
Pour apprendre à goupiner, †
J'ai rencontre la mercandière, ‡
Lonfa malura dondaine,
Qui du pivois solisait, §
Lonfa malura dondé.

J'ai rencontré la mercandière,
Qui du pivois solisait.
Je lui jaspine en bigorne, ‖
Lonfa malura dondaine,
Qu'as-tu donc à morfiller? ¶
Lonfa malura dondé.

Je lui jaspine en bigorne
Qu'as-tu donc à morfiller?
J'ai du chenu pivois sans lance **
Lonfa malura dondaine,
Et du larton savonné, ††
Lonfa malura dondé.

* City to city. † To work. ‡ The shopkeeper.
§ Sold wine. ‖ I ask him in slang. ¶ To eat.
** Good wine without water. †† White bread.

Ja'i du chenu pivois sans lance
Et du larton savonné
Une lourde, une tournante *
Lonfa malura dondaine,
Et un pieu pour roupiller †
Lonfa malura dondé.

Une lourde, une tournante
Et un pieu pour roupiller,
J'enquille dans sa cambriole ‡
Lonfa malura dondaine,
Espérant de l'entifler §
Lonfa malura dondé.

J'enquille dans sa cambriole
Espérant de l'entifler
Je rembroque au coin du rifle ‖
Lonfa malura dondaine,
Un messière qui pionçait ¶
Lonfa malura dondé.

Je rembroque au coin du rifle
Un messière qui pionçait ;
J'ai sondé dans ses vallades, **
Lonfa malura dondaine,
Son carle j'ai pessigué ††
Lonfa malura dondé.

J'ai sondé dans ses vallades,
Son carle j'ai pessigué
Son carle, aussi sa tocquante ‡‡
Lonfa malura dondaine,
Et ses attaches de cé §§
Lonfa malura dondé.

Son carle, aussi sa tocquante
Et ses attaches de cé,

* A door and a key. † A bed to sleep upon. ‡ I enter her chamber.
§ To make myself agreeable to her.
‖ I observe in the corner of the room. ¶ A man lying asleep.
** Search his pockets. †† I took his money.
‡‡ His money and watch. §§ His silver buckles.

Son coulant et sa montante *
Lonfa malura dondaine,
Et son combre galuché †
Lonfa malura dondé.

Son coulant et sa montante
Et son combre galuché,
Son frusque, aussi sa lisette ‡
Lonfa malura dondaine,
Et ses tirants brodanchés §
Lonfa malura dondé.

Son frusque, aussi sa lisette
Et ses tirants brodanchés,
Crompe, crompe, mercandière ||
Lonfa malura dondaine,
Car nous nous serions bequillés ¶
Lonfa malura dondé.

Crompe, crompe, mercandière,
Car nous serions bequillés
Sur la placarde de vergne **
Lonfa malura dondaine,
Il nous faudrait gambiller ††
Lonfa malura dondé.

Sur la placarde de vergne
Il nous faudrait gambiller
Allumés de toutes ces largues ‡‡
Lonfa malura dondaine,
Et du trepe rassemblé §§
Lonfa malura dondé.

Allumés de toutes ces largues
Et du trepe rassemblé,
Et de ces charlats bons drilles, ||||
Lonfa malura dondaine,
Tous aboulant goupiner ¶¶
Lonfa malura dondé.

* His chain and breeches.
‡ His coat and waistcoat.
|| Take care of yourself, shopkeeper.
** On the Place de Ville.
‡‡ Looked at by all these women.
|||| Thieves; good fellows.
† Gold edged hat.
§ Embroidered stockings.
¶ Hanged.
†† To dance.
§§ People.
¶¶ All coming to rob.

Riboulet having been safely delivered of his fourteen couplets, Manon la Blonde was desirous of evincing the powers of her lungs. "Now for another!" said she; "attend to one I learnt at Lazarre; open your *listeners*, and repeat after me."

Un jour à la Croix-Rouge
Nous étions dix à douze.

(She interrupted herself with "just as we now are.")

Nous étions dix à douze
Tous grinches de renom, *
Nous attendions la sorgue †
Voulant poisser des bogues ‡
Pour faire du billon. § (bis)

Partage ou non partage
Tout est à notre usage;
N'épargnons le poitou ‖
Poissons avec adresse ¶‖
Messières et gonzesses **
Sans faire de regout. †† (bis)

Dessus le pont au change
Certain argent-de-change
Se criblait au charron, ‡‡
J'engantai sa toquante §§
Ses attaches brillantes ‖‖
Avec ses billemonts. ¶‖¶‖ (bis)

Quand douze plombes crossent,***
Ses pegres s'en retournant †††
Au tapis de Montron ‡‡‡
Montron ouvre ta lourde, §§§
Si tu veux que j'aboule, ‖‖‖
Et piausse en ton bocsin. ¶‖¶‖¶‖ (bis)

* Thieves. † Night. ‡ Watches. § Money.
‖ Let us be cautious. ¶ Let us rob. ** Citizen and wife.
†† Awaken suspicion. ‡‡ Cried "thief." §§ I took his watch.
‖‖ His diamond buckles. ¶¶ His bank notes.
*** Twelve o'clock strikes. ††† The thieves.
‡‡‡ At the cabaret. §§§ Your door. ‖‖‖ Give money.
¶¶¶ Sleep at your house.

Montron drogue à sa larque, *
Bonnis-moi donc girofle †
Qui sont ces pegres-là ?‡
Des grinchisseurs de bogues, §
Esquinteur de boutoques, ||
Les connobres tu pas ? ¶ (bis)

Et vite ma culbute ; **
Quand je vois mon affure ††
Je suis toujours paré ‡‡
Du plus grand cœur du monde
Je vais à la profonde §§
Pour vous donner du frais. (bis)

Mais déjà la patrarque, ||||
Au clair de la mouchardé,¶¶
Nous reluque de loin.***
L'aventure est étrange,
C'était l'argent-de-change,
Que suivait les roussins. ††† (bis)

A des fois l'on rigole ‡‡‡
Ou bien l'on pavillonne §§§
Qu'on devrait lansquiner||||||
Raille, griviers, et cognes ¶¶¶
Nous ont pour la cigogne ****
Tretons marrons paumés. †††† (bis)

This chorus, which we took up, as it were, from Manon's mouth, before she had finished uttering them, was repeated eight or ten times, in a manner which almost broke the windows of the house about us. After this burst of bacchanalian hilarity, the first fumes of wine, which are usually most potent, beginning somewhat to dissipate, we entered into conversation. The chapter of confidences, according to custom, opened

* Asks his wife. † Say, my love. ‡ These thieves.
§ Watch stealers. || Burglars. ¶ Do you not know them?
** Breeches. †† Profit. ‡‡ Ready. §§ Cellar.
||| Patrol. ¶¶ The moon. *** Looks at us.
††† Spies. ‡‡‡ Laughs. §§§ Jokes. |||| To weep.
¶¶¶ Exempt, soldiers, and gendarmes. **** Palace of justice.
†††† Taken in the act.

by interrogatories. I did not require to be much questioned, but went beyond the communications which they desired to know: a stranger in Paris, I had only known Riboulet in prison at Valenciennes, when he was sent back to his regiment as a deserter; he was a *college chum*, (a fellow-prisoner,) whom I had met again. As to the rest, I took care to represent myself in colours which charmed them: I was a thorough *out-and-outer* (sacripan fini.) I know not what I had not done, and was ready to do any thing. I unbosomed myself that they might unbosom as freely in their turn; it is a tactic which has often been successful with me: the party soon chattered like magpies, and I became as well acquainted with all their doings as if I had never been separated from them. They told me their names, residences, exploits, misfortunes, hopes; they had met a man who was really worthy of their confidence: I returned it, I suited them, and all was said.

Such explanations always make a man thirsty, more or less: all the liquor-shops in our road were visited: more than a hundred toasts were drank in honour of our new convention, and we were not to separate again. "Come along with us, come," they said, and they were so pressing, that, quite unable to refuse their importunities, I agreed to go to their abode, Rue des Filles-Dieu, No. 14, where they lodged in a furnished house. Once in their abode, it was impossible to refuse a share of their bed: it is difficult to describe what good fellows they were; and so was I, and they were the better convinced of it, as, during an hour, whilst I pretended to be sleeping, my friend Riboulet passed an eulogy on me, in a low tone of voice, of which not even half was true, or I should have richly merited a sentence for ten times the term of my natural life. I was not born coiffeur, like a certain personage whom the witty Figaro ridicules, I was born coiffé, and had the happiness of killing a generation of honest men with vexation. At last

Riboulet had so completely placed me in good odour with our hosts, that about break of day they proposed to me to go out upon a *job* with them, a robbery which they had planned in the Rue de la Verrerie.

I had only just time to warn the chief of the second division, who made his arrangements so well, that they were apprehended with the property about their persons. Riboulet and I remained on the look out, to give alarm in case of danger, as the thieves believed, but, in fact, to see if the police were on their posts. When they passed near us, all three in a coach, whence they could not see us, "Well!" said Riboulet, "there they are, like Manon's song, tretons marrons paumés," (taken in the very act.) They were also condemned, and if the names of Debuire, Rolé, and Hippolyte, called la Biche, are still on the muster-roll at the Bagnes, it is the result of an evening passed at Guillotin's amongst the children of the sun, (aux enfants du soleil.)

CHAPTER XXXVI.

A frequenter of la Petite Chaise—A room to rob—Father Masson's oranges—The heap of stones—No compromise—A nocturnal carrying off—The jolly thief—Every man to his liking—My first visit to Bicêtre—Down with Vidocq! Superb discourse—A matter of fear—The storm is appeased—They will not kill me.

THIEVES frequently fell into my clutches when I least expected them; it was said that their evil genius impelled them to come and find me. It must be confessed that those who thus flung themselves into the wolf's throat were horribly unlucky or infernally stupid. When I saw with what facility the majority of them gave themselves up, I was really astonished that they should have chosen a profession in which, to avoid perils, so many precautions are necessary: some of

them were such good-natured fellows, that I considered as almost miraculous the impunity which they had enjoyed up to the moment when they met me, and paid the reckoning of their crimes. It is incredible that any individuals created expressly to fall into any plot or snare, should have awaited my coming to the police to be caught. Before my time the police was either most clumsily arranged, or else I was singularly fortunate: under any circumstances it is, as they say, "give a man luck and fling him into the sea." The following recital is in point. One day, towards twilight, dressed like a workman of the dock-yards, I was seated on the parapet of the Quai de Gèvres, when I saw, coming towards me, an individual whom I knew to be one of the frequenters of the Petite Chaise and the Bon Puits, two cabarets of renown for robbers.

"Good evening, Jean Louis," said this person, accosting me.

"Good evening, my lad."

"What the devil are you doing there? You look as if you were funking?"

"What do you mean, my boy? When the belly grumbles the mouth mumbles."

"What, the cupboard empty, that is not right for you, who are one of the *family*."

"Very true, but 'tis so."

"Come along, then, let us have a quart at Niguenac's: I have twenty *browns* left, and we will see how far they will go."

He conducted me to a vintner's, and called for a bottle, and then, leaving me for an instant, returned with two pounds of potatoes. "Here," he said, putting them smoking hot upon the table, "here are some gudgeons caught with a spade in the fields of Sablons; they are not fried though."

"These are oranges, but we want some salt."

"Salt, my lad, that will not ruin us."

The salt was brought, and, although an hour before I had made an excellent dinner at Martin's, I fell on the

potatoes, and devoured them as if I had not tasted food for a couple of days.

"You peg away," said he, "as if you would crash your *ivories*, (teeth;) one would think that you were tucking in at a regular *spread*."

"Oh, my lad, all that goes down the gullet fills the belly."

"Very true, very true."

Mouthful followed mouthful with prodigious rapidity, and I did nothing but peel and swallow: I cannot tell how it was that I was not literally crammed, but my stomach had never been more complaisant. At last my task was done, my comrade offered me a quid, and thus addressed me.

"On the word of a man, and as true as my name is Masson, and is the same as my father's, I have always considered you a hearty blade; I know you have been unfortunate, I have been told so, but the devil's hoof is not always at the poor man's door, and if you like I can put you on a good scent."

"That would not, perhaps, suit me, for my *rigging* is not over and above excellent."

"True! I see, I see, (looking at my clothes, which were rather tattered,) it seems that at this moment you are not the luckiest *cove* in the world."

"Very right: I have most urgent need of a new fit out."

"In that case come with me, I have a locksmith's daughter with which I shall clear out an apartment this evening."

"Tell me all about it, for I must learn the particulars before I can join you in it."

"What a flat you are, there is no occasion for you to be *fly*.

"Oh! that is all true as gospel, and I am your man, only you can explain in two words ——."

"Now, hold your *gab*, I tell you my plan is settled, and the booty sure: the *fence's ken* (receiver's house) is only a stone's throw off. As soon as *prigged*, so

soon disposed of; it is a good haul, and you shall have your whack."

"Come, then, let us be off."

Masson conducted me to the boulevard Saint Denis, which we traversed until we came to a heap of stones. There he stopped, looked about him to see that no one was watching, and then going up to the pile, he took off several lumps, put his hand into the cavity and fished up a bunch of keys.

"I have now all the herbs of Saint John," said he, "and we will go together to the corn-market."

On reaching the place, he pointed out to me, at a small distance, and almost opposite the guard-house, the house which he intended to enter.

"Now, my boy," said he, "do not go far distant, wait for me, and keep your weather-eye open; I am going to see if the *mot* has *mizzled*, (if the woman of the house has gone out.)"

Masson opened the side-door, but no sooner had he shut it after him than I ran to the post, where making myself known to the chief, I hastily told him that a robbery was then committing, and that no time was to be lost, if they would secure the robber with the property in his possession. Having done this, I returned to the place where Masson had left me. Hardly had I got there when some person, advancing towards me, said,

"Is it you, Jean Louis?"

"Yes, it is me," was my reply, testifying my astonishment that he had returned empty-handed.

"Oh, say nothing about it; a devil of a neighbour came up the staircase and deranged my plans; but what is deferred is not lost. Minute follows minute and the mutton is boiled at last, as you will see; one must not compromise oneself."

He then left me again, and was not long in reappearing with a very large bundle, under the weight of which he was almost sinking. He passed me without uttering a word: I followed, and walking in close

files, two guards, armed only with the bayonet, followed him also, making the least possible noise.

It was necessary to know where he deposited his booty. He entered a shopkeeper's at the Rue du Tour, (the death's head,) where he only stopped a moment.

"It was heavy," said he, on coming out, "and I have still a good *cast* to haul in."

I allowed him to go on, and returning again to the room he had before entered he completed the gutting of it; and scarcely had ten minutes elapsed before he descended the second time, carrying on his head a bed, mattresses, quilts, curtains, and sheets. He had not had time to make a good bundle of them, and on crossing the threshold, being stopped by the narrowness of the door, and unwilling to drop his prey, he stumbled and almost fell, but, recovering himself, he began his journey, beckoning me to follow him. At a turn of the street he came up to me, and said, in a low voice,

"I think I shall go back the third time, if you will go up with me, as we can then get down the window-curtains and blinds."

"Agreed," said I; "when one sleeps on straw curtains are a luxury."

"A luxury, indeed," said he, smiling; "but no time must be lost in chatter, do not go far away and I will hail you as I pass."

Masson went on his way, but at a short distance from where we had met we were both stopped. We were first conducted to the guard-house, and afterwards to the commissary, who interrogated us.

"There are two of you," said the public officer to Masson, (pointing at me,) "who is this man? I suppose a thief like yourself."

"Who is this man? Do I know him? Ask himself; when I shall have seen him once more, that will be the second time."

"You must not tell me that there is no collusion between you, for you were met together."

"There is no collusion, my worthy commissary: he was going on one side of the way, I was coming on the other, just as he was passing close beside me, something slid from me, it was a pillow; I told him of it, and he stooped to pick it up, and just then the guard came up and nabbed us both: this is why I am now before you, and I wish I may die if it is not the actual truth. Ask him if it is not."

The story was not badly imagined, and I took care not to deny what Masson said, but follow in his track: at length the commissary appeared convinced. "Have you any papers?" he inquired. I showed a permission of residence, which was pronounced correct, and my dismissal was instantly ordered. An evident satisfaction pervaded the features of Masson, when he heard the words, allez-vous coucher, (go to bed,) addressed to me: it was the formula of my liberty, and he was so much rejoiced at it, that any person must have been blind not to perceive it.

The robber was still kept, and nothing remained but to lay hands on the female receiver before she had disposed of the property intrusted to her. An immediate search was made, and, surprised in the midst of most material evidence which condemned her, the death's head was carried off from her trade at the moment when she least expected it.

Masson was taken to the prefecture of police, and the next day, according to the custom of thieves, from time immemorial, when a brother labourer is grabbed, I sent him a twopenny brown loaf, a hock of bacon, and a franc. I was told that he felt obliged by the attention, but had not the slightest suspicion that he who sent him the tribute of the fraternity was the cause of his mishap. It was only at La Force that he learnt that Jean Louis and Vidocq were the same person, and then he devised a singular means of defence; he asserted that I was the author of the robbery with which he was charged, and that, wanting his aid to remove the property, I had gone to seek him: but this long story stated to the

court would not bear him out, and Masson in vain pleaded his innocence: he was sentenced to incarceration.

A short time afterwards I was assisting at the preparations for the departure of the chain of galley-slaves, when Masson, whom I had not seen since his apprehension, saw me through the grating.

"Ha!" said he to me, "Monsieur Jean Louis: and so it was you who got me into the *stone jug*. Oh! if I had known that you were Vidocq I would have made you pay for the oranges!"

"You are a well-wisher of mine, then; you who made me the proposal of accompanying you?"

"Very true, but you never told me that you were a *nose*."

"If I had told you so I should have betrayed my trust, and that would not have prevented you from doing the job; you would only have chosen another *pal*."

"But you are not the less a rascal; I, who was so kind to you! Now, I would rather remain here as long as my life continued in my body, than be free, as you are, and equally dishonoured."

"Every man to his taste."

"That is very fine! your taste—a *nose*, a spy—very fine, truly!"

"Why, it is as respectable a trade as thieving; besides, but for us what would the honest men do?"

At these words he burst into a loud fit of laughter.

"Honest men! honest men!" he repeated, "you really make me laugh when I am in no grinning mood. Honest men! what would become of them? do not trouble yourself, for it cannot concern you; when you are at the meadow (Bagne) again you will sing to a different tune."

"Oh! he will return there," said one of the prisoners who was listening to us.

"He," cried out Masson, "we do not want him; luck to the jolly boys! that's the thing."

Every time that my duties called me to Bicêtre I was sure that I should have to put up with such reproaches as I received from Masson. I seldom entered into discussion with the prisoner who apostrophized me: but I was not always silent, for fear that he might suppose, not that I despised him, but that I was afraid of him. Being in the presence of some hundreds of malefactors who had all, more or less, to complain of me, since they had all been apprehended by me, it may be supposed that it was necessary to evince some firmness, but this firmness was never more requisite than on the day when I first made my appearance in the midst of this horrible population.

I was no sooner the principal agent of the police of safety, than, most jealous of the proper fulfilment of the duty confided to me, I devoted myself seriously to acquire the necessary information. It seemed to me an excellent method to class, as accurately as possible, the descriptions of all the individuals at whom the finger of justice was pointed. I could thereby more readily recognise them if they should escape, and at the expiration of the sentence it became more easy for me to have that surveillance over them that was required of me. I then solicited from M. Henry authority to go to Bicêtre with my auxiliaries, that I might examine, during the operation of fettering, both the convicts of Paris and those from the provinces, who generally assemble on the same chain. M. Henry made many observations to turn me from a step, of which the advantages did not seem to him proportioned to the imminent danger to which I should thereby expose myself.

"I am informed," said he to me, "that the prisoners have conspired to play you some mischievous trick. If you persist—if you go at the departure of the chain, you will afford them an opportunity which they have long anxiously awaited: and, by my honour, whatever precaution you may take, I will not insure your safety." I thanked this gentleman for the interest which he testi-

fied for me, but at the same time insisted that he should accord me the permission I asked for, and he at length gave me the order which it was necessary for me to obtain.

On the day of fettering I went to Bicêtre with some of my agents; I entered the court, and instantly a most tumultuous uproar ensued, mingled with cries: "Down with the spies! down with the villain! down with Vidocq!" were heard from all the windows, where the prisoners, mounted on each other's shoulders, with faces pressed against the bars, were collected in groups. I advanced a few paces, and the vociferations redoubled; the whole place resounded with invectives and threats of destruction, uttered with accents of fury; it was a most infernal sight to look at the visages of these cannibals, on which were manifested, by horrible contortions, the thirst of blood and the desire of vengeance. There was throughout the whole prison a most frightful uproar; I could not restrain an impulse of terror, and reproaching myself with my imprudence, was almost tempted to beat a retreat; but suddenly my courage mounted. "What!" said I to myself, "thou hast not trembled when thou hast attacked the villains in their dens: they are here under bolts and bars, and art thou now scared? Courage; if thou must perish, at least make head against the storm, and let them not think they have intimidated thee!"

This return to a resolution more suited to the opinion which should really be formed of me, was so rapid as to leave no opportunity for any person to remark my weakness; I soon recovered all my courage, and, no longer burthened by a shadow of fear, walked boldly forward with my eyes fixed on the windows, and advanced to those of the lower story. At this moment a new burst of rage was evinced by the prisoners. They were not men, but ferocious beasts who were roaring: it was a tumult, a noise; it might have been thought that Bicêtre was about to be rent from its foundations, and that the walls of its cells were actually gaping

open. In the midst of this outrageous din, I made a signal that I wished to speak: a dead silence ensued after the tempest, and they listened. "Scum of the mob," I said, "why do you howl thus? It was when I grabbed you that you should, not have cried out, but defended yourselves. Shall you be any better for thus reproaching me? You treat me as a spy; well! I am a spy, but so are you also, for there is not one amongst you who has not offered to sell his comrade to me, in the hopes of thereby obtaining an impunity which I would not grant you; I rendered you to justice because you were culpable. I have not spared you I know; what motives have I for doing so? Is there any one here whom I ever knew when a freeman who can reproach me with ever having been his accomplice? Besides, even if I have been a thief, tell me what does it prove but that I am more skilful or fortunate than you, since I have not been caught in the fact. I defy the most malicious to show a tittle of evidence to prove that I have been accused of robbery or swindling. It is useless to seek for twelve o'clock at three in the morning; oppose me by a single fact, one solitary truth, and I will confess myself the greatest rogue amongst you all. Is it the profession that you disapprove? let those who blame me most for this tell me frankly, whether they do not a hundred times a day desire to be in my place?"

This harangue, during which no one interrupted me, was followed by hooting and shouting. Soon afterwards vociferations and roarings began again, but I felt no sensation but that of indignation, and, transported with anger, I became bold even beyond my strength. They announced that the convicts were about to be led into the court of fetters; I went to post myself in the passage, at the moment when they came to the call; and, determined on selling my life dearly, I awaited until they should try to accomplish their threats. I confess that, in my mind, I desired much that one of them should attempt to lay hands upon me, so greatly did

the desire of vengeance animate me. Ill fated was the man who would have dared to assail me! but not one of these wretches made the least attempt, and I had only to endure the scowling look, to which I responded with that assurance which always disconcerts the enemy. The call terminated, a low murmur was the prelude to a fresh uproar: they vomited forth imprecations against me; "Let him come on then, he remains at the gate," the convicts bellowed forth, adding to my name the grossest epithets. Driven to extremity by this insolent defiance, I entered with one of my agents, and went into the midst of two hundred robbers, the majority of whom were arrested by me: "Come on, my friends! courage," cried they in the cells in which they were shut up, "look at the pig, kill him, and let us hear no more about him."

Now or never was the the time;—"Now, gentlemen," said I to the galley slaves, "kill him, you see that they advise you well; try." I do not know what revolution of opinion actuated them, but the more I was in their power, the more they became appeased. At the termination of the fettering, those men, who had sworn to exterminate me, were so much softened that many of them begged me to render them slight services. They had no reason to repent of having taxed my kindness, and the next day, at the hour of departure, after having thanked me, they bade me a cordial farewell. All was changed from black to white; the most mutinous of the previous evening had become supple, respectful at least in appearance, and almost overpoweringly so.

This was an experimental lesson of which I never lost the remembrance. It proved to me that, with persons of this stamp, we can only be potent when resolute: to keep them respectful, it is enough to have awed them once. From this period, I never allowed the chain to quit unless I attended the fettering of the convicts, and, with very few exceptions, I was never afterwards insulted. The convicts were accustomed to

see me; if I did not go, it seemed as if they missed something, and in fact, nearly all of them had some commission to give me. From the moment they fell under the control of civil death, I was, in a measure, their testamentary executor. With a small portion resentments were not obliterated, but a thief's vengeance is not lasting. For eighteen years that I have carried on the war with thieves, little or great, I have often been menaced; many galley slaves, celebrated for their intrepidity, have made oaths to assassinate me as soon as they should be at liberty;—they have all perjured themselves, and will continue to do so. Am I asked why? It is, that, at first, the only affair for a robber is to rob: that alone occupies him. If he cannot do otherwise, he will kill me to get my purse, that is his "vocation;"—he will kill me to do away with a testimony which would destroy him, this is again a part of his business;—he will kill me to avoid punishment;—but when the punishment is inflicted, what purpose would it answer? Robbers do not lose time in assassination.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Utility of a good stomach—The suspicious occurrence—The procession of bundles—The swallows of La Grève—The convenience of a hackney-coach—The swag of these gentlemen—The shipwright's man—There is no trusting every body—Madame Bras, or the scrupulous shopkeeper—Annette, or the good woman—People do not always eat—The first who was king—Vidocq caught, a new piece of which the last act is passed in a guard-house—I play the part of Vidocq—Representation at my benefit—Unanimous applause—*Pomme Rouge*—*Le grand Casuel*—The inspection of papers—I let a robber escape—The veteran who takes his broth—The author of the *Pied-du-Mouton*—The accusing stockings and cravat—I lose my five-franc piece—The fight with the vintner—I am apprehended—The commissary's round—My deliverance—The bandage falls—Vidocq the Catcher recognised in Vidocq the Caught—Do you wish for a piece of good advice?—Mind how the nail is driven!

One night, half of which had been spent in the obscure lurking places of the Halle, hoping to fall in

with some thieves who, in the overflow of that good-nature which two or three glasses of liquor, offered at a fitting time, produces, allow themselves to be *pumped*, as to their past doings, those now in hand, and those meditated,—I was retiring, very much discomposed at having, to the detriment of my stomach, swallowed from pure vexation a good number of small glasses of that diluted spirit to which vitriol gives the strength and flavour, when, at the corner of the Rue des Coutures Saint-Gervais, I saw several individuals squatted in the embrasures of the doors. By the light of the lamps, I easily distinguished beside them packets which they were endeavouring to squeeze into a smaller compass, but the suspicious whiteness of which could not fail to attract attention. Bundles at this hour of the night, and men who seek an obscure shelter, when no water was falling;—a prodigious portion of perspicuity was not wanting to find, in such a combination of circumstances, all the characteristics of a suspicious occurrence. I made up my mind that they were thieves, and the bundles the booty which they had just obtained. "Good," said I to myself, "let us evince no suspicions, but follow the procession when it sets forth, and if it passes by the corps de garde, catch is the word; on the other hand I will see them to their homes, take the address, and send the police after them." I thereupon made up my mind, without appearing to be troubled with what was behind me, but scarcely had I advanced ten paces when some one calls, "Jean Louis!" it was the voice of a man named Richelot, whom I had often met at the various thieves' haunts. I stopped naturally.

"Ah! good evening, Richelot," said I, "what the devil are you doing here at this time of the morning? Are you alone? You look frightened."

"Well I may be, I have narrowly escaped being *nabbed* on the boulevard du Temple."

"*Nabbed!* and why?"

"Why? here, come this way; do you see our friends with the bundles?"

"I am awake; you are loaded with *swag*," (plunder.)

I approached them; and the whole party instantly rising, as soon as they were on their feet I recognised Lapierre, Commery, Lenoir, and Dubuisson; they all four hastened to assure me how glad they were to see me, and to extend the hand of friendship to me.

COMMERY. "Ah! we narrowly escaped; my heart still thumps, put your hand upon it, feel how it goes tick-tack."

VIDOCQ. "That is nothing."

LAPIERRE. "Oh! we have had a fright in real earnest: I know very well that when I saw the *greens*,* my heart jumped bang into my mouth."

DUBUISSON. "And just above the market-place were the *hirondelles de la Grève*, (dragoons of Paris,) whom we met nose to nose on horseback just by *la Gaité*" (the theatre.)

VIDOCQ. "What spoonies you are! you should have had a *drag* to whisk off the *swag* in. You are but greenhorns."

RICHELOT. "Greenhorns if you like; but we had no means of conveyance, and we have therefore chosen the back streets."

VIDOCQ. "And where are you now going? If I can assist you in any way ——"

RICHELOT. "If you will pilot us, and give us your company as far as the Rue Saint-Sebastien, where we are going to deposit the *swag*, you shall have your *whack*."

VIDOCQ. "With pleasure, my boys."

RICHELOT. "Well, then, go first, and spy if you twig any *coves* or *beaks*."

Richelot and his companions took up their bundles and I went forward. Our progress was fortunate and

* The Parisian guard, whose uniform was green.

we reached the door of the house without interruption, each of us taking off our shoes to make no noise as we went up stairs. We reached the landing-place on the third story; they were awaiting us. A door opened softly, and we entered a vast chamber dimly lighted, of which the tenant was a shipwright's man, who had already been before the police. Although he did not know me, my presence seemed to trouble him, and whilst he was helping to conceal the bundles under the bed, I heard him ask a question in a low voice, which I could guess by the reply, which was spoken in a louder tone.

RICHELOT. "It is Jean-Louis, a good fellow; be quiet, he is staunch."

THE TENANT. "That's all right; there are now-adays so many *noses* and *sneaks*, that we should be *fly* to every *cove*.

LAPIERRE. "Oh be easy! be easy! I can answer for him as for myself: he is a friend and a Frenchman."

THE TENANT. "Since it is all right, I will trust him, and upon the strength of it we will have *a shove in the mouth* all round."

He got on a sort of stool, and lifting his hand up to the shelf of an old cupboard, he took out a full bladder.

"Here's the stuff, brandy and nothing but some of my own prigging. Come, Jean, you shall begin."

VIDOCQ. "With all my heart, (*pouring forth into a green glass and drinking.*) It is capital *out and out tipple*, which cheers as it goes down—now it is your turn, Lapierre; come, *sluice* your *ivories*."

The glass and bladder passed from hand to hand, and when each had drank enough we threw ourselves on the bed until the morning. At daybreak we heard in the streets the cry of the sweep, (in Paris we know that the savoyards are the cocks of the least frequented quarters.)

RICHELOT, (*jogging his neighbour.*) "Ah! Lapierre, we must go to the *fence*."

LAPIERRE. "Let me sleep, do."

RICHELOT. "Come, come, stir your stumps.

LAPIERRE. " Go by yourself, or take Lenoir."

RICHELOT. " You had better come, as you have already dealt with the old woman, and can make a surer bargain."

LAPIERRE. " Let me alone, I am sleepy."

VIDOCQ. " My G—, what sluggards you are, I will go if you will tell me where."

RICHELOT. " You are right, Jean Louis, but the *fence* has never seen you and will not deal for the *swag* but with us. But if you like we will go together."

VIDOCQ. " Yes, we two, and then another time she will know my phiz."

We went. The *fence* lived in Rue de Bretagne, No. 14, in the house of a sausage-maker, who appeared the owner of it. Richelot entered, and asked if Madame Bras was at home. Yes, was the answer ; and after having gone through the passage we went up the stairs to the three pair. Madame Bras had not gone out, but, actuated by a principle of honour, she would not take in any property by daylight. " At least," said Richelot to her, " if you cannot take the goods now, give us earnest ; come, it is a good haul, and you know we deal all upon the square."

" You say very true, but I cannot allow myself to be compromised by a pair of good eyes ; come in the evening, then all cats are grey." Richelot tried by every effort to extract some coin from her, but she was inexorable, and we retired without having obtained any thing. My companion cursed, swore, stormed, till it did one's heart good to hear him.

" Well," said I to him, " one would imagine that you had lost every thing. Why vex yourself? If she will not, another will ; come with me to my *fence,* I am sure she will lend us four or five crowns."

We went to the Rue Neuve-Saint-François, where I had fixed my domicile. By a low whistle, I made Annette understand that I wanted her, and she quickly

descended and came to us at the corner of the old Rue du Temple.

"Good day, Madame."

"Good day, Jean Louis."

"If you are inclined to be obliging, lend me twenty francs, and this evening you shall have them again."

"Yes, this evening! if you gain any thing you will go to la Courtille."

"No, I assure you I will be punctual."

"May I believe you? I will not refuse you then; come with me, whilst your friend waits for you at the cabaret at the corner of the Rue de l'Oseille."

On being alone with Annette I gave her the requisite instructions, and when I found that she clearly understood them, I rejoined Richelot in the cabaret; "Here," said I to him, showing the twenty francs, "is what you may call a *mot*, and nothing but a good one."

"Parbleu, wo'n't she *post the blunt* for the whole of the *swag*."

"I think not. She is only a *fence* for *metal*, *tickers*, and *frippery*."

"It is a pity, for she is an *out and out mot*, and just such a one as would suit us well."

After finishing our bottle, we set out to regain the lodging, where we found ready a Normandy goose of first-rate quality, and some other *prog*. I produced the money, and as it was intended for further supplies for the *victualling office*, our host went out for a dozen of wine and some bread. We were all so sharp-set that the provisions seemed only to appear and then vanish instantly. The bladder of brandy was drained to the last drop. Our meal terminated, it was proposed to open the packets. They contained most beautiful linen, sheets, shirts of extraordinary fineness, gowns with superbly worked borders, cravats, stockings, &c. all damp and wet. The thieves told me that they had taken the booty from one of the largest houses in the

Rue de l'Echiquier, where they had introduced themselves by a window, of which they had broken the bars.

The inventory concluded, I proposed that we should make different lots, and not sell them all in the same place. I insinuated that they would give as much for each lot as for the whole in a lump, and that two sales were better than one. My comrades were of the same opinion, and made two divisions of the booty. It then became a matter of question as to how to get rid of them; they were sure of the sale of one lot, but wanted a purchaser for the second. A clothes-seller, called Pomme Rouge, in the Rue de la Juiverie, was the man whom I pointed out to them. He had long been pointed out to me as a regular *fence*,—goods taken in and no questions asked. Here was an opportunity of putting him to the test, and I was unwilling that it should escape, for if he were caught, the result of my plans was infinitely more agreeable; for instead of only one *fence*, I should cause the arrest of two, and thus I should kill three birds with one stone.

It was agreed that they should make an offer to my man, but nothing could be done till the *darkey*, and what was to keep us from ennui till then? What could we converse about? Amongst robbers the communion of martyrs has not mental resources sufficient to keep up conversation for more than a quarter of an hour. What can be done? *prigs* do nothing, unless at *work*, and when at *work* they do nothing. But yet it was necessary to kill time; we had still some money before us, wine was voted for by acclamation, and we again commenced our libations to Bacchus. The sons of Mercury drink fast and long, but yet one cannot always be drinking. If, indeed, topers were like the buckets of the Danaïdes, open at one end and with holes at the other, disgust would not proceed from plenitude! Unfortunately, each man has his capacity, and when, between the bladder and the brain, the wave, whose place of exit is too narrow, remounts towards its source, there is no need to say, my worthy friend, that if we

would avoid unpleasant consequences we must stop: this our companions did. As they thought they had need of their head for some later period, and as a thick cloud already began to spread over the osseous vault which covers the potent ruler of all our actions, that they might not lose all guidance, they insensibly ceased to make a funnel of their mouths, and only opened them to talk. What was the nature of their conversation? The talk, which they would have been much posed to keep up on any other subject, turned on their comrades who were at the Bagne, or in prison. They also spoke about spies.

"Talking of spies," said the shipwright, "you must have heard of the celebrated rogue who has turned *nose*, that Vidocq; do any of you fellows know him?"

ALL TOGETHER. (myself in chorus.) "Yes, yes, but only by name."

DUBUISSON. "I know they talk a good deal about him. They say he comes from the Bagne, where he was sentenced for twenty-four years."

THE SHIPWRIGHT. "You are wrong, you flat. This Vidocq is a *prig*, who was sentenced for life for his many escapes. He was allowed to be set at liberty because he promised to *blow the gaff*, and that is the reason that he stops at Paris. He is a *deep file;* when he wants to *trap* a *covey* he tries to make friends with him, and, as soon as he has done that, he slips some *swag* into his *cly* and then all is done; or else he leads him on to some *job* that he may be caught *at work.* He it was who *floored* Bailli, Jacquet, and Martinet. Oh G—, yes it was he! let me tell you how he *did* them."

ALL TOGETHER. (myself in chorus.) "*Did* them, well said, my lad."

THE SHIPWRIGHT. "Whilst drinking together with another —— like himself, you know him, the *rip* Riboulet, Manon's *fancy man*."

ALL. "Manon la Blonde's?"

THE SHIPWRIGHT. "Yes, she. They were speaking

of one thing and another, Vidocq says, as he had just left the Bagne, he wanted to find some friends to *prig*. The others are caught in the net. He tickled them so well, that he leads them to a *spot of work*, in the Rue Grand Zurleur. It was thought that he would *blow the gaff* to the police, and so he did. They were all taken, and in the mean time the rascal escapes with his comrade. This is his plan for catching good fellows. It was he who brought all the chauffeurs to be kissed by the *headsman's daughter* after having been their leader."

Every time the narrator paused we refreshed ourselves with a glass of wine. Lapierre, profiting by one of these pauses, spoke thus.

"What, is it that cock and bull story? He talks like a magpie. He is *chaffing* us. Do you think such *gammon* amuses us? I like to amuse myself."

The Shipwright. "What the deuce will you do, then? If we had any *books*, (cards,) we might handle them a bit."

Lapierre. "I'll tell you what we will do, act a play."

The Shipwright. "Go it then, M. Tarma (Talma.)"

Lapierre. "Do you think I can play by myself?"

Richelot. "We will help you, but what shall be the piece?"

Dubuisson. "The play of Cæsar; you know there is one of that name, who says, the first who was king had a happy lot."

Lapierre. "Oh, none of that *blarney*; let us play the piece of Vidocq caught, after having sold his brethren like Joseph."

I scarcely knew what to think of this singular business: however, without being at all disconcerted, I cried out suddenly, "I will play Vidocq; they say he is a stout chap, and it will suit me."

"You're stout," said Lenoir, "but he is much stouter."

"That is no matter," observed Lapierre, "Jean Louis is not a bad representation, he weighs his weight."

"Come, then, we don't want so much *jaw* about it," said Richelot, lifting a table into one corner of the room. "You Jean Louis, and you Lapierre stand there; Lenoir, Dubuisson, and Etienne, (the shipwright) go to the other end: they shall be the friends, and I will seat myself on the bed and be the people."

"What people?" inquired Etienne. "Why the audience if you like. The shipwright is a booby."

"I am a spectator too."

"No, you stupid ass, I am. You are a friend, take your place, the play is going to begin."

We imagine ourselves in a public-house at la Courtille; each talks. I get up, and, under a pretext of asking for some tobacco, enter into conversation with the friends at the other table, I speak a little slang, they find me a *downy cove*, and give me a knowing look, which I return, and it is found we are all lads of the same *profession*. They follow the customary usages of society,—a glass more than necessary. I complain of being without a *job of work*. They complain, and we all complain together. We commence to be very full of mutual compassion and sympathy; I curse the *beaks*, they curse them too; I swear at the *big wigs* of my quarter who persecute me; my friends look at each other, consult each other's eyes, and deliberate upon the opportunity offered by, or the disadvantages of, my acquaintance. They take my hand, they press it, I consent; it is agreed that they may rely on me. Then comes the proposal—the character I play is that which, with but few variations, I always have played—I only alter a little, by putting the stolen goods into the pockets of my friends. Then was heard the unanimous applause, accompanied by shouts of laughter. "Well done, well done," cried the actors and the witness of this scene.

"Well done, certainly," said Richelot, "but see the sun is setting and it is time to *tramp;* the play can finish in the *drag*, or elsewhere, when we have done

with the *fence;* I will go and get a *jarvey,* if you fellows like?"

"Yes, yes, let us be off."

The drama was progressing well, we were approaching the climax, but it was doomed to be a very different one from that anticipated by these gentlemen, for the catastrophe was not in accordance with the title of the piece. We all got into a hackney-coach, and desired the coachman to stop at the corner of the Rue de Bretagne, and the Rue de Tourraine. Bras, one of the *fences,* was waiting at a short distance. Dubuisson, Commery, and Lenoir alighted, taking with them the portion of the merchandise which we had agreed to sell. Whilst they were agreeing about the price, I saw, on looking from the window, that Annette had fulfilled my intention. Persons whom I saw, some with their noses in the air, as if seeking for some number, others walking about like idlers, were not in this quarter, I thought, without some motive.

After ten minutes of expectation, we were rejoined by our comrades who had been to Bras. They had brought away one hundred and twenty-five francs for things worth at least six times as much; but it was of no consequence, they were not sorry to realize what they were in haste to enjoy.

There remained those bundles which we had reserved for Pomme Rouge. On reaching Rue de la Juiverie, Richelot said to me, "Come, you must go and bargain, you know the *downy fence*

"That will not do," I replied, "I owe him money, and we have had a row about it."

I owed Pomme Rouge nothing, but we had seen each other, and he knew that I was Vidocq. It would, therefore, have been imprudent to show myself, and I left my friends to arrange these matters, and on their return, as the appearance of Annette in the vicinity of the shop gave me the certainty that the police was on the *qui vive,* I proposed to discharge the coach and go and

sup in the cabaret of the Grand Casuel, on the Quai Pelletier, at the corner of the Rue Planche Mibray.

After the visit to Pomme Rouge we were richer by eighty francs, and the sum at our disposal was so considerable, that we might give way to some excess without fear of distressing ourselves, but we had no time to expend it, for scarcely had we got our glasses in hand when the guard entered, followed by a posse of inspectors. At the sight of the veterans and the spies all their countenances fell, and the general feeling was "we are caught." Thibault, the peace-officer, asked us for our papers, some had none, and others were not correct, mine were amongst these latter. "For the charge of all these sparks," said the peace-officer, "safe bind, safe find." We were tied two and two, and conducted to the commissary. Lapierre was coupled with me. "Have you good legs?" I said to him in a low tone. "Yes," was his reply, and when we reached the top of the Rue de la Tannerie, taking out a knife I had concealed up my sleeve, I cut the cord. "Courage, Lapierre, courage!" I cried. With a blow of my elbow I prostrated the veteran who had taken me by the arm; perhaps it was the very man who has since become food for Martin the bear; whether or not I darted away, and with a few leaps reached a small alley leading to the Seine. Lapierre followed me, and we reached the Quai des Ormes together.

They lost all traces of us, and I was very glad to have escaped without being recognised. Lapierre was equally rejoiced, for not having had any time for reflection, he was far from suspecting any sinister motives in me; but, in fact, if I favoured his escape, it was in the hope of introducing myself, under his auspices, into some other band of thieves. By fleeing with him I removed all suspicions that himself or his companions might have conceived, and kept up the good opinion which they had of me. In this way I hoped to make

new discoveries, for as I was a secret agent I was desirous of acting as quietly as possible.

Lapierre was free, but I kept him in sight, and was ready to give him up the moment he was no longer useful to me.

We continued running towards the hospital, where at length we stopped, and entered a cabaret to recover breath and rest ourselves. I ordered a measure of wine to refresh us; "Here, lad," said I to Lapierre, "here is a comforter."

"Oh yes, it is hard work."

"And difficult to keep up, is it not?"

"Nothing can drive the idea from my mind ——."

"What?"

"Here, let us drink."

And no sooner had he emptied his glass than he became more pensive; "No, no," he repeated, "nothing can drive the idea from my mind."

"What do you mean? tell me."

"Well, then, I will tell you."

"You are right; but first you will do well to take off the stockings you have on your feet, and the cravat about your neck."

Lapierre was nearly in the same condition as the celebrated author of the *Pied du Mouton*, when, to descend in the garden of the Palais Royal, he had no other covering on his feet than the dress-stockings and white satin slippers of his mistress. As it seemed to me that I perceived in the eyes of my friend that dark scowl of mistrust which, if one does not take care, increases so rapidly, I was glad to testify one of those marks of interest, the effect of which is to reassure a suspicious mind: such was my aim in advising him to remove from his attire some articles of small value, which, during the overhauling of the booty, his associates and himself had immediately applied to their own use.

"What shall I do with them?" said Lapierre.

"Throw them into the river."

"I'll not be such a fool! the silk stockings are quite new, and the cravat has never been hemmed."

"Silly nonsense."

"You want to laugh at me, my boy; throw away your own first."

I begged him to observe that I had nothing on that could compromise me. "You are like the hares," I added, "you lose your memory as you run; do you not remember that there was no cravat for me, and with trowsers like these (touching those I wore) would you have me wear women's stockings?"

He took off the stockings which, folding up, he enveloped in the cravat.

Thieves are at the same time misers and spendthrifts: he felt the necessity of removing these convicting articles out of sight, but his heart bled at the thoughts of not making a profit by them. It is because the produce of robbery is often so dearly paid for, that the sacrifice of it is always painful.

Lapierre was most anxious to sell his stockings and cravat, and we went together to the Rue de la Bûcherie to offer them to a shopkeeper, who gave us forty-five sous for them. Lapierre appeared to have made up his determination since the catastrophe of Grand Casuel; yet he was constrained in his manners, and if I am any judge of what was passing in his mind, in spite of my efforts to reestablish myself in his opinion, I was strongly suspected. Such feelings were not very favourable to my projects, and persuaded that henceforward I must not temporize, but bring matters to a speedy termination, I said to Lapierre, "If you like we will go and sup at Place Maubert."

"I will, if you please," was the reply.

I took him to the Deux Frères, where I called for wine, pork chops, and cheese. At eleven o'clock we were still at table, every body had retired, and they brought us in a bill which came to four francs fifteen centimes. I immediately cried out, "My five-franc

piece, my five-franc piece! where can it be?" I rummaged all my pockets and searched myself from head to feet. "My God! I must have lost it in running: look, Lapierre, if you have it?"

"No, I have only my forty-five sous, and not a *dump* besides."

"Look for it, I am going to try and arrange with the people." I offered the cabaretier two francs fifty centimes, promising to bring him the remainder on the morrow; but he would not listen to me. "Ah! you think," said he, "that you may come and have all you want here, and then pay me with monkey's allowance."

"But," I observed to him, "it is an accident which might happen to the most honest man."

"That's all my eye! When one is low in cash we are trickish or so; a cup of wine, or so, one would not mind, but it is no *go* to have a whole supper on *tick*."

"Oh, never mind, old lad; if it accommodates good fellows, never mind."

"Come, come, not so much *jaw;* pay me, or I'll fetch the guard."

"The guard! that for the guard and you too;" accompanying the words with a gesture of contempt much used by common people.

"Ah, you vagabond! is it not enough to carry off my property?" cried he, doubling his fist and thrusting it in my face. "Do not strike me," I replied to his apostrophe, "do not strike me, or ——"

He advanced towards me, and I instantly hit him a blow. A quarrel and uproar followed, which Lapierre thinking would come to serious consequences, judged it best to *mizzle;* but on the very moment when he was about to make off and leave me to extricate myself as best I might, the waiter seized him by the throat and cried out "thieves."

The guard-house was nigh, the soldiers came in, and, for the second time in that day, we were placed between two ranges of those candles of Maubeuge whose wicks

have a smell of gunpowder. My comrade endeavoured to prove to the corporal that he was not in fault, but the veteran was immovable, and we were shut up in the guard-house. Lapierre became silent and sad as a brother of La Trappe, he did not even unclose his teeth. At length, about two o'clock in the morning, the commissary went his round, and asked to see the persons in confinement. Lapierre first appeared, and was told he might go if he would pay the bill. I was called in my turn, and on entering the room recognised M. Legoix. The recognition was mutual, and in two words I explained to him what I had done; I told him the place where the stockings and cravat had been sold, and whilst he hastened to seize on these articles, which were requisite to convict Lapierre, I returned to him. He was no longer silent.

"The bandage has fallen," said he, "I see what is done, it was all a plot."

"What! you are laughing at me, but I will speak frankly. Yes, it is done, and it is a plot, but it was you who got us into the trap."

"No, my friend, it was not me; I do not know who, but I suspect you more than any one else."

At these words I grew angry, he furious: to threats succeeded blows, and we proceeded to fight until we were separated. As soon as we were parted I found my five-franc piece; and as the cabaretier had not reckoned the thump I gave him, it was enough for me not only to satisfy all his demands, but also to offer to the corps de garde, I will not say the stirrup-cup, but that small drop of farewell token which the *snob* always pays willingly. This tribute paid, there was no further reasons for my detention, and I started off without paying my adieu to Lapierre, who was now known; and the next day I learnt that the most complete success had crowned my efforts. The two *fences*, Bras and Pomme Rouge, had been surprised in the midst of ample proofs of the nefarious traffic which they carried on; the robbers had been apprehended with the property

which they had instantly applied to their use, and they were compelled to confess; Lapierre alone had tried denial of the facts, but, confronted with the shopkeeper of Rue de la Bücherie, he was decidedly and positively recognised—the stockings and cravat were his accusers. The whole gang, robbers and receivers, were sent to La Force, in the expectation of judgment; there they soon learnt that the comrade who had played the part of "Vidocq caught," was, in fact, "Vidocq the catcher." Great was their surprise; how they must have commended the admirable talents of the comedian! The sentence confirmed, all were ordered to the Bagne. The evening before their departure I was present when they were fettered, and, on seeing me, they could not forbear smiling.

"Behold your work, you villain," said Lapierre, "you are content, no doubt."

"I have, at least, no reproach to make against myself, I did not advise you to steal. Did you not make up to me? Why be so confiding? When a man exercises a profession like yours, he ought to be more on his guard."

"It is all well," said Commery, "you are sure to be at the galleys again yourself."

"In the mean time a good journey to yourself. Keep my place for me, and if ever you return to *Pantin* (Paris) do not play at such dangerous games again."

After this reply they conversed together, and Richelot said, "Well, well! I owe him a turn."

"As for you," replied the shipwright, "you brought him amongst us. Since you knew him, you ought to have known that he was a *nose*."

"Ah, yes! it was Richelot who brought it upon us," sighed Pomme Rouge, who was being fettered, and nearly had his head broken by the hammer which was rivetting his collar.

"Do not move," said the smith roughly. "It was he, it was he," replied the *fence*, "who *floored* us, and but for him ——."

"Stand steady, you fool, and mind *your eye*." These were the last words I heard, but as I went away I saw, by certain gestures, that the colloquy grew warmer. What are they saying? I know not.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Now for Saint Cloud—The aspiring spy—The scheme of diversion, or the deceitful stratagem—An early visit—The disorder of a sleeping chamber—Singular comments—No report—They are honest fellows in the faubourg Saint Marceau—The turkey's claws—Take care of your shoes—Sacrifice to the god of fat paunches—*Deus est in nobis*—Judas' language—The policeman's nectar—Explanation of the word *Traiffe*—The two mistresses—The man who arrests himself—Content gives wings—The new Epictetus—A monologue—Despairing incredulity—Change from a tilbury to wooden shoes—A tradition—The mistress of a Russian prince—Brown bread and the tit-bits of Tortoni—Mother Bariole—The old seraglio, or the hell of a kept woman—Prostitutes and hackney-coach horses—The friend of all the world—The invulnerable—The picture of the Sabines—The holy arch—The money-box—*Infandum regina jubes*—Hatred to epaulettes—Good sentiments—A strange religion—The lottery ticket and the offering to Sainte-Geneviève—Example of remarkable fidelity—Penelope—The oath—I know the beautiful mask—Journey through Paris—Louison *la Blagueuse*—The monster—A fury—Cruel duty—Emilie in the guard-house—Return to Bariole's—The friend's bottle—The Sybil's tripod—Philemon and Baucis—Josephine Real, or the fruits of a good education—Philosophical reflections on concord and death—Three arrests—The traitor punished—A trait of active morality—A liberation—Answer to critics.

In the summer of 1812, a professed thief, named Hotot, who had long sought to be reinstated as a secret agent, in which employment he had been engaged previously to my admission into the police, came to offer his services to me for the fête of Saint Cloud. It is known as one of the most celebrated of the environs of Paris, and that, led by the concourse of persons, pickpockets assemble there in large bodies. It was on Friday that Hotot was brought to me by a comrade. This step appeared to me the more extraordinary, as I had previously given information against him which

had led to his being brought before the court of assizes. Perhaps he only desired to connect himself with me that he might the more readily play me some ill turn: such was my first thought, but I received him kindly, and even testified my satisfaction that he had not doubted my wish to be of service to him. I evinced so much apparent sincerity in my proffers of good-will towards him, that it was impossible for him to conceal his intentions from my penetration. A sudden change, which overspread his whole face, convinced me instantly, that, in accepting his offer, I was favouring some plans which he was not willing to confide to me. I saw his internal congratulations at having duped me. But be that as it might, I feigned to have the utmost confidence in him, and it was agreed that, on the following Sunday, he should go, at two o'clock, and post himself near the principal basin, that he might point out the thieves of his acquaintance, who, he told me, would come to *work* at that spot.

On the day appointed, I went to Saint-Cloud with the only two agents I then had under my command. On arriving at the destined place, I looked out for Hotot; I walked backwards and forwards, looked about me on all sides, but no Hotot. At length, after waiting for at least an hour and a half, my patience being worn nearly threadbare, I despatched one of my staff to the principal walk, desiring him to endeavour to find an auxiliary whose want of punctuality was as suspicious as his zeal.

My agent searched for an entire hour, when wearied with exploring every hole and corner of the garden and park, he returned and told me that he could not find Hotot. The moment afterwards I saw my man himself running towards me bathed in perspiration, "You do not know," said he to us, "that I had just got hold of six *prigs*, but they saw you and instantly *mizzled;* I am sorry, for they swallowed the bait, but what is deferred is not lost, and I shall have them yet."

I pretended to take all this for gospel, and Hotot

was convinced that I had not any doubt of his veracity. We spent the greater portion of the day together, and only separated about twilight. I then went to the gendarmes' station, where the-peace officers told me that many watches had been stolen in a direction precisely opposite to that in which, by the advice of Hotot, our watch was kept. It was then plain to me that he attracted us to one point, that he might the more easily *work* in another. It is an old stratagem in the tactics of diversion and false information given by thieves that they may have less fear of the police.

Hotot, whom I took good care not to reproach in any way, imagined that he had completely gulled me; but if I said nothing, I did not think the less, and increasing my show of friendship towards him, whilst he was meditating a renewal of his Saint Cloud trickery, I was on the alert to catch him tripping at the first opportunity. Our friendship being still very close, the opportunity presented itself earlier than I had even dared to hope.

One morning, when returning with Gaffré from the faubourg Saint Marceau, where we had passed the night, I suddenly determined to make a visit to Hotot. We were near the Rue Saint Pierre aux Bœuf, where he resided. I proposed to my comrade of the watch to accompany me, and, on his assenting, we went to Hotot's, where, on knocking, he opened the door and appeared surprised to see us; "what a wonder at this early hour."

"Are you astonished?" said I; "we come to have a glass with you."

"Oh! you are welcome;" and then jumping into bed, "Where is the liquor?"

"Gaffré will be so kind as to fetch it."

I put my hand into my pocket, and as Gaffré, as a Jew, was less careful of his trouble than his money, he willingly undertook the commission, and went out for that purpose. During his absence I remarked that Hotot had the air of a man who has gone to bed later than usual; the room was, besides, in a very extraor-

dinary state of disorder. His clothes, rather torn than taken off, seemed to have had a heavy soaking; and his shoes were covered with white clay, which was still wet. Not to have concluded from all these indications that Hotot had but recently returned, would not have been Vidocq. For the moment I thought nothing more of it, but my fancy soon wandered into the wide field of conjecture, and I conceived suspicions which I took care not to evince; I would not even appear curious, that is to say indiscreet, and, for fear of disquieting my worthy friend, I did not ask him a single question. We spoke of the rain and the fine weather, but more of the fine weather than the rain, and when we had nothing left to drink we went away.

Once out of the house, I communicated to Gaffré the remarks I had made; "I am much deceived," I added, "or he has been abroad all night; there has been something in the wind."

"I think so too, for his clothes are still wet, and his shoes covered with mud! He has not been walking in the dust."

Hotot hardly thought that we were talking of him, but yet his ears must have tingled. "Where has he been? What has he done?" we inquired of each other; perhaps he has joined some gang. Gaffré was no less puzzled than myself, and we were compelled to think that Hotot might be honest after all.

At twelve o'clock, we went to make our report on the transactions of the night; our account was not very interesting; nothing has occurred was the whole contents. Ah! said M. Henry to us, the people in the faubourg Saint Marceau are all honest! I had much better have sent you to the boulevard Saint Martin; it appears that the *lead robbers (voleurs de plomb)* have renewed their work; they carried off more than four hundred and fifty pounds from a house newly built. The watchman, who pursued without catching them, says, they were four in number. The robbery was effected during the heavy shower of last night."

"During the heavy shower! parbleu!" I cried, "you know one of the robbers."

"Who is he?"

"Hotot."

"He who served the police, and who asked leave again to enter it?"

"The same."

I told M. Henry my suspicions and remarks, and as he was convinced that I was correct, I went out instantly, that I might with all possible speed convert what was at present but presumptive evidence into proof positive. The commissary of the quarter in which the robbery had been effected, went with me to the spot, and we found in one place on the ground the deep imprint of two nailed shoes, and the earth had been indented by the weight of a man. These traces could afford precise indications; and precautions were taken that they should not be effaced. I felt perfectly assured that they were exactly fitted to Hotot's shoes, and taking Gaffré with me to him, that I might verify my suspicions without alarming the culprit, I devised the plan, which was thus executed. On getting to Hotot's residence we made a tremendous noise at the door.

"Get up, get up, we have brought the poultry." He arose, turned the key, and we stumbled into the room like men somewhat stupid with liquor.

"Hallo!" said Hotot, "allow me to pay my respects to you. You have been *warming the oven* early this morning."

"Yes, and we have come to you," I replied, "to finish the baking. You are very cunning," I added, showing him in its covering a purchase which we had made as we came along, "guess what we have in here."

"How can I guess?" Then, tearing the corner of the paper, I exposed the claws of a bird.

"Ah! sacre dieu!" he cried, "it is a turkey."

"Yes, a brother of yours, and, as you see, it is by

its feet that we know this sort of animal: do you understand me now?"

"What does he say?"

"I say it is roasted."

"Oh! it should be baked with venison fat."

"Venison fat! here look at it."

I handed the bird to him, and whilst he examined and turned it over and over, Gaffré stooped down, picked up his shoes, and put them in his hat.

"Well, and what did you give for this *bit of hollow?*"

"*Seven bob, a kick, and eight mag.*"

"The d ——! Seven shillings and tenpence. That is the price of a pair of shoes."

"Exactly so, my boy," said the pilferer, rubbing his hands.

"Here is plenty to bite at; and how well it smells, quite deliciously, it is perfectly tempting! We will soon settle his business."

"Who carves? I cannot."

"Well, then, we will help you; is there a knife in the box?"

"Yes, look in the drawer."

I found a knife, and then sought an excuse to send Gaffré out. "Oh, by the way," said I, whilst I laid the cloth, "you can oblige me by going to my house, and saying, that they need not wait dinner for me."

"Very well, and then you will be off without me; that is *no go;* I shall not *cut my stick* until I have had some *grubbery.*"

"But we cannot eat without drinking."

"Well, then, I will have the liquor produced."

He opened the window, and called to a vintner, "And now," he added, "you cannot play me any trick."

Gaffré was like the majority of police agents, and, except being treacherous, a good enough fellow; but a perfect gourmand. With him the belly superseded all other business; and thus, although he had obtained

possession of the shoes, which was the main point in the affair, I saw I could not induce him to leave the place until he had had his share of the eatables. I hastened, therefore, to cut up the bird, and when the wine arrived, "Come to table," I cried to my gastronomist, "make haste, and cram your fill."

Hotot's bed was his table, and without any forks but those of father Adam, we made to the god who is within us, that is the god of *Ventrus*, a sacrifice in the manner of the ancients. We ate like ogres, and the repast was quickly terminated. "Now," said Gaffré, "I can *toddle*. I know not if you are like me, but when the sun shines in my stomach, I am good for nothing; when the chest is full it is a different matter."

"Well, then, *mizzle*."

"D. I. O."

He took his hat, and disappeared.

"Now he is gone," said Hotot, with the tone of a man who is not sorry to be left alone with another for some time. "Well, my friend Jules, is there never to be a vacancy for Hotot?"

"Patience, patience, all will come in good time."

"It is only for you to say a good word for me, and M. Henry would listen, if you would ——"

"It must not be to-day, then, for I expect a good rowing; Gaffré will not escape, for we have not sent in our report these two days."

This lie was not without its purpose; it was not necessary that Hotot should think I had been informed of the robbery in which I believed him a participator; he was without mistrust, and I kept him in that security; and, for fear he should think of getting up, I led the conversation to those points which most interested him. He spoke to me successively of many affairs. "Ah!" he said, sighing, "if I were certain of entering the police again, with a pay of twelve or fifteen *bob* a day, I could give such information! I know now of a burglary, which would be a welcome disclosure to M. Henry."

" Do you ?"

" Yes, three robbers, Berchier called Bicêtre, Caffin, and Linois, whom I will give up to him in the actual fact, as sure as you and I make two."

" If you can, why don't you? That would be an excellent beginning."

" I know it, but —"

" Are you afraid to make yourself seem visible in the business? If you perform services, I will do my best to ensure your admission."

" Ah, my friend, you pour balm into my mind; you will procure my admission."

" Oh that will be easily effected."

" Come then, a bumper to luck," cried Hotot, transported with joy.

" Yes, let us drink to your approaching reception."

" And the sooner the better."

Hotot was enchanted, and already laid down a line of conduct; he had his dreams of happiness, and there was in his very legs those inquietudes of hope which are produced by the prospect of coming pleasure. I was afraid lest he should quit his bed, when at length some person knocked at the door; it was Gaffré, holding in his hand a small bottle of brandy, which Annette had given to him. " *Traiffe*," said my Israelitish colleague as he entered, in that Hebrew slang, which was doubtless the favourite language of our patron, Monsieur Judas. *Traiffe* and *maron* are one and the same thing. As I pique myself on being a Hebraist of the first order, I instantly comprehended him, and saw how to play my cards. Whilst I was pouring out for the neophyte the nectar of a policeman, Gaffré replaced the shoes. We continued to chat and drink, and before we parted, I learnt that the plunder of the lead was that of which Hotot proposed to point out the perpetrators. The father Bellemont, a blacksmith of the Rue de la Tannerie, was the *fence* whom he mentioned to me.

As these details were interesting, I told Hotot that I

should instantly communicate them to M. Henry, and recommended him to find out the place where the three thieves slept. He promised to point out the house, and when we had agreed upon preliminaries, we separated. Gaffré had not left me. "Well!" said he, "it is he, the shoes fit precisely, and the impression is very deep. In leaping from the window he must have fallen with all his weight." This was the signification of the word *traiffe;* and now I had only to take measures accordingly. I had already explained Hotot's conduct to myself, and I readily conceived the part he wished to play. In the first place, it was clear that he committed the robbery with the intention of making his profit by it, but he was chasing two hares at once; by pointing out his accomplices he attained his second object, that of making himself of consequence in the eyes of the police, that he might thereby be reestablished in their employ. I trembled to think of the consequences of such a combination. Wretch, said I to myself, I will contrive that he may have the recompense of his crime, and if the unhappy creatures who have aided him in his expedition are convicted, it is but just that he should be a partaker of their sentence. I did not hesitate to believe him the most guilty of the whole, and from what I knew of his character, it seemed most probable to me that he had led them on to it, only to contrive a job; I even went so far as to think that it was possible that he alone had committed the robbery, but thought it advisable to accuse of his own crime those individuals whose misconduct made them suspected characters. In each of these suppositions, Hotot was a great rogue, and I determined to rid society of him.

I knew that he had two mistresses, one Emilie Simonet, who had several children by him, and with whom he lived as a husband; the other Félicité Renaud, a common girl, who doated upon him. I thought I could contrive to attain my ends by setting these rivals at loggerheads, and by their mutual jealousy light the

flambeau that was to show him to justice. Hotot was watched, and in the afternoon I learned that he was in the Champs Elysées with Félicité. I went to him there, and taking him aside, told him that I required him on an affair of extreme importance.

"You must know," I said, "you are to be apprehended and taken to prison, where you must *pump a cove* that we shall *nab* this evening. As you will be in *quod* before him, he will not take you for a *sneak*, and when he is brought in you can easily *plant* yourself upon him."

Hotot accepted the proposition with joy. "Ah!" he exclaimed, "I am then a spy once more! You may rely on me, but I must first take leave of Félicité." He went towards her, and as the hour of nocturnal seductions, or *padding the pavé* for the amorously disposed, was nigh, she was not angry with him for leaving her so soon.

"Now you have got rid of the *mot*, I will give you instructions. You know the little *ken* on the boulevard Montmartre in front of the Theatre des Variétés?"

"Yes, Brunet's."

"Well, go there and seat yourself at the further end of the room with a bottle of beer, and when you see two of the inspectors of the officer of peace, Mercier, enter—you know them?"

"Know them! do you ask me such a question, who am an old trooper?"

"Well, as you know them it will be all right: when they come in, make them a sign that it is you, that they may not mistake you for any other person."

"You be easy, they will not mistake me."

"You know it will be disagreeable if they should lay hands on some unlucky citizen."

"Oh! there shall be no mistake, I shall be there, and then the signal agreed on. The signal will do all."

"You understand clearly?"

"Yes, do you take me for a fool? I will not give them the trouble to take a second glance."

"All right, they shall have the countersign, and as soon as they perceive you, they will know what they are to do: they will arrest and convey you to the station of Lycée, where you will stay two or three hours, and then the youth you are to *pump*, having already seen you there, will not be surprised to meet you again at the depot."

"Give yourself no uneasiness; I will do the trick so well, that I will defy the most *downy cove* to discover that I am not situated exactly like himself. Besides, you will see how cleverly I do my work, to the very letter."

He seemed so hearty in the business, that I was really sorry at being compelled to deceive him thus, but, reflecting on his conduct towards his comrades, the feeling of pity which I had momentarily experienced was dissipated never to return. He gave me his hand, and we parted; he walked with all the velocity of eager satisfaction; the earth seemed scarcely to bear him. On my part, no less swift than he, I flew to the prefecture, where I found the inspectors I had mentioned to him; one of them was named Cochois, now a watchman at Bicêtre; I told them what they were to do and followed them. They entered the house.

Scarcely had they crossed the threshold, when Hotot, faithful to the orders I had given him, pointed to himself with his finger, like a man who says, "It is me." At this signal the inspectors went up to him, and asked for his letters of protection. Hotot, as proud as Artabanes, answered that he had none. "Then you must come with us," was the immediate rejoinder, and to prevent him from running away, if he should be so inclined, they secured his hands with cords. During this operation, a sort of internal content overspread the face of Hotot: he was happy to find himself caught: he blessed his bonds: he contemplated them almost with love, for, as he believed, all this preparation was but a ceremonious form; and in fact, like some philosopher of antiquity, he could boast of being free in his chains;

and he said in a low voice to the inspectors, "Devil fetch me if I run! The *mauleys* and *trotters* are tied; you could not do more to secure a regular *workman*."

It was about eight in the evening when Hotot was brought to the guard-house: at eleven o'clock they had not brought in the person from whom he was to extract confession, and the delay began to appear extraordinary to him. Perhaps the individual might have escaped the pursuit of justice, or, perhaps, he had already confessed. In that case the aid of a *sneak* was useless; I know not what conjectures the prisoner formed, I only know that at length, tired with waiting, and thinking they had forgotten him, he asked the serjeant of the guard to inform the commissary of police that he was still there. "If he be there, let him remain there," said the commissary, "it is no business of mine." This answer transmitted to Hotot awakened no other idea than that of a negligence of the inspectors. "If I had my supper now," he added, with the comico-serio accent of that lachrymose gaiety which is less touching than laughable;—"they are making sport of me, perhaps they are stuffing away in some comfortable corner, whilst I am supping here with *Duke Humphrey*." Twice or thrice he called, sometimes the corporal, sometimes the serjeant, to relate his griefs to them; he did not even leave the officer of the guard alone, but supplicated him to allow of his being set at liberty. "I will return, if necessary," he added; "what do you risk, since I was only grabbed for a particular purpose?"

Unfortunately, the officer, who told us all these particulars next day, was one of those incredulous personages whose obstinacy is not to be shaken. Hotot was only tormented by his appetite; now, with persons who think there is such a thing as remorse, this might have been construed into presumptive innocence, but with those who trust only to lock and key—fatality had included this officer in the number; and, besides, not having any power to act for himself, however desirous of so doing, he drew the bolt upon Hotot, who, unable

to obtain anything from the inspectors, made his moan in the following broken and interrupted soliloquy, which, heard through the door, excited mirth, by his alternatives of grotesque resignation and impatience.

"Oh! I say, though, it is coming it a little too strong to keep me here all night!—impossible—they are coming—no; no more an inspector than I am a king—what the deuce keeps the brutes?—If I were behind them I would apply a quickener—if it is not their fault, to be sure, nothing can be said.—They certainly planted me for the purpose—yet, why don't they bring in the *cove*—perhaps he has done them.—If he be not caught in the fact they can do nothing with him.—There is no fun in all this, though, to me, who have not tasted food since I arose.—Come, gentlemen, as soon as you please, at your earliest convenience—I am quite ready—but we can't always have our own way.—What a devil of an unlucky go for me!—It plays the deuce with my stomach; I want to eat, and have nothing.—How my belly cries *cupboard*.—This is a nice new year's present, I must confess.—Do they want to try my appetite?—A very excellent method, certainly—fasting is good for young people.—Never mind, never mind, it will not kill me this time, and I shall breakfast all the better in the morning.—I will wager they are guzzling away at some cabaret, the brutes!—If I were near them—this is a good joke, certainly, an admirable farce.—In the name of all the devils in h——, and the saints in the calendar!—Well, why put yourself out, my boy?—Hunger makes the wolf leave the woods—get out, get out yourself, boy, it is easy enough—if I had but my turkey of this morning—if my friend Jules were here—he does not know, ah! if he knew."

Hotot said, as the people say, "if the king knew;" but whilst he was deploring my ignorance, and so very far from foreseeing the consequences of an arrest, which he supposed pretended, I, exploring the little streets in the neighbourhood of the place du Châtelet, had joined Emilie Simonet, in one of those low haunts where, to

suit light purses, a landlady keeps liquors and lasses' both tending to the same end and serving for the same purposes. Here the liquors are like the secret entrance of the lottery-office, a means of deceiving the spy: the shamefaced lover enters, under the pretext of taking a glass of wine, and is doubly poisoned. It is to this sort of blind coffee-shop that the refuse of prostitutes crowd, and heap their favours on the beastly drunkard, or make terms with the poverty of their customer. More than one ci-devant beauty, now reduced to her calico petticoat, her coarse apron, and wooden shoes,—unless she prefer *philosophes*, (shoes of fifteen, twenty, or twenty-five pence,) here boasts of the tradition, almost forgotten, though recent, of those charms which procured for her the cachemere and splendid veil which she displayed in the cavalcades of Montmorency, or else in the elegant tilbury which conveyed her to Bagatelle. I have seen many of these vicissitudes, and to give one of the million examples, there was a friend of Emilie, named Caroline, who had been the mistress of a Russian prince. In her days of splendour, a hundred thousand crowns a year did not pay the expenses of her establishment; she had equipages, horses, lackeys, courtiers; she had been very handsome, but her beauty had entirely faded. She was Emilie's companion, and even more degraded than her. Constantly muddled by liquor, she never had a lucid interval. The lady of the house, who provided her attire, for Caroline had no longer a rag of her own, watched her as closely as a cat does a mouse, lest she should sell her clothes. A hundred times she had been found at some low hole of vice naked as a worm; she had drank away every article of dress, even to her chemise. Such is the sad condition of these wretched creatures, almost all of whom have had, at one time of their lives, a run of good luck: after having the means of literally rolling in money, they feel the want of a crust to stop the cravings of hunger, and those palates, on which the delicacies of Tortoni palled, find a relish in the pota-

toes of La Grève. It is in this catalogue of courtesans that are to be found those damsels who form the delight of the paviors, messengers, and water-bearers: kept by the libertines of this laborious class, whose liberalities form their main chance, they, in their turns, when not smitten by some fencing-master, or street-singer, support the thieves, or, at least, if they are in good keeping, by way of return, they comfort them during their dungeon woes, and in the dead season of the year.

The comrade of the princess Caroline, Emilie Simonet, or madame Hotot, was one of this stamp: hers was a kind heart perverted; I met her at mother Bariole's. Mother Bariole, a good woman, if there ever was one, and as honest as it was possible in her profession, had a sort of consideration amongst the debauched beings who infest these places in double capacities; these revolting porticoes of a sanctuary, where, braving all disgust, lust and misery caress each other by turns. For nearly half a century her establishment was the providence and last refuge of those daughters of Laïs, whom the consequences of their fall from virtue, and time, so swift in his outrages, have cast headlong under the same control as the stream and the bank: it is the old seraglio, where no one must penetrate who desires to rejoice his mind by delightful images: here is no enchantress! The Armida of the Chaussée d'Antin is but a hideous trull, who, alternating between a prison and a hospital, exhausts, in her own person, the vicissitudes of a career—whose last hope must be to die on a dunghill. In this asylum, the luxury of the Rue Vivienne is superseded by the trumpery of the Temple: and she who, during the ephemeral triumph of her attractions scarcely budded, disdained the first fruits of the fashion, finds still wherewithal to deck herself in that faded finery, which, falling lower and lower, has, at length, reached the wardrobe of mother Bariole. Thus we see a broken-down *prad* of the hackney *drag* assume, with

pride, the harness which humiliated him in the days when his well-fed carcass formed the glory of a splendid equipage. If the comparison fails in nobleness of idea, it is just in fact.

It would be a curious history, and profitable to morality, to have the narrative of some of mother Bariole's nymphs: it might be to the purpose to add to it the biography of this venerable matron, who, placed for fifty years in the very centre of blows from fists, kicks from feet, thrusts from swords, &c., has passed through the whole period without a single scratch; the friend of the police, the friend of the thieves, the friend of the soldiery, in fact, every body's friend, she has preserved herself invulnerable in the midst of storms innumerable, and of the thousand and one battles of which she has been spectatress. Sabine or Roman when the combat commenced, woe to him who touched a hair of the *mother's* head! Her counter was like the holy arch, it was the neutral territory which even the flying bottles respected. This is, indeed, being loved! not one of the Sabines who would not have shed her blood for her. It was a glorious sight to see her in the morning, as they were all thronging round her to tell their dreams about the lottery; and at the approach of quarter-day, when the savings destined to pay the rent was insufficient, because the money-box had been broken open, the poor girls would work themselves ill to make up the deficit! What misery if the abbess, to satisfy her landlord, was compelled to *spout* her silver mugs! In what could she then warm the little sugared wine which she drank with her *Swiss*, or her gossip, when, chatting together, and deploring the hardship of the times, nose to nose, and with elbows on the table, they soothed their sorrows with a cup of comfort. This dear mother Bariole, how often she sent to the Mont-de-Piété for the militia of good conduct, (*bureau de mœurs,*) to regale them with oysters and white wine! How generous the inspectors found her, and how compassionate the thieves! The confidence of the latter

she never betrayed. With what interest did she listen to the wailings of those who were *out of work*, and, sending a sprat to catch a herring, if she augured well of the fortune of any one of them, under the guise of friendship she handed over the cup of consolation; nay, even the *creature* on *tick*, if the unemployed *cracksman* was likely soon to be *flush*. "*Work*, my children," she said to the *labourers* of all classes, "to be welcome to me you must always be *doing*." She did not advise the soldiery in the same way, but gained their affections by attentions that were endless; she cursed the police with them, and to perfect their pleasure, in case of a disturbance, she never sent for the guard until the last extremity. She detested colonels, captains, adjutants, sub-lieutenants, in fact, all epaulettes; but then she doated on worsted lace, and nothing could equal her affection for subalterns in general, and particularly those who were well-looking: she was a mother to them all. "Ah, my darling!" I have heard her often say, "when you return with the serjeant you will be a major."

"Yes, mother Bariole, and between the hours of parade the house shall be merry."

Maman Bariole is still alive, but since I am not now called on to visit her, I know not if her establishment be supported on the same system. At the time I knew her, she had all the love for me which a spy could ever have expected from her. She was delighted when I asked for Emilie Simonet, who was her favourite. Mother Bariole thought I was about to throw the handkerchief in her harem.

"You cannot ask me for any one whom I would more readily give to you."

"Is she, then, your favourite?"

"What do you mean? I like women who take care of their children: if she had put them out of the way, I would never have looked at her again. Those poor little things did not ask to be born: why should not Christians have as much natural affection as animals?

Her last is my godchild,—the very image of Hotot, the very *spit* of him. I wish you could see her, she grows like a mushroom; she will be no fool: there will be no occasion to teach her any thing; she will know every thing."

"She is forward, indeed."

"Yes, and pretty: a little love! let her only be until she is as old as a fifteen sous piece, and I know she will bring her mother in as much money as she can carry. With a daughter one always has a resource."

"Certainly."

"Yes, yes, the good God will bless her, Emilie; and then she has not, for a long time, had any mishap with the men."

"Does the good God meddle with these things?"

"Ah, certainly, you chaps are unbelievers, you believe in nothing."

"You have some religion, then, mother Bariole."

"I hope I have: I do not like priests, but that is all the same. It is not eight days since I had a nine days' devotion made at Sainte-Geneviève for a safe passage of some liquor from Brussels, and the butt arrived safe and sound."

"And the end of the wax candle, have you burnt that?"

"Hold your tongue, you heathen."

"I will lay a bet that you have some Easter cake at your bed-head."

"A little, my boy! people should not live like brutes."

Bariole, who did not like to be thwarted about her creed, began to call to Emilie.

"Come, make haste," she cried; "wait, my son, I am going to see if she has finished."

"That's right, for I am in a hurry." Emilie soon appeared with a corporal of artillery, who, without looking behind him, immediately took leave of her.

"Since he did not ask for his dram," observed Bariole, "we will put it back into the bottle."

"I will drink it," said Emilie.

"No, no, Lisette."

"You joke, it is paid for." (drinking.)

"Ah! there are flies in it."

"That will make your heart gay," I cried.

"So it will, well said. Is it you, Jules, what are you doing in this quarter?"

"I heard you were here, and said to myself, I must see Hotot's wife, I will have a drop with her."

"Agathe," called Bariole, "bring a pint;" and Agathe, according to custom, pretending to go down into the cellar, went out by the back door to the vintner's, whence she brought a flask, of which she reserved three parts, and, by baptizing the rest, obtained the quantity required.

"This is not adulterated," said Emilie to me, whilst I poured it out into her glass, "see, it makes bubbles on the top, which is a good sign; I will drink again."

I pleased her much by giving her plenty of drink, but that was only the first step towards gaining her confidence; and wishing to reach, insensibly, to the catalogue of her complaints against Hotot, I managed so skilfully, that the change of conversation did not give her any suspicion. I first began by deploring my own lot, and these girls, when lamentations are made which have any relation to their own, are never slow in joining chorus: I have seen many of them, before the second pint has been emptied, burst into tears and weep like Magdalenes; at the third, I became their best friend; then there was no further restraint, all that was heaviest upon their hearts came forth with a sudden explosion; it was that moment of overflowing confidence, when the exordium is always, "The world is full of troubles, every one has his own." Emilie, who had, during the day, tolerably well washed down her griefs, was not slow in commencing her tale of woe on the subject of her rival and Hotot's infidelities.

"Is he such a rover, your Hotot? fellows like him do not deserve to have wives. To leave such a woman

as you for a Félicité! between ourselves that Félicité is a ——; if I had to make a choice, I give you my word that I would give you the preference."

"Come, Jules, you are *buttering* me down. You are *trying it on!* I know well enough that Félicité is the better looking; but if I am not so *swell*, I have my heart in the right place. You saw it when I used to take the *scran* to Lorcefé; (La Force;) that is the time to judge if one is true or not.

"That is true, you took every care of him, I was witness to that."

"Now, Jules, have I not done all a woman could do for him? The blackguard, one can scarcely keep one's temper! I did it to the injury of my trade. I am sure that no one could say a word against me; a married wife and all could not have done more."

"What is it you say? she would not have done so much."

"To be sure not, but it is not only that, he knows how disposed I am to have children—whilst he had been fifteen months in *quod* did I have a young one without him? Is not that virtue? and now he would deprive me altogether. My shoe knows what I have undergone, and would tell long tales if it could speak; did it not have those ten sous pieces which passed under the very nose of Bariole? He ought to remember them; but cut off the rope from a rogue's neck and ——."

"You are right! It was not Félicité, then, who gave them to him?"

"Félicité! she would sooner have eaten him. But it is always those that they love best," (she sighed and drank, sighed and drank, sighed, and drank again.) "Since we two are together, tell me have you seen them together lately? tell me the truth, and on the word of Emilie Simonet, which is my real name, may every drop which has entered, and shall enter my lips turn to poison, may I die on the spot, or may I be *nabbed*

when *easing* the next *cull* I make a *plant* upon, if I open my mouth to him about it."

"Why should I tell you? you women are all blabs."

"On my word and honour," (assuming a solemn air and tone,) "by the ashes of my father, who is as dead as you are alive ——."

This Homeric form of speech is no longer in use, except amongst the priestesses of Venus-Cloacina. Whence it came to them, I know not. Had some washerwoman's daughter sworn by the ashes of her mother,—but by the ashes of my father! The words are even more formidable than the prophetic nebulæ which alarmed Fontenelle: they comprise an entire monography. In the mouth of a woman who would seem to be honest, they are always a bad augury, whatever be her appearance or real situation; without running the risk of deceiving her, one can say, "I know you, beautiful mask." This oath, considering the quality of the persons who use it, has always appeared to me so burlesque, that it has never been uttered in my presence without exciting in me an irresistible impulse to laugh.

"Laugh away, laugh away," said Emilie to me, "it is laughable enough, is it not? Come, now, be quiet: it is true, there is no pleasure with him, he believes nothing. May I be the greatest wretch under the canopy of heaven; by all that I hold dearest in life; by the life of my child, which is an oath I never make; may all the miseries of life befall me if I speak of you to him." At the same time pulling forward the thumb of her right-hand, the nail of which, scraping against her upper teeth, escaped with a slight noise,—she added, crossing herself as she spoke, "now, Jules, it is sacred: now it is all as right as if a notary had signed articles between us."

During this conversation our pint measure had been frequently filled, and the more the Penelope of Hotot

drank, the more pressing she became, and the more solemnly pledged herself to silence.

"Indeed, my boy Jules, you should tell me, when I promise you that he shall know nothing of it."

"Ah! you are such a good wench that I can keep nothing from you; but I forewarn you, do not *nose*, if so, take care of yourself. I would not be the death of you, but Hotot is my friend, you know."

"There is no danger, and when any one tells me a thing (pointing to her breast) it is there—it is death."

"Well, then, I went this evening to the Champs Elysées and there saw your man with Félicité; they were quarrelling at first; she declared that he had you in his room in the Rue Saint Pierre aux Bœufs. He swore that he had not, and that he no longer kept up any connection with you. You know that when she was by I could not do otherwise than say as he did. They made it up, and, afterwards, from some words they let fall, I think he passed the night before last with Félicité at the Place du Palais Royal."

"Oh, then, you're wrong, for he was with his friends."

"With Caffin, Bicêtre, and Linois; Hotot told me that."

"What, did he tell you? He forbade my speaking of it: that is just like him, and then afterwards, if any accident should happen to him, he would *fan* me well."

"Oh, don't be alarmed; I am not the man to bring a friend into a scrape; if I am a spy, I have my feelings about me still!"

"I know, my dear Jules, that you were compelled to enter the police, or else return to the Bagne."

"It is all the same, police or not, I am all right still; and if I had any one to lay my clutches on, Hotot is not the man."

"You are right, my boy, never *snitch* upon comrades: and now, my lad of mettle, tell me, where did he go with the *mot?*"

"Do you wish to know? They went to *roost* at

Bicêtre's. I cannot give you the address, for I did not ask for it.'

"Oh! gone to Bicêtre! right as my hand, right as a *trivet*—I will go and stir them up."

"I will go with you—is it far off?

"You know the Rue du Bon Puits?"

"Yes."

"Well! it is then at Lahire's, on the fourth pair of stairs. Now she shall carry my *ten commandments* in her face. Jules, have you a six liard piece? let me have it, that I may mark the soles of her feet with it."

"I have not one."

"Never mind, I have my key in my handkerchief;—Oh I'll kick up a h— of a row. I thought something would turn up this morning, for I had three knaves in my hand of cards."

"Listen to me, don't be too much in haste. That will not be the plan to find if they be there or not. You can trust to me, let me have my way: if I remain, you will know what it means,—that I have found the birds at roost."

"That's a good idea, let us be sure before we begin to make an uproar."

We reached the Rue du Bon Puits, and I entered, when having assured myself that Bicêtre was in his lair, I rejoined Emilie, whose brain was actually turned by wine and jealousy.

"Well, now, see how unlucky we are! they have just left with Bicêtre and his wife, to go and sup at Linois's. I asked where, but they could not inform me."

"P'r'aps they would not; but that is of no consequence, none at all. I know where Linois *hangs out*, at his mother's. Come with me, you shall go and ask her, that they may have no suspicion of anything."

"Oh! you will take me from place to place till morning!"

"What, Jules, do you refuse me? Ah, my dear boy, don't refuse, don't refuse, you shall have no reason to repent it—I will give you as many kisses as you like."

How could a kiss, and such a kiss, be resisted? I went to the Rue Jocquelot, and then I climbed to the sixth story, where I saw Linois, who did not know my name.

"I am looking for Hotot," I said to him, "have you seen him?" "No," was the reply, and as he was in bed, I retired, after having wished him good-night.

"We have the luck of it! I have again been thrown off my scent: they have been here, but are now gone to seek for Caffin to *stand* some wine. Where does Caffin pitch his tent?"

"Why I should be puzzled to tell you, but as he is a petticoat hunter, I am sure we shall find him amongst the women in the Place aux Veaux. Come along."

"Why we shall traverse the four corners of Paris. It is getting late, and I have no time to spare."

"Pray, Jules, do not leave me, the inspectors will perhaps *grab* me."

As compliance was useful, I did not persist in my refusal. I went with Emilie to the Place aux Veaux, and, from *ken to ken*, taking draughts of courage in each cabaret, we flew onwards to the place where I hoped to perfect my informations. We flew, I say, though the expression is somewhat strong, in spite of the weight on my arm; Emilie, very much intoxicated, had much difficulty to put her feet on the ground. But the more she staggered, the more communicative she became, so that she disclosed to me the most secret thoughts of her faithless swain. I learnt from her all that I required to know concerning Hotot, and I had the satisfaction of convincing myself that I was not deceived in judging him capable of directing the thieves whom he proposed to give up to the police. Emilie hoping to find Hotot, and I to discover Caffin, when a girl named Louison la Blagueuse, whom we met, told us that he was with Emilie Taquet, and that he would pass the night either at Bariole's or at Blondin's, who was also an encourager of loves. "Thank ye, my little one," said Simonet to the sister cyprian, who gave us this welcome information.

" It is just so," she continued, " Bicêtre is with his wife, Linois and Caffin are with theirs, Hotot is with Felicité, every Jack has his Jill: the wretch! he shall have my life or I will have his; I don't mind being killed; (grinding her teeth and tearing her hair;) Jules, do not leave me, I will massacre them, my friend, I will massacre them!"

During this ebullition of vengeance, we were still going forward, until at length we reached the corner of the Rue des Arcis. " What are you doing, Melie?" grunted out a harsh voice, and a female approached us. " It is the petite Madelon," cried Emilie.

" Ah my lass! how are you? I am on the look out: have you seen Caffin this evening?"

" Caffin, do you say?"

" Yes, Caffin."

" They are at mother Bariole's."

No hour is unfitting that can be turned to its purpose. Besides Emilie was one of the house. We went in and learnt that Caffin was there, but that Hotot had not made his appearance. On this intelligence, Madame Hotot imagined that they wished to deceive her.

" Yes, you encourage his vice," she said to Bariole, " give me my man, you old ——."

I do not remember the epithets she heaped upon her, but there was, for a quarter of an hour, an incessant firing, supported by a succession of glasses of *tape* poured upon the wine which had already fermented jealousy to its height. " Will you cease with your bullying?" interrupted Bariole, who was an excellent trumpeter. " Your man! your man! he is at the mill, and the devil may fetch him. Did you put him into my keeping? He is a fine *kiddy!* Every body's man! Such fellows as he are to be picked up—. You think he is with Caffin, then go and see: go to Taquet's chamber."

Emilie did not allow her to say so twice, but went to convince herself, and returned. " Well," said Bariole, " are you satisfied now?"

"There is no one there but Caffin."

"Did I not tell you so?"

"Where is the brute, where is the monster?"

"If you like," I said to her, "I will take you to him."

"Oh pray do, I beg of you, Jules."

"It is a long distance from here, at the Hotel d'Angleterre."

"Do you think he is there?"

"I am sure of it; he went to pass an hour or two and wait until Félicité has finished her evening, and then he will go and meet her in the Rue Froid Manteau."

Emilie did not doubt but that I had exactly guessed the fact, and would not delay a moment; she was bursting with rage, but would give me neither peace nor quiet until I had consented to undertake to go with her to the Hotel d'Angleterre. The transit appeared long, for I was the knight of a lady, whose centre of gravity, vacillating excessively, gave me much trouble to keep my own equilibrium; however, half dragging, half carrying the belle, I reached the Rue St. Honoré, and the very door of the haunt where she trusted to find her man. We went through the rooms, and without fear of disturbing the amorous tête-à-têtes, glanced our eyes over each closet which was ranged on both sides of the corridor. Hotot was not there, and the rival of Félicité was transported beyond bounds, her eyes were starting from their orbits, her lips covered with foam; she wept, she stormed, she was an epileptic, a demoniac; with dishevelled hair, pale, her features frightfully and spasmodically contracted, and the sinews of her neck stretched by passion, she presented the hideous appearance of one of those corpses to whom galvanism has restored motion. Terrible effects of love and brandy, jealousy and wine! Yet in the crisis which thus agitated her, Emilie did not lose sight of me, but clinging to my arm, swo e never to quit me until she had unkennelled the ingrate who had thus tormented her.

But there was now no more that I wished to learn, and for some time I had been endeavouring to rid myself of her, and make her understand that I was going to inquire if Félicité had returned, which was soon done, as she lived in a house where there was a doorkeeper. Emilie, who had received so much complaisance from me, could but be pleased with my offer, and I went out without any attempt on her part to follow me; but instead of performing the commission I had undertaken, I went to the corps de garde of the Château d'Eau, when making myself known to the chief officer, I begged him to arrest and keep her in the closest confinement. It certainly pained me to push matters to this extremity, for after all she had evinced it will be agreed that Emilie deserved a better fate, but this night she certainly passed in the guard-house. How painful it is sometimes to perform strict duty! No one knew better than myself where was the beloved whom she was cursing; was I not necessarily deprived of the satisfaction of proving him innocent when she supposed him guilty? Perhaps, before I proceed further, it may not be useless to say why I had caused Hotot to be apprehended. It was that he might not have time to exculpate himself by the removal of all traces of his share in the robbery, or in bargaining for his safety with the police. But the tender Emilie, why imprison her? Had I not to dread her return to Bariole's, where, in the loquacity of intoxication, she might utter reminiscences which would put Caffin on his guard? It may be objected that she was not in a state even to keep herself upright; I will not dispute that; but the reader must remember that, from the experience of children and drunkards, certain philosophers have been induced to think that men (and women of course included) were originally quadrupeds. Emilie, even on four paws, could have regained her domicile, and then her tongue would soon have returned, and my measures must infallibly have been betrayed.

After all these precautions, Hotot being already in my clutch, I had only to secure his three accomplices, and I knew where to prick for them all. I took two agents with me, and soon afterwards presented myself at Bariole's in the name of the law.

"Ah!" said the mother, "when I saw you bring your body here, I feared all was not right. What will these gentlemen take?" she added, addressing my two aide-de-camps. "You will take something to be sure, what shall it be? from the small bottle that I keep for friends?" and whilst speaking, she stooped to rummage in her counter-drawer, whence she took, from amongst a parcel of millinery, an old gilt flask which contained the precious liquid. "I am obliged to hide it, or with these girls—ah! people are much to be pitied who have to deal with women. I vow, if ever I can get a means of living—how happy they are who have an income to live upon! See, I have not enough to provide myself with an arm-chair. Here is one like a skeleton, we can see its bones."

"Oh! come, tell us about your sofa; it has beautiful hair, and one leg in the air most gracefully," said a young girl, who, when we entered, was sleeping on a table in the corner of the room; "it is like Philemon and Baucis?"

"What, is that you, little Real? I did not see you. What are you chattering about with your *Philemus* and *Baucou?* What are you talking about?"

"I said," replied Fifine, "that it is like the Sybil's tripod."

"Good, good, it is the tripeman's arm-chair; you shall not say so of it any longer. I will have it new stuffed. You see she has had an education, and is not an ignorant beast like us: see what it is to have parents. But I know enough to enable me to carry on the war. Come come, Fifine, draw the cork of this bottle and have a drop."

"You are very kind, ma'am."

"Do not tell any of the others."

The glass was poured out, and a double row of pearls was formed on the surface of the Coignac.

"It is delicious; I say it is in the *Costico Barbaro*," observed Fifine.

"Well, gentlemen," resumed Bariole, "shall we leave a drop for the Capuchins? Fill, I drink to you. Here's to you my men; here we are all in perfect harmony, and yet we must die some day! It is so pleasant to agree when friends meet! Ah! my God, yes we must die, and that pains me, and yet we have all toil and trouble on this earth; it is too much for me, there is not a minute when the idea does not pass through my mind; but let us live honestly, that is the main thing, and then we can always walk with our heads up.—Let us not be led into temptation. In my case, die when I may, no one can reproach me with wronging them of the value of a pin's head. But what leads you here at this hour, my children? Not for my girls; they are all quiet; if you want a sample, look at her (*pointing to Fifine.*) But, by the by, Jules, what have you done with Melie?"

"I'll tell you presently; give us a candle."

"I will bet you want Caffin. Good riddance; I assure you he is a regular *fancy man*."

"And a woman thumper, too!" added Fifine.

"We don't often see the colour of his *blunt*," said Bariole. "See, Jules, on this slate is the expense and earnings of his wife; she cannot get enough for the fellow. If Paris could be cleared of such vagabonds, we should be better off." She offered to lead me to the *pensioner's* chamber, but as I knew the way as well as she did, I declined the offer. "The second door," she said, "with the key in it." I could not mistake, and entering the room told Caffin he was my prisoner.

"Well! well! what's the row?" said he, waking; "what, is it you, Jules, who have *nabbed* me?"

"What do you mean? I am no conjuror, and if you had not been *snitched*, I should not have come to disturb your sleep."

"What, at the old game, but it won't do; old birds are not caught with such chaff."

"Just as you please, it is your own affair; but if what they say be true your fortune is told—you are bound for a trip to the Bagne."

"Yes, believe that and drink water, you will never be full."

"Well then, if you must have it all to convince you, listen. I have no interest in *pumping* you. I repeat that I could not have guessed your haunt had I not been told that you *filched* some *double tripe* (lead) on the boulevard Saint-Martin, when you narrowly escaped the watch, or you would not have needed my visit. Are you *fly* now? Out of the quartette that made the gang, one has *blown the gaff*, guess the *nose* and I will tell you."

Caffin reflected for a moment, and then, lifting his head up like a horse who rears, "Jules," he said, "I perceive one of the party has *started*, take me to the *big-wig* and I'll make a clean breast on't too. There is no harm in *peaching* when others have *nosed* first. It is another thing with you, who are a spy by compulsion, for I know that if you could make a good hit you would give the police the go-by."

"As you observe, my boy, if I had known what I now know, I should not have been amongst them, but when our senses leave us we do many things we cannot undo."

"Where are you going to take me to?"

"To the station of the Place du Châtelet, and if you will tell the facts, I will inform the commissary."

"Yes, tell him to come, I will trap that ——— Hotot, for it is only he who could have blown us."

The commissary came. Caffin confessed the crime, but at the same time did not fail to accuse Hotot, whom he pointed out as his only accomplice. He was not a false brother. His two friends showed the same friendship; surprised in bed, and interrogated se-

parately, they could not do otherwise than confess their guilt. Hotot, whom they accused of their misfortune, was the only one whom each inculpated. In spite of this nobility of feeling, worthy of being cited with the fine traits of "Active Morality," this generous trio were sent to the galleys, and the traitor Hotot accompanied them. He is now at the Bagne, where, most probably, he does but talk about the most curious particulars of his apprehension.

Emelie Simonet was released after six hours' captivity. When set free, she was half paralyzed by the bumpers she had quaffed; she could no longer understand, speak, or see, nor had she preserved the least recollection of what had passed. When the first ray of light broke in upon her, she asked for her lover, and on the reply of one of her companions that he was at La Force, "Miserable man!" she exclaimed, "what had he to do with taking lead from roofs, had he not all that man could wish for with me?" Afterwards, the unfortunate Emelie showed herself inconsolable, and the exemplary model of a grief that was daily poisoned; if in the morning she was only maudlin, by evening she was dead—drunk. Terrible effects of love and brandy, of brandy and love!

A theft of small extent has supplied me with an opportunity of sketching a hideous picture; and yet the sketch is but very imperfect and far from the abominable reality, from which the powers that be, who are bound to promote all that is good and civilized, will deliver us, when to them it seemeth best. To permit these sinks of corruption wherein the people plunge body and soul, and which are never closed, is an insult to morality, an outrage upon nature, and a crime against humanity. Let not these pages be accused as licentious; they are not the recitals of Petronius which add fuel to the already inflamed imagination, and make proselytes to impurity. I describe immorality, not to extend its influences, but to make them

abominated. Who that has read this chapter, is not horrified at the vices it depicts, since they produce the last degree of brutalization?

CHAPTER XXXIX.

I am fearful of my own renown—The approach of a grand fête—The classes of robbers—The rouletiers at the last gasp—A deluge of denunciations—I am nearly caught—The mattress, the false keys, and the crow-bar—The revengeful confession—The terrible Limodin—The mania for turning spy—The female thief who denounces herself—The good son—The unlucky fugitive—The twelfth-night king and queen—The treacherous kiss—The difficulty overcome—The washerwoman's basket—The stolen child—The umbrella which affords no shelter—The modern Sappho—Liberty is not the first of blessings—The inseparables—The heroism of friendship—Vice has its virtues.

When an individual of passable intellect bends all his faculties to one point, it but seldom occurs that he does not become expert in his profession. This is the whole secret of my great aptitude for detecting thieves. The moment I became a secret agent, I had but one thought, and all my efforts tended to reduce to inaction as speedily as possible the wretches, who, desirous of perverting the resources of labour, seek a subsistence in a series of outrages on the right of property, more or less criminal. I did not delude myself as to the sort of success of which I was ambitious, and I had not the folly to think that I could effectually extirpate robbery; but by carrying on a war *à l'outrance* against offenders, I hoped to render them less numerous. I may say, that the success of my first attempts surpassed the expectation of myself and M. Henry. In my own estimation, my reputation increased with too much rapidity; for reputation betrayed the mystery of my employ, and from the moment I was known, it was necessary either that I should renounce the service of the police, or else belong to it ostensibly. Thenceforward, my task became much more difficult, but obstacles

daunted me not, and, as I lacked neither zeal nor devotion, I thought it still possible not to destroy the good opinion which the authorities had conceived of me. I had now no chance of feigning with malefactors. The mask fallen, I was in their eyes a spy, and nothing but a spy. Yet I was a spy under better circumstances than the majority of my colleagues; and when I could not do otherwise than appear openly, yet my secret services of former periods profited me much, either by the connections I had formed, or by the vast number of facts and descriptions of all sorts that I had arranged and stored in my memory. I could then, like a certain king of Portugal, (but with more certainty than he,) judge of men by their looks, and point out to the police those dangerous persons who should be removed from society. The arbitrary power of the police at this period, and the faculty of administrative detentions, which formed its strong hold, left me a prodigious latitude for the exercise of my physiognomical knowledge, founded on positive experience. But, I thought that as it so greatly regarded the public welfare, I must not act with levity. Certainly, nothing would have been easier to me than to have filled the prisons; the thieves, and by this title all were denominated who had been committed for trial for any act contrary to honesty, were not ignorant that their fate was in the hands of the first as well as the last agent; and that to bring upon them a sentence of indefinite imprisonment at Bicêtre, only a statement was necessary whether true or false. Those particularly, who had been already in the hands of justice, were more exposed to the consequences of such denouncements, as no one took the trouble of minute inquiry: there were, besides, in the capital, a multitude of noted characters, of bad repute, whether merited or not, who were not treated with any greater consideration. This method of repression had serious consequences, since the innocent might be condemned as well as the guilty, the reformed confounded with the incorrigible. Certainly, when any feast or solemnity attracted a large

concourse of strangers to Paris, that the streets might be somewhat cleared, it was very convenient to have what was called a *raffle;* but the ceremony over, of course they set at liberty those prisoners against whom there was nothing but presumptive evidence, and thus associations of crime were formed during incarceration, by the very means adopted to prevent it. He who, having withdrawn from his former course of life, had returned to an honest mode of existence, was compulsorily driven to vicious habits, and relapsed, in spite of himself, into his former ways. Another with a bad reputation, just about to adopt a different line of conduct, by being cast amongst these vile characters, and confounded with them, was lost without hope of return. The system adopted was most deplorable, and I planned another, which consisted not in apprehending the suspected, but catching in the very act those who were justly suspected. For this purpose, I classed the thieves according to the particular *branch of the profession* that each followed, and in each catalogue I took care so to arrange my information, that I might learn how they were severally engaged; so that not one robbery was committed but I was informed of it, and learnt the names of the perpetrators. Very frequently my spies, men or women, for I had them of both sexes, had shared in the crime; I knew it; but with a persuasion that they would, in their turn, be pointed out to me by some other false comrade, who would denounce them, I consented to their remaining behind the curtain, under a certain proviso.

Justice lost nothing from this tolerance; denounced or denouncers all reached the same termination—the Bagne; there was impunity for none. I certainly felt a repugnance at employing such agents, and particularly at being bound to keep silence concerning them, when I was convinced of their culpability, but the security of Paris prevailed over considerations purely moral.

"If I speak," I said to myself, when I had business with a spy of this sort, "I shall convict a rogue, but if

I do not now spare him, fifty of his comrades, whom he is about to betray to me, will escape the punishment of the laws;" and this calculation prescribed a line of conduct to me, which I followed up as long as it was useful to society. Between the thieves and myself hostilities were not less lasting; I only allowed the enemy certain terms, and tacitly granted safeguards, safe-conducts, and truces, which died a natural death on the least infraction thereof. The false comrade becoming the victim of another false comrade, I had no power to interpose between the crime and the repression of it, and the perfidious delinquent fell, betrayed by a rogue not less treacherous than himself. I thus made thieves serve for the destruction of thieves; that was my method, and it was excellent; the proof is, that in less than seven years, I placed in the hands of justice more than four thousand malefactors. Whole classes of thieves were at bay, and amongst the number was those called the rouletiers, (who plunder baggage from travelling carriages;) I was anxious to reduce them all to inaction; I made the attempt, which was nearly fatal to me. I can never forget M. Henry's remark on this occasion: "It is not doing well only, but you must also give proof that you have done well."

Two of the most daring rouletiers, named Gosnet and Doré, alarmed at my efforts to put a stop to their depredations, came to a resolution to devote their services to the police, and in a short time they procured the arrest of a great many of their comrades, who were all convicted. They appeared zealous; I owed to their informations some most important discoveries, and particularly of several *fences;* the more dangerous, as in business they enjoyed a reputation for honesty. After services of this nature I thought I could trust them; I asked for their admission as secret agents, with an allowance of one hundred and fifty francs per month. They wished nothing more, they said; their ambition was limited to the hundred and fifty francs per month.

I believed them, and as I saw in them my future colleagues, I evinced a confidence almost boundless; we shall see how they deserved it.

For some months two or three particularly adroit rouletiers had arrived at Paris, where they did not sleep. Declarations poured in upon the prefecture; they committed robberies with incredible audacity, and it was the more difficult to catch them in the fact, as they only went out at night, and as, in their expeditions on the roads round the capital, they were always armed to the teeth. The capture of such brigands must confer honour upon me; to effect it, I was ready to confront all peril, when one day Gosnet, with whom I had often conversed on the subject, said to me, "Jules, if you wish to catch Mayer, Victor Marquet, and his brother in the fact, there is but one way; you must come and sleep at our house, and then we shall be better able to go out at the proper hours."

I believed Gosnet was sincere, and agreed to go and instal myself immediately in the apartment which he shared with Doré, and we soon began to make our nocturnal explorations together on the route which Mayer and the two Marquets generally frequented. We frequently met them, but unwilling to seize them, except in the commission of some robbery, or at least with the spoil in their possession, we were compelled to let them pass. We had already made several of these fruitless tours, when I began to remark at my companions' domicile something which gave me cause of disquiet. There was somewhat of constraint in their conduct towards me, and they might (I thought) be plotting against me. I could not read their thoughts, but at all risks, I was never with them without being armed with a brace of pistols, of which they had no knowledge.

One night that we were going out, Doré suddenly complained of an attack of colic, which tormented him most excruciatingly; the pains became more and more severe, he was torn and bent double by them, and it was

evident that he could not go out in such a condition. The party was consequently postponed until next day, and as there was nothing to be done, I laid down again and fell asleep. A few moments afterwards I awoke and jumped up, thinking I heard a noise at the door, and repeated blows proved that I was not mistaken. What did they want? Was their business with us? That was not probable, for no person knew our retreat. One of my companions arose, I made him a signal to be still, but he got out of bed; then, in a low voice, I recommended him to listen, but not open; he went to the door, whilst Gosnet, who was in an adjacent chamber, did not stir. The knocking continued, and as a precautionary measure, I made haste to put on my drawers and waistcoat. Doré having done the same, returned to his post, but, whilst he was listening, his mistress gave me a look so expressive, that I had no difficulty in understanding it; I lifted up my mattress at the feet, and what did I see? a large bunch of skeleton keys and a crow-bar. All was now apparent, I saw at once through the plot, and to frustrate it, I hastened to place the keys in my hat, and the crow-bar in my drawers; then going to the door I listened in my turn; they were talking in a low tone, and I could not hear a word that passed; however, I conceived that so early a visit was not without its motive, and taking Doré into the second room, told him I would endeavour to ascertain who it was.

"As you like," was the reply.

Some person knocking again, I asked who was there? "Is not M. Gosnet here?" some one inquired in a low tone of voice.

"M. Gosnet is below stairs, the door underneath."

"Thank'ye, excuse our disturbing you."

"Oh, there is no harm done."

They went down; I opened the door without any noise, and at two jumps reached the privy, into which I flung the crow-bar, and was about to throw the keys also, but some person entered behind, and I recognised

an inspector named Spiquette, belonging to the staff of the juge d'instruction, who instantly recognised me.

"Why do you follow me?"

"Oh, for nothing; it is M. Vigny, the juge d'instruction, who desires to see you, and speak to you."

"If that be all, I will put on my breeches and follow you."

"Make haste, let me take your place, and wait for me."

I awaited the inspector, and we went down together. The chamber was filled with gendarmes and spies; M. Vigny was in the midst of them, who instantly read to me a mandate, issued against me as well as against my hosts and their wives; then, to fulfil the instruction of his commission, he ordered the most exact search. It was not difficult to see through the whole affair, particularly when Spiquette, lifting up the mattress, and astonished at finding nothing, cast a peculiar look at Gosnet, who appeared stupified with amazement. His disappointment did not escape me. I saw that he was completely upset, and being myself quite reassured, I said to the magistrate,—

"Sir, I see, with the hope of making himself of importance, some person has overshot his mark. You have been deceived; there is nothing here to suspect; besides, M. Gosnet could not allow it. Would you, M. Gosnet? Answer to the judge."

He could not do otherwise than confirm my assertion, but only muttered out his words, and it required no conjuration to penetrate the bottom of his soul.

The search concluded, we were tied, put into two coaches, and conducted to the Palais, where we were placed in a small room called the *Souricière*, (rat-trap.) Shut up with Gosnet and Doré, I took care how I expressed my suspicions of them. At noon we were interrogated, and at evening were transferred, my two companions to La Force, and I to Sainte-Pelagie. I know not how it was, but the bunch of keys, which I kept in my hat, was not observed by any of the persons

at the prison gate. Although I had been searched, they were not found, and I was not sorry for it. I wrote instantly to M. Henry to tell him of the plot laid for me, and having no difficulty in convincing him of my innocence, I recovered my liberty two days afterwards. I repaired to the prefecture with the keys, so fortunately concealed from all investigation. I deemed myself lucky in having escaped the peril, for I was within an ace of destruction. But for Doré's mistress, and my own presence of mind, I should certainly have fallen once more under the jurisdiction of the argousins. With thieves' tools about me, I should have been overpowered by a fresh sentence, of which my situation as a fugitive would have supplied the motives, and I should have been sent again to the Bagne. M. Henry reprimanded me for an imprudence which had nearly been fatal to me.

"Where," said he, "would you have been had Gosnet and Doré prosecuted their plan a little more skilfully? Vidocq," he added, "mind yourself, do not carry your devotion to such an extent, above all do not put yourself into the power of these thieves; you have many enemies. Undertake nothing of which you have not maturely considered the probable result, and before you risk any important step in future, come and consult me." I profited by this advice, and reaped the benefit of it.

Gosnet and Doré did not remain long at La Force, and on their dismissal, I went to see them; I did not allow them to see that I suspected their treachery, but determined to have my revenge for a game which I had not lost. I let loose a spy upon them, and soon learnt that they had committed a robbery, of which all the proofs were easily producible. Apprehended and convicted, they had four years' leisure to think of me. When their sentence was passed, I took care to visit them, and when I told them how I had known and thwarted their plot, they wept with rage. Gosnet, taken back to the prison of Auray, whence he had escaped,

conceived a means of vengeance, which did not succeed. Feigning repentance, he sent for a priest, and under the pretence of a general confession, avowed the commission of various robberies, in which I was (of course) implicated. The confessor, to whom my pretended participation had not been communicated under the seal of secresy, addressed the prefecture by letter, in which I was violently inculpated; but Gosnet's confession had not the hoped for result.

It was the despotism exercised over the thieves which propagated amongst them the system of denouncing each other, and to thrust them (if I may be allowed the expression) to the height of demoralization. Formerly they composed, in the bosom of society, a society apart, which included neither traitors nor deserters; but when they were proscribed *en masse*, instead of closing their ranks, they in their fright gave a cry of alarm, which rendered every expedient for personal safety legitimate, even to the injury of ancient faith. The chain which united the family of malefactors once broken, each made no scruple of denouncing his comrades to ensure his own safety. At the approach of particular periods, which were marked as convicting epochs, such as new year's day, the fête of the emperor, or any other ceremony, denunciations poured thick as hail upon the second division. To escape what the agents termed the *sweeping order*, that is to say, the order for apprehending all individuals reputed robbers, it was who should be first to furnish the police with useful information. There was no lack of suspected persons, who hastened to prove themselves liege subjects by turning spies upon their comrades, whose abodes were not known; and thus, ere long, the prisons were completely filled. We may justly imagine, that in these general *battues*, it was impossible to prevent a multitude of abuses: most iniquitous breaches of justice occurred, and frequently without chance of reparation. Unfortunate mechanics, who, at the expiration of a simple correctional punishment, returned to their trade, and endea-

voured, by their good conduct, to efface the remembrance of past wrongs, were enveloped in the meshes, and confounded with thieves by profession: there was not the least chance of reclaiming them, for, confined in the depot, they were led the next day before the terrible Limodin, who compelled them to undergo an interrogatory. Such an interrogatory, gracious heaven!

"Your name, your residence? You have been under sentence before?"

"Yes, sir, but I have been at my trade since, and—"

"Enough—bring up another."

"But, Monsieur Limodin, I beg ——"

"Silence! another; I am understood, I hope."

The man on whom silence was imposed was about to allege reasons in his favour. Liberated for several years, he could produce testimonies of his honesty, and prove, by a thousand testimonies, that he had returned to laborious habits; in fact, that he was irreproachable in every way: but M. Limodin had not leisure to hear him.

"I should never have done," he said, "if I am to have my time taken up by such chattering."

Sometimes in a morning this brutal interrogatory was carried on with such speed, that a hundred persons, men or women, were sent off, some to Bicêtre, and the others to Saint-Lazare. It was pitiless: in his eyes nothing could atone for a momentary error. How many poor devils, who had forsaken the paths of vice, have been thrown into them again by him! Many of the victims of this implacable severity repented that they had ever betaken themselves to honest modes of life, and swore, in their rage, to become determined robbers.

"Of what use," said these unfortunates, "has been our return to the paths of rectitude? See how we are treated: it would be better to have been a rogue always. Why make laws, if they are not observed? Why were we condemned for a time, if they will not allow that we can be reformed? It would have been better for us to have received sentence for life or death,

since, once again, having returned to the right road, we are not allowed to pursue it."

I have heard a thousand complaints of this kind, and all generally but too well founded. "I have been four years out of Sainte-Pelagie," said one of these prisoners to me. "Since my liberation, I have always worked at the same shop, which proves how steady I must have been, and yet they are not satisfied with me. Well! they have sent me to Bicêtre, although I have done no wrong, and only because I have undergone two years' imprisonment."

This infamous tyranny was doubtless unknown to the préfet, at least I would fain believe so, and yet it was done in his name. Open or secret, the agents were certainly very redoubtable personages, for their reports were received as true: if they arrested a popular man, and described him as a dangerous and incorrigible robber, which was the constant formula, all was settled; the man was convicted to a certainty. It was the golden age for the spies, since every one of these infringements on individual liberty was a prize to them: although this prize was not very extensive. They had a crown for each capture; but what will not a spy do for a crown piece, if there be no danger in the doing? Again, if the sum was small, they looked at the number, and endeavoured to repeat it. On the other hand, those thieves who desired to purchase liberty by their services, denounced equally, whether right or wrong, all those they had known. This was the condition on which they were allowed to remain at Paris; but the prisoners recriminating, they were in their turn compelled to bear them company.

No idea can be formed of the number of individuals whom these detentions have driven into lapses from honesty, which they would have avoided if this abominable system of persecution had been sooner renounced. If they had been left unmolested, they would never have done wrong; but whatever might have been their intentions, they were compulsorily placed in situations

for becoming thieves again. Some freed convicts (this is an exception) obtained, at the expiration of their sentence, leave not to be sent to Bicêtre *on suspicion;* but even then they had no testimonials given to them, so that it was impossible for them to procure work. They had the resource of dying from hunger; but people do not voluntarily resign themselves to so cruel a punishment: they could not die, and therefore plundered, and most frequently plundered and denounced at the same time.

This rage for turning spy made incredible progress; the facts that prove it are so abundant, that I have no difficulty in selecting them. Frequently, in a scarcity of thefts to denounce to me, the spies revealed, whilst imputing them to others, crimes which should have led to their own condemnation. I will give instances.

A female named Bailly, an old thief confined at St. Lazare, sent for me to give information. I went to her, and she told me that if I would undertake to set her at liberty, she would point out to me the authors of five robberies, two of which were forcible burglaries. I agreed; and the details she gave me were so exact, that I believed I had nothing to do but to perform my promise. But, on reflection on the various circumstances which she had narrated, I was somewhat astonished at the accuracy of her information. She had told me the persons robbed, one of whom was a Sieur Frederic, Rue St. Honore, passage Virginie; I went immediately to him, and, in the course of conversation, learned that the denouncer was the sole perpetrator of the robbery committed on this man. I followed up my inquiry and was still more assured of my woman.

I had then only to proceed to the verification of the whole. The plaintiffs were taken to Saint Lazare; when, without being seen by the woman Bailly, whom I showed them in the midst of her companions, th recognised her instantly. A legal confrontation th followed; and Bailly, overwhelmed by evidence, ma

confessions, which led to a sentence of eight years' confinement. She had all the time to say "*Meâ culpâ.*" This woman had accused two of her companions of her robberies, and their suspected conduct might have led to their convictions. Another female robber, called La Belle Bouchère, having made similar disclosures to me as Bailly had done, was not more fortunate.

One Ouasse, whose father was subsequently implicated in the affair of Poulain, the grocer, pointed out to me three individuals as the perpetrators of a robbery, committed at nightfall, in the Rue Saint Germain l'Auxerrois, at a tobacco-dealer's. I went to the spot to acquire information, and soon obtained incontestable proof that Ouasse, recently liberated, was no stranger to the crime. I dissembled with him; but in making use of him I managed so well, that he was apprehended as an accomplice, and sentenced to close confinement. This mishap should have checked his mania for denouncements; but anxious at all risks to turn spy, he made, to the attorney-general of Versailles, several lying informations, which cost him two or three years' imprisonment.

I have already observed that thieves nourish no rancour; and scarcely had Ouasse been liberated, than he came to me, and again gave me information concerning a robbery. I went to verify the information, and found it true. But will it be believed? Ouasse himself was the thief, who, apprehended and convicted, was again sentenced. During his detention, this wretched man, having learnt the arrest of his father, hastened to address to me information in support of the accusation against his parent. It was my duty to transmit it to the authorities; and I did so, but not without experiencing all the indignation which the conduct of so denaturalized a son could create.

In my situation, I should have deprived myself of a most efficacious system of police, had I come to open rupture with the thieves. I therefore did not entirely keep aloof from them; and sometimes, when in full cry

after them, I appeared still to take an interest in their fate. Was I dog or wolf? This was the doubt which I left in their minds; and this doubt, so favourable to calumny whenever I was accused of connivance, which in reality did not exist, was never manifest to them. This accounts for why the thieves were in some measure the contributors to that renown which I have acquired; they imagined that I was openly their enemy, but in fact only wished to protect them; and they sometimes even pitied me for being compelled to follow the business I did, and yet they themselves aided me in transacting it.

Amongst professed robbers, there were but few who did not consider it fortunate to be consulted by the police for information, or employed in some enterprise. Nearly the whole of them would have been cut into quarters to evince their zeal, under the persuasion that they thereby obtained, if not entire immunity, at least some little allowance. Those who most feared its powers were always most ready to serve it. I remember, as a case in point, the adventure of a liberated galley-slave, called Boucher, alias Cadet Poignon. For more than three weeks I had been on the look out for him, when by chance I met him at a cabaret in the Rue Saint Antoine, at the sign of the Bras d'Or (Golden Arm.) I was alone, and he was in a large company. To attempt to seize him *ex abrupto* would have been to risk a failure, for he could have defended himself, and ensured assistance. Boucher had been an agent of police. I had known him as such, and we were on very good terms together. It occurred to me that I would accost him in a friendly manner, and give him a specimen of my craft. On entering the cabaret, I went directly up to the table where he was sitting, and offered him my hand, saying, "Good day, friend Cadet."

"Ah, Jules, my boy, will you have any thing? call for a glass, or take mine."

"Yours is good; there is no gall on your lips. (I drank.) I want to say a word in your ear."

" With pleasure, old fellow; I am with you."

He rose, and, taking him by the arm, I said, " Do you remember the little sailor who was in the chain with you?"

" Yes, yes, a little fat, short chap, who was in the second string, wasn't he?"

" Exactly so, at least so I think. Should you know him again?"

" As well as if I saw my own father. I think I see him now, on Bench No. 13, making straps for the *covies' darbies*."

" I have just apprehended a chap, who I think is he, but am not sure. By chance I went to the guard-house at Birague, and as I went out saw you enter here. Parbleu! said I to myself, that is lucky; here's Cadet, and he will tell me if I am right or not."

" I am quite ready, my boy, if I can oblige you; but before we go, we will have a glass or two. My friends, (to his companions,) do not be impatient; it is only the affair of a minute, and I will be with you again in-s'antly."

We started, and on reaching the guard-house door, politeness required that I should go first, and I did the honours. He went to the bottom of the room, looked sharply about him, but sought in vain for the individual of whom I had spoken to him.

" Where," said he, " is this *fagot* (galley-slave) that I am to look at?"

I was then near the door, and saw placed against the wall the fragments of a looking-glass, such as is usually found in most guard-houses for the use of the dandies of the garrison, and calling to Boucher, I showed him the shattered reflector.

" Here," I said, " look here."

He looked, and turning towards me, said,

" Ah, Jules, you are *chaffing* me. I see only you and myself in the glass; but the man, the arrested man, where is he?"

" You must know that there is no man arrested

here but yourself. See the order for your apprehension."

"Ah! this is a villainous trick."

"Don't you know that the most crafty man is he who prospers best in this world?"

"The most crafty, certainly; but it will do you no good to trap honest fellows in this way."

When the path to reach a discovery of importance was full of difficulties, female robbers were perhaps of more assistance to me than the males. Women generally find means of insinuating themselves, which, for the service of the police, is much more useful than the aid of males. Allying tact with finesse, they are besides endowed with a perseverance which leads them to the end desired. They inspire less distrust, and can introduce themselves every where without awakening suspicion. They have, moreover, a particular facility of introducing themselves amongst servants and portresses; they understand well how to establish communications, and to chatter without being indiscreet. Apparently communicative, even when they are most reserved, they excel in exciting confidence. In fine, strength excepted, they have in the highest degree all the qualities which constitute a fitness for being spies; and when they are in earnest, the police can have no better agents.

M. Henry, who was a clever man, often employed them in the most intricate affairs, and but rarely failed to have fortunate results. Following his example, whenever I have had occasion for the services of female spies, I have generally been satisfied with them. But as they are generally most corrupt beings, and more treacherous than the men, that they might not deceive me, I was compelled to be perpetually on my guard. The following anecdote will show that we must not always trust their zeal, of which they make great parade.

I had obtained the liberty of two celebrated female thieves, on condition of their serving the police faithfully. They had already given proofs of their skill in this way; but employed without salary, and compelled to plunder

for an existence, they were taken again in the very act of robbery. The sentence they underwent was that of which I abridged the duration.

Sophie Lambert and the girl Domer, alias La Belle Lise, were thenceforward in direct communication with me. One morning they came to tell me that they were certain of procuring the apprehension of one Tominot, a dangerous fellow, whom we had long been searching for. They were going, they declared, to breakfast with him, and he was to rejoin them in the evening at a vintner's in the Rue Saint-Antoine. Under other circumstances I might have been duped by these women; but Tominot had been arrested by me the previous evening, and it was a rather difficult matter for them to breakfast with him. I was nevertheless determined to try how far they would push the imposture, and promised to accompany them to their rendezvous. I went accordingly, but as may be supposed, no Tominot appeared up to ten o'clock, when Sophie, pretending impatience, asked the waiter if a gentleman had not inquired for them.

"Him you breakfasted with?" said he. "He came at dusk, and desired me to say that he could not be with you this evening, but would not fail in the morning."

I had no doubt that the waiter was an accomplice, who had received his instructions; but I evinced no suspicion, and determined on seeing what these ladies would do next. For an entire week they took me sometimes to one place, sometimes to another, where we were always to find Tominot, but who of course never appeared. At length, on the 6th of January, they swore they would lead me to him. I waited for them, but they appeared without him, and gave me such good reasons, that I could not be angry; on the contrary, I evinced much satisfaction at the measures they had adopted; and to prove how well contented I was with them, I offered to give them a twelfth cake. They accepted the offer, and we went to the Petit Broc, in the Rue de la Verrerie. We drew for king and queen,

and the royalty fell to Sophie's share, who was a queen in all her glory. We eat, drank, laughed, and when the moment of separation approached, it was proposed to consummate our gaiety by a few bumpers of brandy; but a vintner's brandy, stuff! It was good enough for the ladies of the fish-market; but I scorned to use my queen in that way. At this period I was established as a distiller in the Tourniquet Saint-Jean, and I offered to go to my house and fetch them a drop of the right sort. At this offer the party jumped for joy, and desiring me to return as quickly as possible, I set out, and two minutes afterwards I appeared with a half bottle of Coignac, which was emptied in a twinkling. The flask being dried, I exclaimed, "Come, I have been a good boy to you—you must now do me a service."

"Both, my friend Jules," cried Sophie; "let us see what it is."

"Why this it is. One of my agents has apprehended two lady thieves: it is thought they have at home a great many stolen articles; but to make the search we must find their abode, and they refuse to give it. They are now at the guard-house of Saint-Jean; if you go there you must try and *pump* them. An hour or two will suffice for you to *draw* them, and it will be easy work to two such deep baggages as you."

"Be easy, my dear Jules," said Sophie to me; "we will perform the commission. You know you can trust to us, and you might send us to the world's end if it could serve you; at least I can speak for myself."

"And for me too," said La Belle Lise.

"Well, then, you must convey a line to the officer on guard, that he may know you."

I wrote a note, which I sealed, gave it to them, and we went out together. At a short distance from the market of Saint-Jean we separated, and whilst I remained on the watch, the queen and her companion went to the guard-house. Sophie entered first, and presented the billet to the serjeant, who, on reading it, said,—

"All right, here you both are. Corporal, take four men with you, and conduct these ladies to the prefecture." This order was given conformably to a note I had sent to the serjeant on going out to get the brandy; it was thus written:—

"Monsieur the officer on guard will send under sure and good escort, to the prefecture of police, the females Sophie Lambert and Lise Domer, apprehended by order of M. le Préfet."

These ladies must have made singular reflections, and doubtless guessed that I was wearied with being made their plaything. Be that as it may, I went to see them at the depot next day, and asked them what they thought of the trick?

"Not bad," replied Sophie, "not bad; we had not stolen though." Then addressing Lise, "It is your fault; why did you pretend to seek for a man who was already caught?"

"Did I know it? Ah, if I had, I promise you—— besides, what do you mean? he is caught, and they can accuse him."

"That is all very fine: but tell us, Jules, how long will they keep us at Saint Lazare?"

"Six months at least."

"Only that?" they cried out together.

"Six months is nothing," added Sophie; "it is soon passed. Well, my sweet lad, we are at the disposal of the préfet."

They had a month less than I had told them, and as soon as they were at liberty, came to bring me fresh informations; and this time they were true. One remarkable peculiarity is, that female thieves are usually more incorrigible than males. Sophie Lambert could never persuade herself to renounce her habitual crime. From the age of ten she had entered on the career of theft; and when only twenty-five years of age had spent more than a third of her life in prison.

A short time after my entrance into the service of the police I apprehended her, and she was sentenced to

two years' imprisonment. It was principally in furnished houses that she exercised her culpable industry: no one was more skilful in deceiving the vigilance of the porters, nor more fruitful in expedients to escape their questions. Once introduced, she halted at each landing to make a survey. If she saw a key in any door, she turned it without noise; and if the person who occupied the apartment was sleeping, no matter how lightly, Sophie had a hand still lighter, and in no time watches, jewels, money, all found their way to her *gibecière,* (game-bag,) the name she gave to a secret pocket under her apron. If the tenant of the room was awake, Sophie had excuses enough ready, declaring that she had made a mistake. Then if he awoke during the operation, without being at all disconcerted, she ran to the bed, and embracing him, exclaimed, "Ah, my poor little Mim, let me kiss you! Ah! Sir, I ask pardon. What! is not this Number 17? I thought I was at my lover's."

One morning a person, whose apartment she was ransacking, having suddenly opened his eyes, perceived her near his drawers. He made an exclamation of surprise, and Sophie immediately began to play her scene; but the gentleman was not to be deceived, and was determined to profit by the pretended mistake; if Sophie resisted, a sound of money produced by the struggle, might betray the motive of her visit;—if she yielded, the peril might be still greater.—What was to be done? for any other than herself the conjuncture would have been very embarrassing. Sophie was not cruel, and by the aid of a lie removed all difficulty, and the individual, satisfied with what passed, allowed her to retire. He only lost at this game his watch, his purse, and six spoons.

This woman was a daring creature: twice she ran headlong into my snares, but, after her liberation, in vain did I try to entrap her; there was no watching which she did not baffle, so completely was she on her guard. But what I could not effect by my utmost

efforts, to take her *flagrante delicto*, I owed to a circumstance entirely fortuitous.

Having left my home at daybreak, I was crossing the Place du Chatelet, when I met Sophie face to face. She accosted me with much ease. "Good day, Jules, whither are you bound so early? I will wager that you are going to catch some poor rook."

"Perhaps so; but certainly you are not the person; but where are you going?"

"I am going to Corbeil to see my sister, who is about to establish me in a house. I am weary of the *stone jug*. I am getting reformed; will you have a drop of *short?*"

"Willingly; I will stand treat, and we will have it at Leprétre's."

"Well, do as you like, but make haste, lest I lose the diligence; you will go with me, wo'n't you? it is only in the Rue Dauphine."

"Impossible, I have business at La Chapelle, and am already late. All I can do, is to take a small glass standing."

We went to Leprétre, and after a word or two, and a glass, I took my leave.

"Adieu, Jules, good luck!"

Whilst Sophie trudged away from me, I turned down the Rue de la Haumerie, and ran to hide myself in the corner of the Rue planche Mibray; there I saw her file off towards the Pont-au-Change, walking very fast, and looking behind her at every instant. I felt assured that she feared being followed, and thereupon determined to pursue her. I gained the bridge of Notre Dame, and, crossing it rapidly, reached the quai in time not to lose sight of her. On reaching the Rue Dauphine, she actually entered the office of the Corbeil coaches; but, persuaded that her departure was but a *ruse* to deceive me as to the intention of her early appearance, I ensconced myself in a corner, whence I could observe her motions. Whilst thus on the watch, a coach passed, in which I installed myself, and promised an

extra fee to the coachman if he would follow a female whom I should point out to him. For the moment we were stationary; the diligence started, but there was no Sophie there I would have betted my life; but some minutes afterwards she came to the office door, looked about on all sides, and then started off towards the Rue Christine. She entered into several furnished houses, and by her air I could perceive that no opportunity had offered, but as she persisted in exploring the same quarter, I drew the natural inference that she had not manœuvred successfully, and as I was persuaded that she had not yet finished, I took care not to interrupt her. At length she entered (in the Rue de la Harpe) a fruiterer's, and a moment afterwards appeared, carrying a large washerwoman's basket, which seemed heavy. She walked, however, very fast, and soon reached the Rue Mathurins-Saint-Jacques, and then that of Mâçons Sorbonne. Unfortunately for Sophie, there is a passage which communicates with the Rue de la Harpe and the Rue des Mâçons, and there, after having alighted, I hastened to hide myself, and when she reached the end of the alley I came forth, and we met face to face. On seeing me she changed colour, and attempted to speak, but was so much agitated that she could not utter a word. However, she came to herself gradually, and pretending to be in a great rage, said to me:—

"You see a woman in a passion; my laundress, who was to have brought my linen to the diligence, failed in her promise, I have just fetched it from her, and am going to convey it to a friend; that has prevented me from going to Corbeil."

"Just my case; on going to La Chapelle, I met a person who told me that my man was in this quarter, and that brought me here."

"So much the better; wait for me, I am going a few steps hence with my basket, and we will have a chop together."

"That I have no objection to; I ——, but what do I hear?"

Sophie and I stood thunderstruck at hearing piercing cries issue from the basket; I lifted up the linen that covered it, and saw—a child of two or three months old, whose roaring would have split the tympanum of a dead man.

"Well!" said I to Sophie, "the brat is yours, I suppose. Tell me, is it a girl, or a boy?"

"Well, I am caught again. I shall remember this, and if ever I am asked why, I shall answer, oh nothing, a childish affair. Another time when I steal linen I will first look at it."

"And this umbrella, whose is it?"

"Oh! my God, yes—. As you see; I had, however, wherewithal to shelter myself; but when chance is against you it is in vain to attempt it."

I conducted Sophie to M. de Fresne's, commissary of police, whose office was in the neighbourhood. The umbrella was kept as a convicting evidence. As to the child, whom she had unwittingly carried off, it was instantly returned to its mother. The thief had a sentence of five years' imprisonment. It was, I believe, the fifth or sixth sentence she had undergone; she is still in the hands of justice, and I should not be surprised if she remains at Lazare for life. Sophie thought the trade she carried on a very natural one, and its repression, when unavoidable, she looked upon as an accident. Prison had no horrors for her, far from it; she was, in a manner, in her sphere. Sophie had contracted those inclinations, more than strange, which are not justified by the example of Sappho of old, and under lock and key the opportunities of abandoning herself to these shameful depravities were more frequent; it was not without a motive, as we see, that she had so little liberty. If she were apprehended, it caused her but trifling pain, as she consoled herself by perspective pleasures. This woman was a strange character, as we may judge. A woman named Gillion, with whom she lived in culpable intimacy, was taken whilst committing a theft. Sophie, who aided her, es-

caped, and had nothing to fear; but unable to endure a separation from her friend, she had herself denounced, and was not happy until she heard the sentence read which was to reunite them for two years. The majority of these creatures make a sport of prison; I have seen many, sentenced for a crime which they had committed alone, accuse a comrade, and she, although innocent, make a merit of resigning herself to her sentence.

CHAPTER XL.

Our friends our enemies—The jeweller and the clergyman—The honest man—The hiding place and the coffer—The blessing from heaven and the finger of God—Fatal intelligence—We are undone—The love of our neighbour—The cossacks are innocent—100,000 francs, 50,000 francs, 10,000 francs, or recompense in abatement—The false soldier—The pretended sprain—The cooper's wife at Livry—Local reputation—I am a Jew—My pilgrimage with the nun of Dourdans—The phœnix of women—My metamorphosis into a German servant—My arrest—I am imprisoned—The straw cutter—My entrance to prison—Strangers have friends every where—The church rat—The flesh-coloured coat—The buttons of my great coat—A drunkard's meaning—My history—The battle of Montereau—I have robbed my master—Projects of escape—Journey to Germany—The black hen—Confidence in the attorney-general—My release—Flight with an unfortunate companion—A hundred thousand crowns worth of diamonds—The *minimum*.

A SHORT time before the first invasion M. Senard, one of the richest jewellers of the Palais Royal, having gone to pay a visit to his friend the Curé of Livry, found him in one of those perplexities which are generally caused by the approach of our good friends the enemy. He was anxious to secrete from the rapacity of the cossacks first the consecrated vessels, and then his own little treasures. After much hesitation, although in his situation he must have been used to interments, monsieur le Curé decided on burying the objects which he was anxious to save, and M. Senard, who, like the other gossips and misers, imagined that Paris would be given over to pillage, determined to cover up, in a similar

way, the most precious articles in his shop. It was agreed that the riches of the pastor and those of the jeweller should be deposited in the same hole. But, then, who was to dig the said hole? One of the singers in church was the very pearl of honest fellows, father Moiselet, and in him every confidence could be reposed. He would not touch a penny that did not belong to him. For thirty years, in his capacity of cooper, he had the exclusive privilege of bottling off the wine of the presbytery, which was the best that could be procured. Churchwarden, sexton, butler, ringer, factotum of the church, and devoted to his vicegerent, for whom he would have risen at any hour of the night, he had all the qualities of an excellent servant, without including his discretion, intelligence, and piety. In so serious a conjuncture it was plain that they could not fix better than on Moiselet, and he was the chosen man. The hole, made with much skill, was soon ready to receive the treasure which it was intended to preserve, and six feet of earth were cast on the specie of the Curé, to which were united diamonds worth 100,000 crowns, belonging to M. Senard, and enclosed in a small box. The hollow filled up, the ground was so well flattened, that one would have betted with the devil that it had not been stirred since the creation. "This good Moiselet," said M. Senard, rubbing his hands, "has done it all admirably. Now, gentlemen cossacks, you must have fine noses if you find it out!" At the end of a few days the allied armies made further progress, and clouds of Kirguiz, Kalmucs, and Tartars, of all hordes and all colours, appeared in the environs of Paris. These unpleasant guests are, it is well known, very greedy for plunder: they made, every where, great ravages; they passed no habitation without exacting tribute: but in their ardour for pillage they did not confine themselves to the surface, all belonged to them to the centre of the globe; and that they might not be frustrated in their pretensions, these intrepid geologists made a thousand excavations, which, to the regret of the naturalists of

the country, proved to them, that in France the mines of gold or silver are not so deep as in Peru. Such a discovery was well calculated to give them additional energy; they dug with unparalleled activity, and the spoil they found in many places of concealment threw the Crœsuses of many cantons into perfect despair. The cursed cossacks! But yet the instinct which so surely led them to the spot where treasure was hidden, did not guide them to the hiding place of the Curé. It was like the blessing of heaven, each morning the sun rose and nothing new; nothing new when it set.

Most decidedly the finger of God must be recognised in the impenetrability of the mysterious inhumation performed by Moiselet. M. Senard was so fully convinced of it, that he actually mingled thanksgivings with the prayers which he made for the preservation and repose of his diamonds. Persuaded that his vows would be heard, in growing security he began to sleep more soundly, when one fine day, which was, of all days in the week, a Friday, Moiselet, more dead than alive, ran to the Curés.

"Ah, sir, I can scarcely speak."

"What's the matter, Moiselet?"

"I dare not tell you. Poor M. le Curé, this affects me deeply, I am paralyzed. If my veins were opened not a drop of blood would flow."

"What is the matter? You alarm me."

"The hole."

"Mercy! I want to learn no more. Oh, what a terrible scourge is war! Jeanneton, Jeanneton, come quickly, my shoes and hat."

"But, sir, you have not breakfasted."

"Oh, never mind breakfast."

"You know, sir, when you go out fasting you have such spasms ——."

"My shoes, I tell you."

"And then you complain of your stomach."

"I shall have no want of a stomach again all my life. Never any more—no, never—ruined."

"Ruined—Jesus Maria! Is it possible? Ah! sir, run then—run—."

Whilst the Curé dressed himself in haste, and, impatient to buckle the strap, could scarcely put on his shoes, Moiselet, in a most lamentable tone, told him what he had seen.

"Are you sure of it?" said the Curé, "perhaps they did not take all."

"Ah, sir, God grant it, but I had not courage enough to look."

They went together towards the old barn, when they found that the spoliation had been complete. Reflecting on the extent of his loss, the Curé nearly fell to the ground. Moiselet was in a most pitiable state; the dear man afflicted himself more than if the loss had been his own. It was terrific to hear his sighs and groans. This was the result of a love to one's neighbour. M. Senard little thought how great was the desolation at Livry. What was his despair on receiving the news of the event! In Paris the police is the providence of people who have lost any thing. The first idea, and the most natural one, that occurred to M. Senard was, that the robbery had been committed by the cossacks, and, in such a case, the police could not avail him materially; but M. Senard took care not to suspect the cossacks.

One Monday that I was in the office of M. Henry, I saw one of those little abrupt, brisk men enter, who, at the first glance, we are convinced are interested and distrustful: it was M. Senard, who briefly related his mishap, and concluded by saying, that he had strong suspicions of Moiselet. M. Henry thought also that he was the author of the robbery, and I agreed with both. "It is very well," he said, "but still our opinion is only founded on conjecture, and if Moiselet keeps his own counsel we shall have no chance of convicting him. It will be impossible."

"Impossible?" cried M. Senard, "what will become of me? No, no, I shall not vainly implore your suc-

cour. Do not you know all? can you not do all when you choose? My diamonds! my poor diamonds! I will give one hundred thousand francs to get them back again."

"You may safely offer double, for if the robber has taken due precautions, we can do nothing in the business."

"Ah! sir, you drive me to despair," replied the jeweller, weeping warm tears, and throwing himself on his knees before the chief of the division. "A hundred thousand crowns' worth of diamonds! if I must lose them, I shall die with grief. I beseech you to have pity upon me."

"Have pity,—that is easy for you to ask: but if your man is not excessively crafty, by setting some skilful agent to watch and circumvent him, we may perhaps obtain the secret from him."

"How shall I evince my gratitude to you? I care not for money: fifty thousand francs shall be the reward of him who succeeds."

"Well, Vidocq, what think you of it?"

"The affair is difficult," I answered to M. Henry, "but I will undertake it, and shall not be surprised if I come out of it with honour."

"Ah!" said M. Senard, squeezing my hand affectionately, "you restore me to life; spare nothing, I beseech you, Monsieur Vidocq; go to any expense requisite to arrive at a fortunate result. My purse is open to you, whatever be the sacrifice. Well, do you think you will succeed?"

"Yes, Sir, I do."

"Well, recover my casket, and there are ten thousand francs for you, yes, ten thousand francs. I have said it, and will not recede from my word."

In spite of the successive abatements of M. Senard, in proportion as he believed the discovery probable, I promised to exert every effort in my power to effect the desired result. But before any thing could be undertaken, it was necessary that a formal complaint should

be made; and M. Senard and the curé, thereupon, went to Pontoise, and the declaration being consequently made, and the robbery stated, Moiselet was taken up and interrogated. They tried every means to make him confess his guilt; but he persisted in avowing himself innocent, and, for lack of proof to the contrary, the charge was about to be dropped altogether, when, to preserve it for a time, I set an agent of mine to work. He, clothed in a military uniform, with his left arm in a sling, went with a billet to the house where Moiselet's wife lived. He was supposed to have just left the hospital, and was only to stay at Livry for forty-eight hours; but a few moments after his arrival, he had a fall, and a pretended sprain suddenly occurred, which put it out of his power to continue his route. It was then indispensable for him to delay, and the mayor decided that he should remain with the cooper's wife until further orders.

Madame Moiselet was one of those good, jolly, fat personages, who have no objection to living under the same roof with a wounded conscript, and bore all the joking about the accident which delayed the young soldier at her house; besides, he could console her in her husband's absence, and, as she was not thirty-six years of age, she was still at that time of life when a woman does not despise consolation. This was not all —evil tongues reproached Madame Moiselet with not liking wine—after it had been drank; that was her local reputation! The pretended soldier did not fail to caress all the weak points by which she was accessible: at first he made himself useful, and then, to complete the conciliation of the good graces of his hostess, from time to time he loosened the strings of his tolerably well-filled purse to pay for his bottle of wine.

The cooper's wife was charmed with so many little attentions. The soldier could write, and became her secretary; but the letters which she addressed to her dear husband were of a nature not to compromise her—not the least expression that can have a twofold con-

struction—it was innocence corresponding with innocence. The secretary pities Madame Moiselet and commiserates the prisoner, and, to provoke disclosures, he makes a parade of that extensive morality, which allows of every means of enriching oneself; but Madame was too deep to be duped by such language, and constantly on her guard. At length, after a few days' experience, I was convinced that my agent, in spite of his talent, would draw no profit from his mission. I then resolved to manœuvre in person, and, disguised as a travelling hawker, I began to visit the environs of Livry. I was one of those Jews who deal in every thing,—clothes, jewels, &c. &c.; and I took in exchange gold, silver, jewels, in fact, all that was offered me. An old female robber, who knew the neighbourhood perfectly, accompanied me in my tour: she was the widow of a celebrated thief, Germain Boudier, called Father Latuil, who, after having undergone half-a-dozen sentences, died at last at Saint Pelagie. She had been confined for sixteen years in the prison of Dourdans, where the semblance of modesty and devotion which she assumed had caused her to be called *the Nun*. No one was a better spy over women, or could easier tempt them by the lures of ornaments and gewgaws. She had what is called the *gift of the gab* in the highest degree. I flattered myself that Madame Moiselet, seduced by her eloquence, and by our merchandise, would bring out the store of the curé's crowns, some brilliant of the purest water, nay, even the chalice or paten, in case the bargain should be to her liking. My calculation was not verified; the cooper's wife was in no haste to make a bargain, and her coquetry did not get the better of her. Madame Moiselet was the phœnix of women. I admired her, and, as there was no temptation which she did not resist, convinced that I should lose my time by attempting to play any stratagem off upon her, I resolved to try my chance with her husband.

The Jew hawker was soon metamorphosed into a German servant; and under this disguise I began to

ramble about the vicinity of Pontoise, with a design of being apprehended. I sought out the gendarmes, whilst I pretended to avoid them; but they, thinking I wished to get away from them, demanded a sight of my papers. Of course I had none, and they desired me to accompany them to a magistrate, who, knowing nothing of the jargon in which I replied to his questions, desired to know what money I had; and a search was forthwith commenced in his presence. My pockets contained some money and valuables, the possession of which seemed to astonish him. The magistrate, as curious as a commissary, wished to know how they came into my hands; and I sent him to the devil with two or three Teutonic oaths, of the most polished kind; and he, to teach me better manners another time, sent me to prison.

Once more the iron bolts were drawn upon me. At the moment of my arrival, the prisoners were playing in the prison-yard, and the jailor introduced me amongst them in these terms, "I bring you a murderer of the parts of speech; understand him if you can."

They immediately flocked about me, and I was accosted with salutations of *Landsman* and *Meinheer* without end. During this reception, I looked out for the cooper of Livry. I thought he must be a sort of clownish looking tradesman, who, joining in the concert of salutes which were addressed to me, had called me *Landsman* in that soft silky tone, which is always acquired by those church rats who are wont to live on the meats of the altar. He was not over fat; but that was constitutional with him, and, his leanness apart, he was glowing with health: he had a narrow forehead, small brown eyes sunk in his head, an enormous mouth, and although, in detailing his characteristics, some of a very sinister kind might be seen, the whole had that gentle air which would tempt the Devil to open the gates of Paradise; besides, to complete the portrait, this personage was at least four or five generations behindhand in costume, a circumstance which, in a country where

the Gerontes can make reputation for honesty, always establishes a presumption in favour of the individual.

I know not why I had pictured to myself that Moiselet should have the refinement of roguery, which, to give itself the appearance of honesty, and to conciliate the confidence of old men, dresses itself like them. In the absence of other more characteristic signs, a pair of spectacles on a prominent nose, large buttons on a coat of light hue and square cut, short breeches, a three-cornered hat of the old school, and clocked stockings, would have instantly attracted my attention. The air and face were correspondent, and I had every reason to believe that I had guessed correctly. I wished to assure myself.

"Mossié, Mossié," I said, addressing the prisoner, who seemed to think I said Moiselet, "now, Mossié Fine Hapit, (not knowing his name, I so designated him, because his coat was the colour of flesh,) sacrement, ter teufle, no tongue to me; yer François, I miseraple, I trink vine; faut trink for gelt, plack vine."

I pointed to his hat, which was black; he did not understand me; but on making a gesture that I wanted to drink, he found me perfectly intelligible. All the buttons of my great coat were twenty-franc pieces; I gave him one: he asked if they had brought the wine, and soon afterwards I heard a turnkey say,

"Father Moiselet, I have taken up two bottles for you." The flesh-coloured coat was then Moiselet. I followed him into his room, and we began to drink with all our might. Two other bottles arrived; we only went on in couples. Moiselet, in his capacity of chorister, cooper, sexton, &c. &c. was no less a sot than gossip; he got tipsy with great good-will, and incessantly spoke to me in the jargon I had assumed.

"I like the German much," said he; "you can remain here, my jolly Kinserlique." And the jailor coming in to drink with us he desired him to make me a bed beside his.

"Are you content, Kinserlique?"

"As content as you."

"Do you trink much?"

"I trink altimes."

"Altimes! a good comrade;" and more wine was ordered in.

Matters progressed well; after two or three hours such as these, I pretended to get stupid. Moiselet, to set me to rights, gave me a cup of coffee without sugar; after coffee came glasses of water, No one can conceive the care which my new friend took of me; but when drunkenness is of such a nature it is like death—all care is useless. Drunkenness overpowered me. I went to bed and slept, at least Moiselet thought so; but I saw him many times fill my glass and his own, and gulp them both down. The next day, when I awoke, he paid me the balance, three francs and fifty centimes, which, according to him, remained from the twenty-franc piece. I was an excellent companion; Moiselet found me so, and never quitted me. I finished the twenty-franc piece with him, and then produced one of forty francs, which vanished as quickly. When he saw it drunk out also, he feared it was the last.

"Your button again," said he to me, in a tone of extreme anxiety, and yet very comical.

I showed him another coin. "Ah, your large button again," he shouted out, jumping for joy.

This button went the same way as all the other buttons, until at length, by dint of drinking together, Moiselet understood and spoke my language almost as well as I did myself, and we could then disclose our troubles to each other. Moiselet was very curious to know my history, and that which I trumped up was exactly adapted to inspire the confidence I wished to create.

"My master and I come to France—I was tomestic—master of mein Austrian marechal—Austrian with de gelt in family. Master always roving, always gay, goint regiment at Montreau. Montreau, oh, mein Gott, great, great pattle—many sleep no more but in death.

Napoleon coom—poum, poum go gannon. Prusse, Austrian, Rousse all disturb. I, too, much disturb. Go on my ways with master mein, with my havresac on mein horse—poor teufel was I—but there was gelt in it. Master mein say, 'Galop, Fritz.' I called Fritz in home mein. Fritz galop to Pondi—there halt Fritz —place havresac not visible; and if I get again to Yarmany with havresac, me rich becomen, mistress mein rich, father mein rich, you too rich."

Although the narrative was not the cleverest in the world, father Moiselet swallowed it all as gospel; he saw well that, during the battle of Montereau, I had fled with my master's portmanteau, and hidden it in the forest of Bondy. The confidence did not astonish him, and had the effect of acquiring for me an increase of his affection. This augmentation of friendship, after a confession which exposed me as a thief, proved to me that he had an accommodating conscience. I thenceforward remained convinced that he knew better than any other person what had become of the diamonds of M. Senard, and that it only depended on him to give me full and accurate information.

One evening, after a good dinner, I was boasting to him of the delicacies of the Rhine: he heaved a deep sigh, and then asked me if there were good wine in that country.

"Yes, yes," I answered, "goot vine and charmong girl."

"Charming girls too!"

"Ya, ya!"

"Landsman, shall I go with you?"

Ya, ya, me grat content."

"Ah, you content, well! I quit France, yield the old woman, (he showed me by his fingers that Madame Moiselet was three-and-thirty,) and in your land I take little girl no more as fifteen years."

"Ya, bien, a girl no infant: a! you is a brave lad."

Moiselet returned more than once to his project of emigration: he thought seriously of it, but to emigrate

liberty was requisite, and they were not inclined to let us go out. I suggested to him that he should escape with me on the first opportunity—and when he had promised me that we would not separate, not even to take a last adieu of his wife, I was certain that I should soon have him in my toils. This certainty was the result of very simple reasoning. Moiselet, said I to myself, will follow me to Germany: people do not travel or live on air: he relies on living well there: he is old, and, like king Solomon, proposes to tickle his fancy with some little Abishag of Sunem. Oh, father Moiselet has found the *black hen;* here he has no money, therefore his black hen is not here; but where is she? We shall soon learn, for we are to be henceforward inseparable.

As soon as my man had made all his reflections, and that, with his head full of his castles in Germany, he had so soon resolved to expatriate himself, I addressed to the king's attorney-general a letter, in which, making myself known as the superior agent of the Police de Sûreté, I begged him to give an order that I should be sent away with Moiselet, he to go to Livry, and I to Paris.

We did not wait long for the order, and the jailor announced it to us, on the eve of its being put into execution; and I had the night before me to fortify Moiselet in his resolutions. He persisted in them more strongly than ever, and acceded with rapture to the proposition I made him of our effecting an escape from our escort as soon as it was feasible.

So anxious was he to commence his journey, that he could not sleep. At daybreak, I gave him to understand that I took him for a thief as well as myself.

"Ah, ah, grip also," said I to him, "deep, deep François, you not spoken, but tief all as von."

He made me no answer; but when, with my fingers squeezed together *à la Normande*, he saw me make a gesture of grasping something, he could not prevent

himself from smiling, with that bashful expression of *Yes*, which he had not courage to utter. The hypocrite had some shame about him, the shame of a devotee. I am understood.

At length the wished-for moment of departure came, which was to enable us to accomplish our designs. Moiselet was ready three whole hours beforehand, and to give him courage, I had not neglected to push about the wine and brandy, and he did not leave the prison until after having received all his sacraments.

We were tied with a very thin cord, and on our way he made me a signal that there would be no difficulty in breaking it. He did not think that he should then break the charm which had till then preserved him. The further we went, the more he testified that he placed his hopes of safety in me: at each minute he reiterated a prayer that I would not abandon him; and I as often replied, "Ya, François, ya, I not leave you." At length the decisive moment came, the cord was broken. I leaped a ditch, which separated us from a thicket. Moiselet, who seemed young again, jumped after me: one of the gendarmes alighted to follow us, but to run and jump in jack-boots and with a heavy sword was difficult; and whilst he made a circuit to join us, we disappeared in a hollow, and were soon lost to view.

A path into which we struck led us to the wood of Vaujours. There Moiselet stopped, and having looked carefully about him, went towards some bushes. I saw him then stoop, plunge his arm into a thick tuft, whence he took out a spade: arising quickly, he went on some paces without saying a word; and when we reached a birch tree, several of the boughs of which I observed were broken, he took off his hat and coat, and began to dig. He went to work with so much good-will, that his labour rapidly advanced. Suddenly he stooped down, and then escaped from him that ha! which betokens satisfaction, and which informed me, without the use of a conjuror's rod, that he had found his treasure. I thought the cooper would have fainted; but recovering

himself, he made two or three more strokes with his spade, and the box was exposed to view. I seized on the instrument of his toil, and suddenly changing my language, declared, in very good French, that he was my prisoner.

"No resistance," I said, "or I will cleave your skull in two."

At this threat he seemed in a dream; but when he knew that he was gripped by that iron hand which has subdued the most vigorous malefactors, he was convinced that it was no vision. Moiselet was as quiet as a lamb. I had sworn not to leave him, and kept my word. During the journey to the station of the brigade of gendarmerie, where I deposited him, he frequently cried out,

"I am done—who could have thought it? and he had such a simple look too!"

At the assizes of Versailles, Moiselet was sentenced to six months' solitary confinement.

M. Senard was overpowered with joy at having recovered his hundred thousand crowns worth of diamonds. Faithful to his system of abatement, he reduced the reward one half; and still there was difficulty in getting five thousand francs from him, out of which I had been compelled to expend more than two thousand: in fact, at one moment I really thought I should have been compelled to bear the expenses myself.

CHAPTER XLI.

The stolen looking-glasses—A fine young man—My four trades—The connoisseur—The Turk who had sold his odalisques—No accomplices—General Boucher—The inconvenience of good wines—The little Saint Jean—The soundest sleeper in France—The grand uniform, and the bank notes—The credulity of a fence—Twenty-five thousand francs burnt—The meddler—Capture of twenty-two thieves—The adorable cavalier—The father of all the world—What it is to be knowing—The Lovelace—The almoner of the regiment—Surprise at the Café Hardi—The Anacreon of the galleys—Another little song—I go to the Tuileries—A great lord—The director of the police of the Chateau—Explanations on the subject of the assassination of the Duc de Berri—The giant of robbers—Appear and disappear—A scene by Madame de Genlis—I am accoucheur—Synonymes—The mother and child are well—A matter of form—Baptism—No sugar plums—My gossip at St. Lazare—A suicide—The thieves' alley—The dangerous doctor—Fear benefits—I see old friends—A dinner at Capucin—The trap, the Bohémiens—An exploit at a duchess's—I recover the property—Two mountains never meet The moral hump-backed lady—The fair of Versailles—The disturbed rest of a milliner—The bug bites and bug hunts—Love and tyranny—The window and the green curtain—Scenes of jealousy—I vanish.

A SHORT time after the difficult affair which proved so fatal to the cooper, I was employed to detect the authors of a nocturnal robbery, committed by climbing and forcible entry in the apartments of the Prince de Condé, in the Palais Bourbon. Glasses of a vast size had disappeared, and their abstraction was effected with so much precaution, that the sleep of two *Cerberi,* who supplied the place of a watchman, had not been for a moment disturbed. The frames in which these glasses had been were not at all injured; and I was at first tempted to believe that they had been taken out by looking-glass makers or cabinet makers; but in Paris these workmen are so numerous, that I could not pitch on any one of them whom I knew with any certainty of suspicion. Yet I was resolved to detect the guilty, and to effect this I commenced my inquiries.

The keeper of a sculpture-gallery, near the quincaux of the invalids, gave me the first information by which

I was guided. About three o'clock in the morning, he had seen near his door several glasses, in the care of a young man, who pretended to have been obliged to station them there whilst waiting for the return of his porters, who had broken their hand-barrow. Two hours afterwards, the young man having found two messengers, had made them carry off the glasses, and had directed them to the side of the fountain of the invalids. According to the keeper, the person he saw was about twenty-three years of age, and about five feet and an inch (french measure.) He was clothed in an iron-grey great coat, and had a very good countenance. This information was not immediately useful to me, but it led me to find the messenger, who, the day after the robbery, had carried some glasses of large size to the Rue Saint-Dominique, and left them at the little Hotel Caraman. These were, in all probability, the glasses stolen, and if they were, who could say that they had not changed domicile and owner? I had the person who had received them pointed out to me, and determined on introducing myself to her; and that my presence might not inspire her with fear, it was in the guise of a cook that I introduced myself to her notice. The light jacket and cotton night-cap are the ensigns of the profession; I clothed myself in such attire, and fully entering into the spirit of my character, went to the little Hotel de Caraman, where I ascended to the first floor. The door was closed; I knocked, and it was opened to me by a very good-looking young fellow, who asked me what I wanted. I gave him an address, and told him that having learnt that he was in want of a cook, I had taken the liberty of offering my services to him.

"My dear fellow, you are under a mistake," he replied, "the address you have given me is not mine, but as there are two Rues Saint-Dominique, it is most probably to the other that you should go."

All Ganymedes have not been carried off to Olympus, and the handsome youth who spoke to me had manners,

gestures, and language, which, united to his appearance, convinced me in an instant with whom my business lay. I instantly assumed the tone of an initiate in the mysteries of the ultra-philanthropists, and after some signs which he perfectly understood, I told him how very sorry I was that he did not want me.

"Ah sir," I said to him, "I would rather remain with you, even if you only gave me half what I should get elsewhere; if you only knew how miserable I am; I have been six months out of place, and I do not get a dinner every day. Would you believe that thirty-six hours have elapsed, and I have not taken anything?"

"You pain me, my good fellow; what, are you still fasting? Come, come, you shall dine here."

I had really an appetite capable of giving the lie I had just uttered all the semblance of truth; a two-pound loaf, half a fowl, cheese, and a bottle of wine, which he produced, did not make long sojourn on the table. Once filled, I began again to talk of my unfortunate condition.

"See sir," said I, "if it be possible to be in a more pitiable situation, I know four trades, and out of the whole four cannot get employ in one, tailor, hatter, cook; I know a little of all, and yet cannot get on. My first start was as a looking-glass setter."

"A looking-glass setter!" said he abruptly; and without giving him time to reflect on the imprudence of such an exclamation, I went on.

"Yes, a looking-glass setter, and I know that trade the best of the four; but business is so dead, that there is really nothing now stirring in it."

"Here my friend," said the young man, presenting to me a small glass, "this is brandy, it will do you good; you know not how much you interest me, I can give you work for several days."

"Ah! sir, you are too good, you restore me to life: how, if you please, do you intend to employ me?"

"As a looking-glass framer."

"If you have glasses to fit, pier, Psyche, light of day,

joy of Narcissus, or any others, you have only to in trust me with them, and I will give you a cast of my craft."

"I have glasses of great beauty, they were at my country-house, whence I sent for them, lest the gentlemen Cossacks should take a fancy to break them."

"You did quite right; but may I see them?"

"Yes, my friend."

He took me into a room, and at the first glance I recognised the glasses of the Palais Bourbon. I was ecstatic in their praise, their size, &c.; and after having examined them with the minute attention of a man who understands what he is about, I praised the skill of the workman who unframed them, without injury to the silvering.

"The workman, my friend," said he, "the workman was myself; I would not allow any other person to touch them, not even to load them in the carriage."

"Ah! sir, I am sorry to give you the lie, but what you tell me is impossible; a man must have been a workman to undertake such work, and even the best he of the craft might not have succeeded."

In spite of my observation, he persisted in asserting that he had no help, and as it would not have answered my purpose to have contradicted him, I dropped the subject.

A lie was an accusation at which he might have been angry, but he did not speak with less amenity, and after having given me his instructions, desired me to come early next day, and begin my work as early as possible.

"Do not forget to bring your diamond, as I wish you to remove those arches, which are no longer fashionable."

He had no more to say to me, and I had no more to learn. I left him, and went to join my two agents, to whom I gave the description of his person, and desired them to follow him if he should go out. A warrant was necessary to effect his apprehension, which I pro-

cured, and soon afterwards, having changed my dress, I returned with the commissary of police and my agents to the house of the amateur of glasses, who did not expect me so soon. He did not know me at first, and it was only at the termination of our search, that, examining me more closely, he said to me :—

" I think I recognise you, are you not a cook ?"

" Yes, sir," I replied ; " I am cook, tailor, hatter, looking-glass setter, and, moreover, a spy, at your service."

My coolness so much disconcerted him, that he could not utter another word.

This gentleman was named Alexandre Paruitte. Besides the two glasses, and two chimeras in gilt bronze, which he had stolen from the Palais Bourbon, many other articles were found in his apartments, the produce of various robberies. The inspectors who had accompanied me in this expedition undertook to conduct Paruitte to the depot, but, on the way, were careless enough to allow him to escape, nor was it until ten days afterwards that I contrived to get sight of him, at the gate of the ambassador of his highness the Sultan Mahmoud, and I apprehended him at the moment he got into the carriage of a Turk, who apparently had sold his odalisques.

I am still at a loss to explain how, in spite of obstacles, which the most expert robbers judged insurmountable, Paruitte effected the robbery which twice compelled me to see him. He was steadfast in his assertion of having no companions, for on his trial, when sentenced to irons and imprisonment, no indication, not even the slightest, could be elicited, encouraging the idea that he had any participators.

About the time when Paruitte carried off the glasses from the Palais Bourbon, some thieves effected an entrance in the Rue de Richelieu, No. 17, in the hotel de Valois, when they carried off considerable property, belonging to Marechal Boucher, valued at thirty thousand francs. All was fish that came to net, from the

plain cotton-handkerchief to the glittering uniform of the general. These gentlemen, accustomed to clear off all before them, had even carried off the linen intended for the laundress. This system, which has its rise in a desire not to leave a fraction of any thing to the person robbed, is very dangerous for the thieves, for it compels them to make minute researches, and occasions delays which sometimes terminate most unpropitiously. But on this occasion they had *worked* with perfect security; the presence of the general in his apartment had been a guarantee that they would not be troubled in their enterprise, and they had emptied the wardrobes and trunks with the same security as a broker who is making an inventory after a death. How, I shall be asked, could the general be present? Alas! he was—but when one plays an active part at a good dinner, can the result be doubted! Without hatred, without fear, without suspicion, we pass gaily from Beaune to Chambertin, from Chambertin to Clos-Vougeot, from Clos-Vougeot to Romanée; then after having thus overrun all the wines of Burgundy and discussing their various merits, we come to Champagne and the flatulent *Ai*, and but too happy is that guest, who, full of the joys of the delicious pilgrimage, does not get so far muddled as to be unable to find his way home. The general, after a banquet of this kind, had still preserved his reasoning powers entire, at least I think so, but he had returned excessively sleepy; and as in that state one is more anxious to tumble into bed, than to close a window, he had left his open for the convenience of comers and goers. What imprudence! I know not if he had agreeable dreams, but I remember, that in his statement of the transaction, he deposed that he had awakened from his sleep like a little St. John.

Who were the persons that had committed the depredation? It was not easy to discover them, and at the moment all that could be done or said with certainty was, that they had what is called the *toupet*, since they had disgracefully profaned the brevets of the go-

neral, in a way that must be guessed at, but cannot be mentioned, but which proved that they took him for the most profound sleeper in France.

I was very desirous of detecting the insolents who had perpetrated a robbery attended with circumstances so aggravating. In the absence of all indications by which I might endeavour to trace a path for myself, I allowed myself to be led by that inspiration which has so seldom deceived me. The idea suddenly struck me, that the thieves who had introduced themselves at the general's, might belong to the gang of one Perrin, a blacksmith, who had long been pointed out to me as a most audacious *fence*. I began by surveying the approaches to Perrin's domicile, which was in the Rue de la Sonnerie, No. 1; but after several days' watching, nothing occurred to guide me, and I felt convinced that to arrive at any satisfactory result, I must have recourse to stratagem.

I could not go direct to Perrin as he knew me, but I instructed one of my agents, who would not be suspected. He went to see him, and they conversed on various topics; at length, touching on robberies,—

"I' faith," said Perrin, "no bold hits are now made."

"What do you mean?" replied the agent. "I think those who were at the general's, in the hotel de Valois, have no cause for complaint; when I learn that in his full-dress uniform there was concealed a sum of twenty-five thousand francs in bank notes."

Perrin had so much cupidity and avarice, that if he had been possessor of the dress, this lie, which revealed to him riches of which he had not dreamt, would necessarily make an impression of joy, which he would be unable to dissemble; if the uniform had passed into other hands, and he had already disposed of it, a contrary feeling would betray itself. I had foreseen the alternative. Perrin's eyes did not sparkle, no smile was seen upon his lips; in vain did he seek to disguise his trouble, the feeling of his loss so sorely smote him, that he began to dash the floor with his foot, and tear his hair most

furiously: "Ah mon Dieu, mon Dieu!" he cried, "these events always befall me, must I be for ever wretched?"

"Well, what do you mean? Did you buy it?"

"Yes, yes, I bought it, as you ask me, but I sold it again.

"Do you know to whom?"

"Certainly I do: to a man in the Rue Feydeau, that he might burn the lace."

"Oh, do not despair, there is a remedy still left, if the melter be an honest man."

Perrin gave a jump. "Twenty-five thousand francs burnt! Twenty-five thousand francs! That is not picked up every day; why was I in such haste about it?"

"Well, if I were you, I should try to get back the embroidery before it is put in the melting-pot. If you like, I will go to the melter, and tell him that having had a good offer for it from one of the theatres, you are desirous of buying it back again. I will offer him a premium, and probably he will not make any difficulty about it."

Perrin thought the plan admirable, accepted the proposition with eagerness, and the agent, desirous of rendering him a service, ran to give me an account of what had passed. Then, taking search warrants, I made a descent upon the melter. The embroidery was untouched; I gave them to the agent to convey to Perrin, and at the instant when he, impatient to seize on the notes, gave the first cut with his scissors to release the presumed treasure, I appeared with the commissary. We found at Perrin's evidences of the illicit trade which he carried on; an abundance of stolen property was found in his stores. Conducted to the depot, he was examined; but, at first, only gave very vague replies, whence no intelligence could be collected.

After his imprisonment in La Force, I went to see him, and ask him for information, but could only get from him some few indications; he knew not, he asserted,

the names of the persons who constantly dealt with him. However, the little he told me aided me in forming suspicions that were plausible, and in converting my suspicions to realities. I had a considerable number of suspicious characters marched out before him, and, on his detection of them, they were put on their trials. Twenty-two were sentenced to irons, and amongst them was one of the authors of the robbery on general Boucher. Perrin was tried and convicted of receiving the stolen booty, but in consequence of the utility of the information he had given, only the *minimum* of punishment was pronounced agaist him.

A short time afterwards, two other *fences*, the brothers Perrot, in the hopes of clemency from the judge, followed the example of Perrin, not only in making confessions, but deciding several other prisoners on pointing out their accomplices. From their statements I brought into the power of justice two famous robbers, named Valentin and Rigaudi, alias Grindesi.

Never, perhaps, were there so many of those gentry, who unite the professions of thief and *chevalier d'industrie*, as in the year of the first restoration. One of the most skilful and most enterprising was Winter de Sarre-Louis.

Winter was only twenty-six, and was one of those handsome brown fellows, whose arched eye-brows, long lashes, prominent nose, and rakish air, have such charms for a certain class of females. Winter had, moreover, that good carriage, and peculiar look, which belongs to an officer of light cavalry, and he, therefore, assumed a military costume, which best displayed the graces of his person. One day he was an hussar, the next a lancer, and then again in some fancy uniform. At will he was chief of a squadron, commandant, aide-de-camp, colonel, &c; and to command more consideration, he did not fail to give himself a respectable parentage; he was by turns the son of the valiant Lasalle, of the gallant Winter, colonel of the grenadiers of the imperial horse-guard; nephew of the general Comte

de Lagrange, and cousin-german to Rapp; in fact, there was no name which he did not borrow, no illustrious family to which he did not belong. Born of parents in a decent situation of life, Winter had received an education sufficiently brilliant to enable him to aspire to all these metamorphoses; the elegance of his manner, and a most gentlemanly appearance, completed the illusion.

Few men had made a better début than Winter. Thrown early into the career of arms, he obtained very rapid promotion; but when an officer he soon lost the esteem of his superiors; who, to punish his misconduct, sent him to the Isle of Ré, to one of the colonial battalions. There he so conducted himself as to inspire a belief that he had entirely reformed. But no sooner was he raised a step, than committing some fresh peccadillo, he was compelled to desert in order to avoid punishment. He came thence to Paris, where his exploits as swindler and pickpocket procured him the unenviable distinction of being pointed out to the police as one of the most skilful in his twofold profession.

Winter, who was what is termed a *downy one*, plucked a multitude of *gulpins* even in the most elevated classes of society. He visited princes, dukes, the sons of ancient senators, and it was on them or the ladies of their circle that he made the experiments of his misapplied talents. The females, particularly, however squeamish they were, were never sufficiently so to prevent themselves from being plundered by him. For several months the police were on the look out for this seducing young man, who, changing his dress and abode incessantly, escaped from their clutch at the moment when they thought they had him securely, when I received orders to commence the chase after him, to attempt his capture.

Winter was one of those Lovelaces who never deceive a woman without robbing her. I thought that amongst his victims I could find at least one, who, from a spirit of revenge, would be disposed to put me on the

scent of this monster. By dint of searching, I thought I had met with a willing auxiliary, but as these Ariadnes, however ill used or forsaken they may be, yet shrink from the immolation of their betrayer, I determined to accost the damsel I met with cautiously. It was necessary, before I ventured my bark, to take soundings, and I took care not to manifest any hostility towards Winter, and not to alarm that residue of tenderness, which, despite ill usage, always remains in a sensitive heart. I made my appearance in the character of almoner of the regiment of which he was thought to command, and as such introduced to the ci-devant mistress of the pretended colonel. The costume, the language, the manner I assumed were in perfect unison with the character I was about to play, and I obtained to my wish the confidence of the fair forsaken one, who gave me unwittingly all the information I required. She pointed out to me her favoured rival, who, already ill-treated by Winter, had still the weakness to see him, and could not forbear making fresh sacrifices for him.

I became acquainted with this charming lady, and to obtain favour in her eyes, announced myself as a friend of her lover's family. The relatives of the young giddy pate had empowered me to pay his debts; and if she could contrive an interview with him for me, she might rely on being satisfied with the result of the first. Madame * * * was not sorry to have an opportunity of repairing the dilapidations made on her property, and one morning sent me a note, stating that she was going to dine with her lover the next day at the Boulevard du Temple, at La Galiote. At four o'clock I went, disguised as a messenger, and stationed myself at the door of the restaurant's; and after two hours' watch, I saw a colonel of hussars approach. It was Winter, attended by two servants. I went up to him, and offered to take care of the horses, which proffer was accepted. Winter alighted, he could not escape me, but his eyes met mine, and with one jump he flung himself on his horse, spurred him, and disappeared.

I thought I had him, and my disappointment was great; but I did not despair of catching my gentleman. Some time afterwards I learnt that he was to be at the Café Hardi, in the Boulevard des Italiens. I went thither with some of my agents, and when he arrived all was so well arranged, that he had only to get into a hackney-coach, of which I paid the fare. Led before a commissary of police, he asserted that he was not Winter; but, despite the insignia of the rank he had conferred on himself, and the long string of orders hanging on his breast, he was properly and officially identified as the individual mentioned in the warrant which I had for his apprehension.

Winter was sentenced to eight years' imprisonment, and would now be at liberty but for a forgery which he committed while at Bicêtre, which, bringing on him a fresh sentence of eight years at the galleys, he was conducted to the Bagne at the expiration of his original sentence, and is there at present.

This adventurer does not want wit: he is, I am told, the author of a vast many songs, much in fashion with the galley-slaves, who consider him as their Anacreon. I append one of his productions:—

AIR.—*L'Heureux Pilote.*

Travaillant d'ordinaire,
La sorgue dans Pantin,*
Dans mainte et mainte affaire
Faisant très-bon choppin,†
Ma gente cambriote,‡
Rendoublée de camelotte,§
De la dalle au flaquet;‖
Je vivais sans disgrace,
Sans regout ni morace,¶
Sans taff et sans regret.**

* Evening in Paris. † A good booty. ‡ Chamber.
§ Full of goods. ‖ Money in the pocket.
¶ Without fear or uneasiness. ** Without care.

J'ai fait par comblance*
Gironde larguecapé,†
Soiffant picton sans lance,‡
Pivois non maquillé,§
Pirants, passe à la rousse,‖
Attachés de gratouse,¶
Combriot galuché.**
Cheminant en bon drille,
Un jour à la Courtille
Je m'en étais enganté.††

En faisant nos gambades,
Un grand messière franc,‡‡
Voulant faire parade,
Serre un bogue d'orient.§§
Après la gambriade,‖‖
Le filant sur l'estrade,¶¶¶
D'esbrouf je l'estourbis,***
J'enflaque sa limace,†††
Son bogue, ses frusques, ses passes,‡‡‡
Je m'en fus au fourallis.§§§

Par contretemps, ma largue,
Voulant se piquer d'honneur,
Craignant que je la nargue
Moi que n' suis pas taffeur,‖‖‖‖
Pour gonfler ses valades
Encasque dans un rade,¶¶¶
Sert des sigues a foison****
Ou la crible à la grive,††††
Je m' la donne et m'esquive,‡‡‡‡
Elle est pommée maron.§§§§

Le quart d'œil lui jabotte ‖‖‖‖‖
Mange sur tes nonneurs,¶¶¶¶¶

* An increase. † A handsome mistress.
‡ Drinking wine without water. § Unadulterated wine.
‖ Stockings. ¶ Lace. ** Laced hat. †† Clad. ‡‡ Citizen.
§§ A gold watch. ‖‖ Dance. ¶¶ Following him in the boulevard.
*** I stun him. ††† I take off his shirt.
‡‡‡ I steal his watch, clothes, and shoes.
§§§ The receiving house. ‖‖‖ Coward. ¶¶¶ Enters a shop.
**** Steals money. †††† They call for the guard. ‡‡‡‡ I fly.
§§§§ Taken in the fact. ‖‖‖‖‖ The commissary questions him.
¶¶¶¶¶ Denounces his accomplices.

Lui tire une carotte, ·
Lui montant la couleur.*
L'on vient, on me ligotte,†
Adieu, ma cambriote,
Mon beau pieu, mes dardants.‡
Je monte à la cigogne,§
On me gerbe à la grotte.‖
Au tap et pour douze ans.¶

Ma largue n' sera plus gironde,
Je serais vioc aussi;**
Faudra pour plaire au monde,
Clinquant, frusque, maquis.††
Tout passe dans la tigne,‡‡
Et quoiqu'on en juspine.§§
C'est un f—— flanchet,‖‖
Douze longes de tirade,¶¶
Pour un rigolade,***
Pour un moment d'attrait.

Winter, when I apprehended him, had many associates in Paris, and the Tuileries was the notorious place where the most daring and celebrated thieves assembled, who recommended themselves to public veneration by impudently bedecking themselves with all the crosses of the orders of knighthood. In the eyes of an observer who can discern accurately, the Chateau was then less a royal residence than a haunt infested by these thieves. There congregated a crowd of galley-slaves, pickpockets, and swindlers of every class, who presented themselves as the old companions in arms of Charette, La Roche-Jaquelin, Stofiet, Cadoudal, &c. The days of review and court assemblies witnessed the gathering of these pretended heroes. In my office of superior agent of police, I judged it my duty to keep a strict look-out after these royalists of circumstances. I

* Tell a falsehood.
‡ My fine bed, my loves.
‖ They condemn me to the galleys.
** Old. †† Rouge.
§§ Whatever people say.
¶¶ Twelve years of fetters.
† They tie me.
§ The dock.
¶ To exposure.
‡‡ In this world.
‖‖ Lot.
*** Fool.

stationed myself in their way, either in or out of the apartments, and was soon fortunate enough to restore several of them to the Bagne.

One Sunday, accompanied by one of my auxiliaries, I was on the watch on the Place du Carousel; we saw, going out from the Pavillon de Flore, a person whose costume, not less rich than elegant, attracted the attention of every person. This personage must be a great lord: had he not been covered with orders, he would have been recognised by the delicacy of his embroidery, the grace of his feather, the sparkling knot of his sword; but in the eyes of a police officer all is not gold that glitters. The agent with me, in drawing my attention to this splendid signor, observed that there was a striking likeness between him and one Chambreuil, with whom he had been at the Bagne at Toulon. I had seen Chambreuil, and I went to station myself so as to see this person face to face; and in spite of the dress *à la Française*, the breeches *à l'Angleterre*, the laced neckerchief and ruffles, I instantly recognised the ex-galley-slave: it was, in fact, Chambreuil, a notorious forger, who had obtained much celebrity by his escapes from the galleys. His first sentence was about the period of the successful campaigns in Italy. At this time he followed the army, that he might the more easily imitate the signatures of the purveyors. He had a decided talent for this kind of imitation; but having been too prodigal of his abilities in this way, he had ended by procuring for himself three years' imprisonment. Three years soon pass away. Chambreuil could not, however, reconcile himself to his prison; he escaped, and fled to Paris, where he put into circulation a vast many notes of his own fabrication. This industry was converted into a crime; and, again placed on his trial, he was found guilty, and sent to Brest, where, by virtue of his sentence, he should have passed eight years. Chambreuil again escaped; but as forgery was his constant resource, he was apprehended a third time, and appended to the chain, which was sent to Toulon.

Scarcely had he arrived there, when he again endeavoured to elude the vigilance of his keepers; but apprehended and sent back to the Bagne, he was placed in the too celebrated room, No. 3, where he passed his time, increased by three years.

During this detention, he endeavoured to amuse himself by dividing his leisure between denouncement and swindling, which were no less to his taste than his other pursuit. His choice, however, was forged letters, which, on his leaving the Bagne, brought on him two years' imprisonment in the prison of Embrun.

Chambreuil had just arrived there, when S. A. R. le duc d'Angoulême passing through this city, he caused a petition to be presented to this prince, in which he stated that he was an old Vendean, a devoted servant, whose royalism had drawn down persecution upon him. Chambreuil was immediately set at liberty, and soon afterwards began to use his freedom as heretofore.

When we recognised him, it was easy to judge by the figure he cut that he was in a good vein of fortune. We followed him an instant, to convince ourselves that it was indeed he; and as soon as all doubt was removed, I accosted him, declaring that he was my prisoner. Chambreuil thought then to impose upon me, by spitting in my face a tremendous series of qualities and titles, which he asserted belonged to him. He was nothing less than director of the police of the Chateau, and chief of the royal stud of France; whilst I was an insolent scoundrel, whom he was to punish instantly. In spite of threats, I persisted in making him get into a hackney-coach; and as he made some difficulty about it, we compelled him by main force.

In presence of M. Henry, M. le director of the police of the Chateau was not at all disconcerted; on the contrary, he assumed a tone of arrogant superiority, which actually alarmed the chief of the prefecture. They all thought that I had committed a blunder.

"I will never put up with such an audacious insult," cried Chambreuil; "it is an outrage for which I will

have ample reparation. I will let you know who I am, and we will see if you will dare to use towards me those arbitrary measures, which even the minister would not venture to employ."

I actually thought the moment had arrived when they would apologize to him, and reprimand me. They did not doubt but that Chambreuil was an old galley-slave, but they were afraid they had offended in him some powerful man, on whom court favours were lavished. However, I asserted, with so much energy, that he was only an impostor, that they could not avoid giving a warrant to search his residence. I was to assist the commissary in this operation, at which Chambreuil was to be present; and on the road he whispered to me,—

"My dear Vidocq, there are in my secretary some papers, which it is important to me to keep from inspection; promise me that you will get them, and you shall have no cause to repent it."

"I promise you."

"You will find them under a double lock, of which I will tell you the secret."

He told me how I was to proceed; and I found the papers in the place he had pointed out, which I kept to add to those which confirmed the propriety of his apprehension. Never had a forger so carefully arranged the materials of his swindling. There were found at his house a quantity of printed papers, some with this inscription, *Haras de France*, others with the *Police du Roi;* sheets *à la Tellière* bearing the titles of the minister of war, statements of services, brevets, diplomas, and a register of correspondence, always open as if by accident, that any looker-in might the more easily be deceived,—were among the documents, proving the high functions which Chambreuil took upon himself. He was supposed to be on terms of intimacy with the most distinguished personages; princes and princesses wrote to him: their letters and his were transcribed beside each other, and what appears very strange is, that he was in correspondence with the

préfet of police, whose reply was to be found in his lying register, on the margin of one of his missives.

The light afforded by the search so well corroborated my assertions respecting Chambreuil, that they did not hesitate sending him to La Force, there to await his trial.

Before the tribunal it was impossible to induce him to confess that he was a galley-slave, which I persisted in calling him. He produced, on the contrary, authentic certificates, which stated that he had not left La Vendée since the year 2. The judges were for a time in doubt how to decide between him and me, but I added so many and such powerful proofs in support of my assertions, that, his identity being recognised, he was sentenced to hard labour for life, and imprisoned in the Bagne of L'Orient, where he was not slow in resuming his old profession of denouncer. At the period of the assassination of the Duc de Berry, in concert with one Gerard Carette, he wrote to the police that he had information to give respecting this fearful transaction. Chambreuil was known, and not credited; but some persons, absurd enough to believe that Louvel had accomplices, demanded that Carette should be brought to Paris. This was complied with, and Carette came, but nothing was elicited from him which threw any additional light on the subject.

The year 1814 was one of the most remarkable of my life, principally on account of the important captures which followed one another. Some of them gave rise to most whimsical incidents, and as I am in a vein I will relate one or two.

During a period of three years, a man of almost gigantic stature had been pointed out as the author of a vast many robberies committed in Paris. By the portraits which the sufferers drew of this individual, he could be no other than Sablin, an excessively skilful and enterprising thief, who, freed from many successive sentences, (two of which were in fetters,) had resumed his old trade with all the experience of the prisons.

Many warrants were issued against Sablin, and the cleverest agents of police set upon him, but in vain; he escaped all pursuit, and if they had notice that he had appeared in any spot, by the time they arrived no trace of him remained. All the police officers, being wearied by the useless pursuit of this invisible person, the task devolved on me to seek out and secure him, if possible. For fifteen months I neglected no opportunity of endeavouring to meet him, but he never made his appearance in Paris for more than a few hours at a time, and as soon as the robbery was effected he was away again without our being able in any way to trace him.

Sablin was in a manner known only to me, and I, therefore, was the person whom he most feared to meet. As he could see me afar off, he took good care to keep out of my way, and I never once got sight even of his shadow.

However, as lack of perseverance is not my fault, I at length learnt that Sablin had just taken up his residence at Saint Cloud, where he had hired an apartment. At this news, I set out from Paris so as not to reach there until nightfall. It was in the month of November, and the weather very bad. When I entered Saint Cloud, all my clothes were wringing wet: I did not take the trouble of drying them, and in my impatience to learn if I had been put on a false scent, I obtained, on talking about new comers, some news, which was that a female, whose husband, a foreign merchant, was five feet ten inches, (French measure,) had recently occupied a certain house pointed out to me.

Five feet ten inches (French) is not a common height even for Patagonians; and I no longer doubted but that I had at last found the actual domicile of Sablin. But, as it was too late to present myself, I deferred my visit until the next day; and that I might be certain that my man did not escape me, I resolved, in spite of the rain, to pass the night before his house. I was in ambuscade with one of my agents, and at break of day, the door being opened, I glided quickly into the house

that I might take a survey, and see if it were time to commence work. Scarcely had I put a foot on the first stair, when I paused,—some one was descending. It was a woman whose features and painful step betokened a state of suffering. On seeing me, she shrieked and went back again: I followed, and entering with her into an apartment of which she had a key, heard myself announced in these words, pronounced in accents of horror, "Here is Vidocq." The bed was in an inner room, towards which I darted. A man was in bed—he raised his head—'twas Sablin;—I flung myself upon him, and before he could recognise me I had handcuffed him.

During this operation the lady, having fallen into a chair, groaned very bitterly; she writhed, and appeared tormented by horrid pains.

"What is the matter with your wife?" I inquired of Sablin.

"Do you not see that she is in labour? All night she has been in the same state. When you met her, she was going out to mother Tire-monde's (the midwife)."

At that moment the groans redoubled.

"My God! my God! I can move no longer, I am dying; pray have pity on me: relieve my sufferings! give me help!"

Soon only half-choked sounds were heard. Not to be touched at such a situation would have evinced a heart of marble. But what could I do? It was evident that a midwife was needed, but who was to go in search of her? Two were not too many to guard a fellow of Sablin's strength. I could not go out, nor could I determine on leaving a woman to die; and between humanity and duty, I was the most embarrassed man in the world. Suddenly an historical anecdote, well told by Madame de Genlis, occurred to me: I recalled to mind the "Grand Monarque" performing the office of accoucheur to Lavallière. Why, said I, should I be more delicate than he? Come quick a doctor: I am

one. I immediately took off my coat, and in less than twenty-five minutes Madame Sablin was delivered: it was a boy, a fine boy, to which she gave birth. I swaddled the infant, after having made this toilet of his first ingress or first egress, for I believe that in this instance the two expressions are synonymous; and when the ceremony was over, on looking at my work, I had the satisfaction to find that both mother and child were doing "as well as could be expected."

Then I had to fulfil a form, the entry of the little newcome on the register of the civil magistrates; we were all anxious: I offered to be subscribing witness; and when I had signed, Madame Sablin said to me,

"Ah! Monsieur Jules, since you are here, there is another service you could render us."

"What?"

"I dare scarcely name it."

"Speak, if it be in my power————."

"We have no godfather; would you be kind enough to stand for the boy?"

"Certainly, as well as another; where is the godmother?"

Madame Sablin begged us to call in one of her neighbours; and as soon as all was in readiness, we went to church, accompanied by Sablin, whose escape I had rendered impossible. The honours of this sponsorship did not cost me less than fifty francs, and yet there was no christening feast.

In spite of the vexation which Sablin necessarily experienced, he was so deeply penetrated by my proceedings, that he could not forbear testifying his gratitude.

After a good breakfast, which was brought to us in the chamber of the lying-in lady, I conducted her husband to Paris, where he was sentenced to five years' imprisonment. Being master turnkey at La Force, where he underwent his sentence, Sablin found in this employment, not only a means of living well, but also that of saving, at the expense of the prisoners and the

persons who visited them, a small fortune, which he proposed to share with his wife; but at the period of his liberation, my friend Madame Sablin, who also had a partiality for the property of others, was expiating her crime at Saint-Lazare. In the isolation consequent on the incarceration of his mate, Sablin, like many others, turned to evil courses, that is, having one evening in his pocket the fruits of his savings, which he had turned into specie, he went to the gambling table and lost the whole. Two days afterwards, he was found suspended in the wood of Boulogne: he had selected as the instrument of his death one of the trees in the Allée des Voleurs.

It was not, as may have been seen, without much trouble that I was able to render Sablin up to justice. Certainly if all my searches had been of necessity as tedious and difficult, I could not have accomplished them: but success generally attended me, and sometimes was so close at hand, that I myself was amazed at it.

A few days after my adventure in Saint-Cloud, the Sieur Sebillotte, a vintner in the Rue de Charenton, No. 145, complained of having been robbed. According to his statement, the thieves had effected an entrance by climbing, between seven and eight o'clock in the evening; had carried off twelve thousand francs in cash, two gold watches, and six silver spoons. There had been force used externally and internally. All the circumstances were so extraordinary, that the veracity of M. Sebillotte was somewhat doubted, and I was ordered to clear the affair up. A conversation I had with him convinced me that his complaint comprehended only plain facts.

M. Sebillotte was a landlord; he was in easy circumstances, and out of debt; consequently I could not detect in his situation a shadow of a motive which might lead me to believe that the robbery of which he complained was false; and yet it was of such a nature, that, to commit it, the persons of the house must have

been perfectly well known to the thieves. I asked M. Sebillotte what persons frequented his cabaret; and when he had mentioned some, he said,

"That is nearly all, except chance customers, and those strangers who cured my wife: on my word we were very lucky to have met with them! the poor thing had been suffering these three years, and they have given her a remedy which has done her much good."

"Do you often see these strangers?"

"They used to come here, but since my wife is better, we only see them occasionally."

"Do you know what they are? Perhaps they may have observed —"

"Ah! Sir," cried Madame Sebillotte, who joined in the conversation, "do not suspect them, they are honest, I have proof of that."

"Yes, yes!" added the husband, "she has proof, which she will tell you: you will hear. Tell the gentleman, my dear."

Then Madame Sebillotte began her recital in these terms:—

"Yes, sir, they are honest, or I will be burnt alive. Well, you must know, it is not more than a fortnight ago, it was just a week after the term, I was counting out some money, when one of the females who is with them came in; it was she who had given me the remedy, from which I have had so much relief; and, I must tell you, she would not accept a sous for it, quite the contrary. You must suppose that I was very much pleased at seeing her; I made her sit down beside me, and whilst I was laying out the money in parcels of a hundred francs, she saw one on which was a large man leaning on two young ones, with a skin on his shoulders like a savage, holding a club: 'Ah!' said she, 'have you many like these?' 'Why?' said I. 'Because, you must know, that is worth a hundred and four sous. As many as you have, my husband will take at that price, if you will lay them aside.'

I thought she was jesting; but in the evening I was never more surprised than to see her return with her husband. We looked over the money together, and as we found amongst it three hundred pieces of a hundred sous, like those she had pointed out, I let him have them, and he gave me a premium of sixty francs. You may judge after that if they are honest people or not, since they might, if they had liked, have had them coin for coin."

By the work we know the workmen. The last sentence of Madame Sebillotte informed me what sort of people were those honest creatures whose eulogy she made; nor did I need more to be assured, that the robbery, the authors of which I sought to detect, had been committed by the Bohémiens. The matter of exchange was quite in their way; and then Madame Sebillotte, in describing them, only confirmed me more and more in my preconceived opinion.

I soon left the couple, and from that moment all dark complexions were looked at by me with suspicion. I was thinking how and where I should be most likely to fall in with some of the persons I wanted, when, passing along the Boulevard du Temple, I saw, seated in a cabaret, called La Maison Rustique, two persons, whose copper-hued skin and foreign look awoke in my mind reminiscences of my sojourn at Malines. I entered; who should I see but Christian, with one of his *pals*, whom I also knew. I went up to them, and presenting my hand to Christian, saluted him by the name of Coroin. He looked at me for a moment, and then, my features becoming known to him, "Ah," he cried, jumping on my neck with transport, "my old friend."

So long a period had passed since we met, that, of course, after the customary compliments, we had many questions to ask and reply to mutually. He wanted to know why I left Malines; and without intimating my intention to him, I trumped up a story, which passed current.

"All right, all right," said he; "whether true or

not, I credit it: besides, I find you again, and that is the main point. Ah! all our old cronies will rejoice to see you. They are all in Paris. Caron, Langarin, Ruffler, Martin, Sisque, Mich, Litle; even old mother Lavio is with us; and Betche too, little Betche."

"Ah, yes, your wife."

"How pleased she will be to see you. If you will be here at six o'clock the union will be complete; we are to meet here, and go to the theatre together. You shall be of the party; but we will not part now. You have not dined?"

"No."

"Nor I either; we will go to Capucin."

"If you like; it is close at hand."

"Yes, only two steps, at the corner of the Rue d'Angoulême."

This vintner and cook, whose establishment bears a grotesque image of a disciple of Saint Francis as a sign, then enjoyed the favour of the public, in whose eyes *quantity* is always more valued than *quality;* and then for the holiday keepers on Sunday and Saint Monday,—for those jolly fellows, who carry on the war the whole week, is it not very pleasant to have a place where, without faring badly or offending any person, they may appear in all sorts of garbs, with any growth of beard, and in every state of intoxication?

Such were the advantages which offered themselves at Capucin's, without mentioning the large snuff-box always open on the citizen's counter, at the service of whosoever, in passing, wished to refresh his nostrils with a pinch. It was four o'clock when we installed ourselves in this spot of liberty and joy. The space was long till six o'clock. I was impatient to return to the Maison Rustique, where Christian's companions were to meet. After the repast we rejoined them; there were six, in accosting whom Christian spoke in their peculiar language. They instantly surrounded, hailed, embraced, welcomed me with acclamation; pleasure sparkled in their eyes.

"No play, no play," cried the wanderers, with unanimous voice.

"You are right," said Christian, "no play.; we will go to the theatre another time; let us drink, my boys, let us drink."

"Let us drink," echoed the Bohémiens. Wine and punch circulated freely. I drank, laughed, talked, and carried on my trade. I watched their countenances, motions, actions, and nothing escaped me. I recalled to myself some indications furnished by Monsieur and Madame Sebillotte; and the history of the hundred sous pieces, which had only been the first slight groundwork of a conjecture, became the basis of confirmed conviction.

Christian, or his mates, I could no longer doubt were the authors of the robbery announced to the police. How did I commend the casual glance made so à propos at the interior of La Maison Rustique! But it was not all to have detected the guilty; I waited until their brains were properly heated by the alcoholic applications; and when the whole party was in a state when one candle was enough to show two persons, I went out, and, running hastily to the Theatre de la Gaîté, informed the officer on duty that I was with some thieves, and arranged with him that in an hour or two at latest he should apprehend us all, men and women.

These instructions given, I returned quickly. My absence had not been remarked; but at ten o'clock the house was visited, the peace-officer presented himself, and with him a formidable body of gendarmes and agents. They secured each of us separately, and then conducted us to the guard-house.

The commissary had preceded us; he ordered a general search. Christian, who called himself Hirch, in vain endeavoured to conceal M. Sebillotte's six silver spoons; and his companion, Madame Villemain, (the title the lady gave herself,) could not preserve in secret, from the rigid search she underwent, the two gold watches mentioned in the complaint. The others were

also compelled to produce money and jewels, which were taken from them.

I was anxious to know the opinion of my ancient comrades on this matter. I thought I read in their eyes that they did not in the least distrust me; nor was I mistaken, for scarcely had we reached the violon, (the watch-house,) than they made me excuses for having been the involuntary cause of my arrest.

"It was not purposely done," said Christian, "but who the devil could have expected such a thing? You were quite right to say you knew nothing about us: be quiet, and we will not say a word to the contrary; and, as nothing has been found on your person to put you in any danger, you may be certain they will not long detain you."

Christian then recommended discretion to me, as to his real name, as well as those of his companions.

"Although," he added, "the recommendation is superfluous, since you are not less interested than we, in keeping silence on this score."

"I offered to the gipsies to use the first moments of my liberty in their service; and in the hope that I should not be kept long in durance, they told me their domicile, so that in getting out I might inform their comrades. About midnight the commissary sent for me, under pretence of examining me, and we instantly went to the Marché Lenoir, where dwelt the famous *Duchesse* and three other *pals* of Christian, whom we apprehended by virtue of a warrant, and after a search, which produced all necessary proofs for their conviction.

This band consisted of twelve persons, six men and six women; they were all condemned, the former to irons, the latter to close confinement. The vintner of the Rue de Charenton recovered his jewellery, plate, and the greater portion of his money.

Madame Sebillotte was overjoyed. The specific of the Bohémiens had the effect of rendering her health less precarious, the information of the twelve thousand francs regained perfectly restored it, and doubtless the

experience she had was not lost upon her; she remembered that, once in her life, she had nearly been a great loser, by having sold five-franc pieces for a hundred and four sous. "A burnt child dreads the fire."

This meeting with the Bohémiens was almost miraculous; but in the course of eighteen years that I have been attached to the police, it has happened more than once that I have been casually brought in contact with persons whom in my early days I had known.

A propos of occurrences of this kind, I cannot resist the desire of mentioning in this chapter one of the thousand absurd complaints which it was my lot to receive daily; this in particular procured for me a very singular renewal of acquaintance.

One morning whilst I was occupied in drawing up a report, I was told that a lady of respectable appearance desired to see me; she has, was added, to speak with you on an affair of importance. I ordered that she should be admitted instantly. She entered.

"I have to beg pardon for disturbing you; you are Monsieur Vidocq? It is to Monsieur Vidocq that I have the honour of addressing myself?"

"Yes, madame; and in what can I be of service to you?"

"Oh, you can aid me materially, sir; you can restore to me appetite and sleep. I neither rest nor eat.—Ah, how wretched is it to be gifted with excessive sensibility. Ah! sir, how I pity persons of our sentiment! I swear to you that it is the most distressing qualification that Heaven can bestow!—He was so well brought up, so interesting.—If you had known him you could not have forborne loving him— Poor dear!

"But, madame, condescend to explain: you may perhaps suffer by a causeless delay, and lose precious time."

"He was my only comfort—"

"Well, madame, what is it?"

"I have not power to tell you."

She put her hand into her reticule, and thence pro-

duced a paper which she gave me with averted eyes, saying, " Read, read."

" These are printed papers you have given me; you must have made some mistake."

" Would that I did, sir; would to heaven that I did. I beseech you to cast your eyes over the number 32,740; my grief forbids me to utter more! Ah! how cruel is my fate.—(Tears fell from her eyes, the word expired upon her lips, she was convulsed by sobs, and could with apparent difficulty prevent them suffocating her.) I am strangled! I am choking! I feel something swelling in my throat.—Ah! ah! ah! ah!"

I handed a seat to the lady, and whilst she abandoned herself to her sorrow, I turned over two or three leaves, until I reached No. 32,740, under the head of lost property; the page was moist with tears; I read:

" A small spaniel, with long silvery silky hair, drop-
" ping ears; he is perfectly trimmed; a mark of fire
" above each eye: physiognomy excessively animated,
" the tail trumpet-fashion, forming the bird of paradise.
" His natural disposition is very endearing; will eat no-
" thing but the white of a chicken, and answers to the
" name of Garçon, pronounced with mildness. His mis-
" tress is in despair; fifty francs reward will be given to
" whosoever will bring him to the Rue de Turenne,
" No. 23."

" Well, madame! what am I to do for Garçon? Dogs are not under my control. I see that he was a most amiable creature."

" Ah! sir, amiable! that is the exact word," sighed the lady, in accents that penetrated the very heart; " and his intelligence could not be surpassed; he never left me.—Dearest Garçon! Would you believe it, that during the holy exercises, he had a more devout look than myself? In truth, he was generally admired, his appearance alone was a lesson to mankind.—Alas! alas! on Sunday last we were going together to the sacrament, I was carrying him under my arm; you know

these little creatures have perpetual wants—at the moment we were entering the church, I put him on the ground, that he might do as he wished; I went onwards, not to disturb him, and when I returned—no Garçon.—I called Garçon, Garçon!—he had disappeared. I left the Benedictine to run after him; and—judge of my misery—I could not find him. This is the business that has induced me to trouble you to day, to entreat that you would have the excessive kindness to have a search made for him. I will pay all that is needful; but take care he is not ill used. I am sure the fault has not been his."

"Indeed, madame, whether he is in fault or not is no concern of mine; your complaint is not of that nature to which I am allowed to attend; if we were to give our time to dogs, cats, and birds, there would be endless work."

"Well, sir; since you take that tone, I shall address his excellency. If there is no respect shown to persons who think well—Do you know I belong to the congregation, and that—"

"You may belong to the devil for me—"

I could not finish my speech: a deformity which I observed suddenly in the devout mistress of Garçon, produced from me a sudden fit of laughter, which entirely disconcerted her.

"Am not I an object of mirth?" said she, "laugh away, sir, laugh away."

When my sudden gaiety had a little abated, I said:—

"Forgive, madame, this impulse, which I could not control; I did not know at first with whom I was conversing, but now I know how I should behave. Do you really deplore the loss of Garçon?"

"Ah! sir, I cannot survive it."

"You have never then experienced a loss which more sensibly affected you?"

"No, sir."

"Yet you have had a husband in this world, you had a son, you have had lovers—"

"I, sir! how dare you—"

"Yes, Madame Duflos, you have had lovers; you have really had them. Do you remember a certain night at Versailles?"

At these words she looked at me attentively for a moment; the colour came to her cheek.

"Eugene!" she cried, and instantly hastened from the room.

Madame Duflos was a milliner whose clerk I had been for some time, when, to hide from the search of the police at Arras, I had concealed myself in Paris. She was a droll sort of woman; she had a fine head, bold eye, good eyebrow, majestic forehead; her mouth, elevated at the corners, was large, but adorned with thirty-two teeth of dazzling whiteness; hair of a beautiful black, and aquiline nose, above a tolerably well-furnished moustache, gave to her physiognomy an air which would have been imposing, if her bosom placed between two humps, and her neck plunged into these double shoulders had not suggested the idea of a female Punch.

She was about forty when I first saw her: her appearance was most studiously attended to, and she gave herself the airs of a queen; but from the height of the chair whereon she was perched, so that her knees were elevated above the counter, she seemed less like a Semiramis than the grotesque idol of some Indian pagoda. When I saw her on this species of throne, I had much difficulty to be serious; but I preserved the gravity which circumstances demanded, and had just sufficient command over myself to convert into salutations of the most respectful kind a strong disposition to do entirely otherwise. Madame Duflos took from her bosom a large eye-glass, through which she viewed me, and when she had taken my dimensions from head to foot,

"What is your pleasure, sir?" she said.

I was about to reply, but a clerk who had undertaken to present me, having told her that I was the young man of whom he had spoken, she looked at me again,

and asked me what I knew of business. Of business I was utterly ignorant; I was silent; she repeated the question, and as she evinced some impatience, I was forced to explain.

"Madame," I said, "I know nothing of the business of fashions, but with zeal and perseverance, I hope to give you satisfaction, particularly if assisted by your advice."

"Well, I like that; I wish people to be frank with me. I receive you; you shall fill Theodore's situation."

"I am at your orders as soon as you please, madame."

"Well, then, I engage you at once; from this very day you may begin on trial."

My installation was at once effected. In my situation as junior clerk, I had the task of arranging the magazine and work-room, where about twenty young girls, all very pretty, were employed in fashioning gewgaws, destined to tempt the provincial coquettes. Thrown amongst this bed of beauties, I thought myself transported to a seraglio, and, looking sometimes at the brown and sometimes at the fair, I thought of circulating the handkerchief pretty freely, when, on the morning of the fourth day, Madame Duflos, who had no doubt seen something not quite to her satisfaction, sent for me to her room.

"M. Eugene," she said, "I am much displeased with you; you have been here but a very short time, and already begin to form criminal designs upon my young people. I tell you that will not do for me at all, at all, at all."

Overwhelmed by this merited reproach, and unable to imagine how she had guessed my intentions, I could only stammer out a few unconnected words.

"You would have considerable difficulty in justifying yourself," she added, "but I know very well that at your age we cannot repress our inclinations: but these girls must not be thought of in any way; in the first place, they are too young; then, again, they have no

fortune; a young man should have some person who can assist him, some person of sense and reason,"

During this moral lesson, Madame Duflos, carelessly extended on an easy couch, rolled about her eyes in a way that would infallibly have led to an overpowering burst of laughter from me, had not her head-woman entered very opportunely to tell her that she was wanted in the work-room.

Thus terminated this interview, which proved to me the necessity of being on my guard. Without renouncing my intentions, I only appeared to look on the young women with indifference, and was skilful enough to set her penetration at default; she watched me incessantly, spied my gestures, my words, my looks; but she was only astonished at one thing,—the rapidity of my progress. I had only passed one month's apprenticeship and could already sell a shawl, a fancy gown, a cap, or a bonnet, as well as the most experienced hand. Madame was delighted, and had even the kindness to say, that, if I continued as attentive to her lessons, she did not despair of making me the cock of the mode, (le coq de la nouveauté.)

"But," she added, "mind, no familiarity with the pullets; you understand me, M. Eugene; you understand me. And I have also another thing to recommend to you, that is, not to neglect your personal appearance, nothing is so genteel as a well-dressed man. Besides, I will undertake to provide your dress for the present; let me do so, and you will see if I will not make a little Love of you."

I thanked Madame Duflos, but as I feared that with her extraordinary taste she might make of me some such a Cupid as she was herself a Venus, I told her that I wished to spare her the care of a metamorphosis which appeared to me impossible; but, that if she would confine herself to her kind advice, I should receive it with gratitude, and seek to profit by it.

Some time afterwards, (four days before Saint Louis,) Madame Duflos told me, that intending as usual to go

to the fair of Versailles with some goods, she had decided that I should attend her. We started the next day, and forty-eight hours afterwards were established at the Champ-de-Foire. A servant who had attended us slept in the shop; as for me, I lodged with madame, at the auberge; we had ordered two rooms, but in consequence of the influx of strangers, we could only have one: resignation was compulsory. In the evening, madame had a large screen brought, with which she divided the room into two, so that we each had our own apartment. Before we went to bed, she preached to me for an hour. Afterwards, we went up stairs; madame entered her division, I wished her good evening, and in two minutes was in bed. Soon sighs began to escape her, doubtless caused by the fatigue which she had experienced during the day; she sighed again, but the candle was out, and I went to sleep. Suddenly, I was interrupted in my first nap, I thought some one pronounced my name; I listened.

"Eugene."

It was the voice of Madame Duflos. I made no reply.

"Eugene," she called again, "have you closed the door properly?"

"Yes, madame."

"I think you mistake; look I beg of you, and see if the bolt is properly secured; we cannot be too careful in these auberges."

I did as desired, and returned to my bed. Scarcely was I laid once more on my left side than madame began to complain.

"What a miserable bed! I am eaten up by the bugs, it is impossible to close an eye! And you, Eugene, have you any of these insupportable insects?"

I turned a deaf ear to the question.

"Eugene, answer me; have you any of these bugs, as I have?

"On my word, madame, I have not yet found any."

"You are very fortunate then, and I congratulate you; as for me, I am devoured by them, I have bites of such

a size! If it goes on in this way, I shall pass a sleepless night."

I kept silence, but was compelled to break it when Madame Duflos, exasperated by her sufferings, and not knowing how, between the biting and itching, to relieve herself, began to cry out with all her strength.

"Eugene! Eugene! do get up, I beseech you, and be so good as ask the innkeeper for a light, that we may drive away these cursed animals. Make haste I entreat you, my friend, for I am in hell."

I went down, and came up again with a lighted candle, which I put on the table near the lady's bed. As I was but lightly clad, that is to say, with my flags flying in the wind, I retired as quickly as possible, as well out of respect to the modesty of Madame Duflos, as to escape the seductions of an elegant negligé, in which there appeared to me to be some design. But scarcely had I got round the screen, when Madame Duflos gave a piteous shriek.

"Ah! what a size, what a monster, I can never have the courage to kill it: how it runs, it will get away. Eugene! Eugene! come here, I supplicate you."

I could not retreat, but, like a second Theseus, I risked all, and approached the bed.

"Where, where," said I, "is this Minotaur, let me exterminate him?"

"I conjure you, Eugene, not to jest in that way—there, there, see how it runs; did you see it on the pillow? how it goes down the bed—what swiftness! it seems to know the fate you have in store for it."

In vain did I use all diligence; I could neither catch nor even see the dangerous animal. I looked and felt every where to discover its hiding place. I made every possible exertion to find it, but in vain. Sleep overpowered us in our endeavours; and if, on waking, by a return to the past, I was led to reflect that Madame Duflos had been more fortunate than Potiphar's wife, I had the pain of thinking that I had not had all the virtue of Joseph.

From this time I had the job of watching every night that madame was not tormented by bugs. My service by day was rendered much easier. Considerations, anticipations, little presents—nothing was spared; I was, like the conscript of Charlet, nourished, shod, clothed, and put to bed at the expense of the princess. Unfortunately, the princess was somewhat jealous, and her rule a little despotic. Madame Duflos asked nothing more but that, in more senses than one, I should amuse myself like a hump-backed man; but she went into most tremendous fits of rage if I even glanced at another woman. At last, worn out by this tyranny, I declared one evening that I would free myself from it.

"Ah! you will leave me then," said she, "we will see about that."

Then arming herself with a knife, she darted at me to plunge it in my heart. I seized her arm, and her rage being appeased, I agreed to remain, on condition that she would be more reasonable. She promised; but, from the next day, curtains of green taffety were placed over the windows of the room in which I was placed, as madame had thought it fit to intrust me exclusively with keeping her books. This proceeding was the more vexatious, as I had then no prospect of any control over the work-room.

Madame Duflos was most ingenious in isolating me from the rest of the world; every day there was a new precaution for my security. At last my slavery was so rigorous, that every person saw through the tenderness of which I was the object. The shop girls, who liked nothing better than teasing madame, came to speak to me every instant, sometimes with one excuse, sometimes another; poor Madame Duflos was tormented to death by it! how pitiable! Every hour in the day she poured forth her reproaches on me, and never gave one instant's intermission. I could not for any length of time remain easy under such a despotism. To avoid a burst, which, in my situation, might have involved

me (I had then just escaped from the Bagne) I secretly took a place by the diligence, and absconded.

How little did I then think, that, after a lapse of twenty years, I should meet again in the police office, my little Humpina of the Rue Saint Martin: the proverb would have it so: two mountains never meet.

CHAPTER XLII.

The jolly butcher—A still tongue shows a wise head—The harmlessness of light wines—A murder—The magistrates of Corbeil—The removal of the body—The accusing address—'Tis either he, or his brother—The criminating wound—I hit upon the right man—The mark of Cain—The morning's alarm—Arrest of a suspected pair—One culprit taken—A second sought after—he is accused of being a liberal—The gognettes, or the bards of the quai du Nord—A pretext—Seditious songs—I become an assistant in the kitchen—Genuine wine—The man of principle—A removal to the prefecture—Confession—Resurrection of a dealer in poultry, &c.—A scene of somnambulism—The guilty parties confronted—*Habemus confitentes reos*—A friendly embrace—A supper under lock and key—Departure from Paris.

For upwards of four months a great number of murders and highway robberies had been committed on all the roads conducting to the capital, without its having been possible to discover the perpetrators of these crimes. In vain had the police kept a strict watch upon the actions of all suspected persons—their utmost diligence was fruitless; when a fresh attempt, attended with circumstances of the most horrible nature, supplied them with hints from which they could at length anticipate bringing the culprits to justice. A man named Fontaine, a butcher, living at la Courtille, was going to a fair in the district of Corbeil, carrying with him his leather bag, in which was safely deposited the sum of 1,500 francs; he had passed the Cour de France, and was walking on in the direction of Essonne, when, at a trifling distance from an auberge where he had

had stopped to take some refreshment, he came up with two very well-dressed men. As evening was approaching, Fontaine was not sorry to obtain fellow travellers; he therefore addressed the two strangers, who were not slow in returning his salutation, and a conversation soon arose between them. "Good evening, gentlemen," said he to them.—"The same to you," replied they. "We shall soon have night overtake us," resumed the butcher. "We shall indeed, sir," answered one of the two pedestrians, "and at this season of the year we must not reckon upon much assistance from the twilight."

"I should care very little about it," added Fontaine, "but, unfortunately, I have still a considerable distance to walk to-night."

"And where may you be proceeding to, if it be not too impertinent a question?"

"Where am I going? Why, to Milly, to purchase sheep."

"In that case, if agreeable to you, we may as well join company; my friend and self are proceeding to Corbeil on business, so that chance has been most favourable to us."

"Agreed!" exclaimed the butcher, "things could not have fallen out better; nor shall I be slow in profiting by it; for, in my humble opinion, when one has money about one, travelling in good company is far more pleasant than being quite alone."

"You have money about you, then?"

"You are right there, my friend, and a pretty considerable sum too."

"Well, we likewise have large sums; but we were informed that we ran no risk, as this part of the country was considered perfectly safe."

"Indeed! I am glad to hear it; but, were it otherwise, I have something here (showing a huge stick) that would make a tolerable resistance; besides, I think, the most daring thieves would hardly have the

courage to attack three such formidable antagonists as we should make."

"No, no; they would not dare to meddle with us."

Conversing thus, the trio reached the door of a small house, which the branch of juniper, decorating the entrance, designated as a cabaret. Fontaine proposed to his companions to take a bottle together. They entered; procured some Beaugency at eight sols the flask, and seated themselves to enjoy it. The cheapness of the wine—its harmless nature—their meeting with it at a time when weariness had begun to steal over at least one of the party—were so many reasons for lengthening their stay.—At last they rose to depart; and a general emulation arose as to who should defray the reckoning. Nearly an hour, during which more than one fresh bottle was discussed, passed in this amicable dispute; which, being at last yielded in favour of Fontaine, completed the elevation of his spirits, and raised him to the highest pitch of gaiety. Under similar circumstances, what man could have harboured suspicion?

Poor Fontaine, delighted at having met with such agreeable companions, thought he could not do better than take them as guides for the remaining part of his journey; and in full confidence of their integrity, abandoned himself to their guidance along the by-road they were then travelling. He walked on, therefore, with one of his newly found friends, whilst the second followed close behind. The night was very dark, scarcely allowing the travellers to distinguish one step before the other; but guilt, with its lynx-like eye, can penetrate the thickest gloom; and while Fontaine was unsuspectingly following the path recommended by his companion, the one who remained behind him struck him over the head a violent blow with his cudgel, which made him reel: surprised, but not intimidated, he was about to turn round to defend himself, when a second blow, more fatal than the first, brought him to

the ground: immediately the other robber, armed with a short dagger, threw himself upon him, and ceased not to deal out murderous wounds, till he believed his victim had ceased to exist.

Fontaine had yielded after a long and desperate struggle, and lay as apparently lifeless as his assassins would have had him. They quickly stripped him of the contents of his money-bag, with which they made off, leaving him weltering in his blood. Happily, it was not long before a passenger, attracted by his groans, came to his succour, and discovered the wretched man, whom the freshness of the night air had recalled to his senses. After having rendered him what assistance was in his power, the stranger hastened to the nearest hamlet in search of further aid—information was immediately despatched to the magistrates of Corbeil—the attorney-general arrived without delay at the place of crime, and commenced the most diligent inquiries respecting the slightest circumstances attending it. Eight and twenty wounds, more or less deep, bore ample testimony how much the murderers had feared that their victim should escape them. Spite of the cruelty of their intention, Fontaine was yet able to utter a few words, although his extreme exhaustion from loss of blood rendered him unable to give all the particulars which were necessary for the ends of justice. He was removed to the hospital, and at the end of two days, so favourable a change took place, that he was pronounced out of danger.

The most minute exactitude had been observed in removing the body. Nothing had been neglected which might lead to the discovery of the assassins. Accurate impressions were taken of the footmarks; buttons, fragments of paper dyed in blood were carefully collected: on one of these pieces, which appeared to have been hastily torn off to wipe the blade of a knife found at no great distance from it, was observed some written characters, but they were without any connecting sense, and, consequently, unable to afford any information

likely to throw a light on the affair. Nevertheless, the attorney-general attached a great importance to the explanation of these fragments; and, upon more narrowly exploring the spot where Fontaine had been found lying, a second morsel was picked up, which presented every appearance of being part of a torn address: by dint of close examination, the following words were deciphered:—

A Monsieur Rao—
Marchand de vins, bar—
Roche—
Cli—

This piece of paper seemed to have once formed part of a printed address; but of whose address? It was at present wholly impossible to make out. However that might be, as no circumstance is too slight to deserve notice in the absence of more substantial proofs, notes were carefully made of every thing that might be hereafter available information. The magistrates assembled on this occasion received the thanks their extreme zeal and ability so fully merited. So soon as they had fulfilled this part of their mission, they returned with all haste to Paris, in order to concert further plans with the judicial and administrative authority. At their desire, I had immediate conference with them, and, furnished with a *procès verbal* prepared by them, I opened the campaign against the assassins. Their victim had sufficiently described them; but how could I place implicit reliance on information proceeding from such a source? Few men in imminent danger can preserve sufficient presence of mind to take accurate views of all that is passing; and upon the present occasion I was the more inclined to doubt the testimony of Fontaine, from the extreme nicety with which he detailed the most trifling particulars; he related, that during the long struggle he had with the assailants, one of them had fallen on his knees, uttering a cry of pain; and that he heard him moaning and complaining to his accomplice of suffering extreme pain. Similar remarks

to this which he pretended to have made, appeared to me very extraordinary, considering the state in which he was found. I could not bring myself to believe that he himself felt quite assured of the correctness of his reminiscences. I determined, nevertheless, to turn them to the best account I could; but still I required a more definite point to start from. The torn address was, in my estimation, an enigma, which must first be solved; and, to effect this, I racked my brains day and night, and at last felt satisfied, that, excepting the name, (respecting which I had but few doubts,) the perfect address would run thus :—

A Monsieur ——,
Marchand de vins,
Barrière Rochechouart.
Chaussée de Clignancourt.

It was therefore evident that the assassins were in league with a wine-merchant of that neighbourhood;—perhaps the wine-merchant himself was one of the perpetrators of the crime. I set my plans to work, so as to know the truth as quickly as possible; and before the end of the day I was satisfied that I had been right in directing my suspicions towards an individual named Raoul. This man had become known to me under very unfavourable auspices; he passed for one of the most daring traffickers in contraband goods, and the cabaret kept by him had long been marked out as the rendezvous where a crowd of suspicious persons nightly celebrated their riotous orgies. Raoul had moreover married the sister of a liberated galley-slave; and I was informed that he was linked in with persons of both sexes, of characters as desperate as their fortunes. In a word, his reputation was that of a loose and profligate man; and whenever a crime was denounced, if he had not positively participated in it, all thought themselves warranted in saying to him, "If it were not done by yourself, at least it was the work of your brother, or some of your relations."

Raoul, however, contrived to anticipate every scheme

laid for entrapping him, either through his own sagacity, or the hints of his associates. I resolved, as a first step, to keep a careful watch over all the approaches to the cabaret; and I charged my agents to observe, with a scrutinizing eye, the different persons who frequented it, in order to ascertain whether, amongst the number, there might not be found one who was wounded in the knee. While my spies were at the post I had assigned to them, my own observations soon informed me that Raoul was in the constant habit of receiving at his house one or two persons of infamous character, with whom he seemed upon terms of the closest intimacy. The neighbours affirmed that they were frequently seen going out together, that they made long absences, and that it was universally believed that the greater part of honest Raoul's profits were those drawn from his dealings in contraband goods. A wine-merchant, who possessed the greatest facility of observing what was going on in Raoul's domicile, told me that he had often observed these worthy friends stealing from the house in the gloom of the evening, and returning at an early hour the following morning, apparently exhausted with fatigue, and splashed up to the neck. I further learned that he had set up a target in his garden, and was constantly practising firing with a pistol. Such were the particulars I gathered respecting this notable character from all who knew any thing of him. At the same time my agents brought me the intelligence of their having observed at the house of Raoul a man, whom, for many reasons, they surmised to be one of the assassins we were in search of. This person had first attracted their suspicions by a halt in his gait, proceeding not so much from habitual lameness, as from recent injury; and upon further examination of his person and dress, both were found in close agreement with the description given by Fontaine of one of the robbers. My agents further informed me that the man in question was generally accompanied by his wife; and that both appeared on the best possible terms with Raoul. My emissaries

had succeeded in tracing their abode, which was in the first floor of a house situated in the Rue Coquenard; and here, in the apprehension of giving the slightest hint of their suspicions to the suspected party, their investigations had rested.

These particulars strengthened all my conjectures, and I was no sooner in possession of them, than I determined to go myself, and watch near the house which had been described to me. It was now night, and I was compelled to defer my purpose till the coming morn; however, before the sun had risen, I was on the look-out in the Rue Coquenard. I remained there without perceiving any thing worthy of notice till four o'clock in the afternoon, and was beginning to grow impatient of the little success our plans seemed likely to realize, when my agents pointed out to me an individual, whose features and name suddenly occurred to my memory. "See! there he is," cried they; and scarcely had my eyes glanced over him, than I recognised a person named Court, whom, from previous circumstances fresh in my recollection, I instantly set down as one of the assassins I was in search of. His principles, which were of the most abandoned nature, had drawn down upon him, on many important occasions, severe consequences. He had just been punished by a six months' imprisonment for some fraudulent act, and I well remembered having arrested him once before for a highway robbery. In a word, he was one of those degraded beings who, like Cain, bore on his forehead the stamp of shame and death.

Without being much of a prophet, one might boldly have predicted that this man was destined to a scaffold. One of those presentiments, which have never deceived me, told me that he had at length reached the term of that perilous career to which a blind fatality had conducted him. However, not wishing to hazard success by precipitancy, I inquired, with all possible caution, what were his means of procuring a subsistence. No one could satisfy me; and it appeared a notorious

truth, that he was never known either to possess a shilling, or to have any ostensible method of earning one. The neighbours, when questioned, assured me that he led a most dissolute life, and, in fact, was considered as a person of extremely bad connexions and pursuits; his very look would have condemned him in a court of justice; and for my ownself, who had such powerful reasons for concluding both himself and his confederate Raoul to be finished rogues and highwaymen, it may be readily supposed I lost no time in applying for warrants for their apprehension. The necessary papers were no sooner asked for than given; and the very next morning, almost before daylight appeared, I repaired to the house where Court lodged; having ascended the stairs till I reached the landing-place on the first floor, I knocked at his door.

"Who is there?" asked a voice from within.

"Who should it be but Raoul?" said I, imitating the voice of the latter; "come, come, friend, open the door."

"Well, don't be in a hurry then," answered he; and, listening, I could distinctly hear the hasty movements of some one preparing to unfasten the door, which was no sooner unclosed, than, believing he was speaking to his friend Raoul, "Well," exclaimed he, "what news? any thing fresh turned up?"

"Yes, yes," replied I, "I have a thousand things to say to you;" but by this, through the glimmer of morning twilight, he discovered his error, and cried out, in a voice expressive of the greatest alarm, "Bless me, if it is not Monsieur Jules!" (This was the name which I was generally called by common women and thieves.)

"M. Jules!" repeated the wife of Court, still more alarmed than her husband.

'Suppose it is M. Jules," said I, "why should that frighten you? The devil is never so black as he is painted."

"To be sure," observed the husband; "M. Jules is

a good fellow; and although he *nobbed* me once, never mind, I owe him no ill-will for it."

"I know that, my *regular*," said I; "besides, why should you be angry with me? is it my fault if you *do a bit of moonlight?*"

"*Moonlight!* Ah!" replied Court, with the accent of a man who felt himself all at once relieved of the weight of a mountain; "*moonlight*, oh, M. Jules, if it were so, you know very well I should make no secret of it with you; however, you are welcome to look about you, and see what is to be seen."

Whilst he was every moment becoming more tranquil as to the nature of my visit, I proceeded to turn over every thing in the apartment, in which I found a pair of pistols ready loaded and primed; some knives; clothes, which appeared to have been recently washed; with several other articles, all of which I seized.

There now only remained to put the finishing stroke to my expedition, by arresting both husband and wife; for, to have allowed either of them to remain at large, would have ensured the destruction of my plan for entrapping Raoul, who would have learned from them sufficient to defeat my schemes. I therefore conducted them both to the station in the Place Cadet. Court, whom I had pinioned, relapsed all of a sudden into his original terror, and became gloomy and pensive. The precautions taken by me rendered him uneasy, and his wife appeared to participate in his terrible reflections. Their consternation was complete, when, upon our arrival at the guard-house, they heard me give orders that they should be kept apart and carefully watched. I directed that they should be plentifully supplied with food; but they were neither hungry nor thirsty.

Whenever Court was questioned on the subject, a mournful shake of the head was the only answer returned; and eighteen hours elapsed without his opening his lips. His eye was fixed and heavy, and his whole countenance rigid and immovable. This impassability convinced me but too well that he was guilty. Under

similar circumstances I have almost always observed the two extremes, a profound silence, or an extreme volubility.

Court and his wife being in a place of safety, my next business was to seize Raoul. I immediately repaired to his cabaret; he was not at home. The waiter left in charge of the house told me that he had slept at Paris, where he possessed a small country seat; but that being Sunday, he would be sure to return home quite early.

This absence of Raoul was a mischance I had not calculated upon, and I trembled, least on his way home the whim might have seized him of calling upon his friend Court. In that case he would of course have learned his arrest; and the knowledge of that might put him too much on his guard to enable me to lay hold of him. I feared likewise that he might have had a view of our expedition from the Rue Coquenard; and my apprehensions were redoubled when the waiter told me that his master's country house was in the Fauxbourg Montmartre. He had never been at it, and could not point out the road to me, but he believed it was in the close vicinity of the Place Cadet. Every additional particular I derived from him redoubled my fears, and led me to attribute the unusual absence of Raoul from his business to his having got scent of my intentions towards him.

At nine o'clock he had not returned; and the waiter, whom I questioned as closely as I could do, without allowing him to see into my designs, appeared all wonder and uneasiness that his master should thus delay his return upon so busy a day as Sunday invariably was with them. Even the servant, who was busied in preparing the breakfast I had ordered for myself and my agents, expressed her surprise at her master, and still more her mistress, being so much less exact to their usual hour for appearing than she had ever known them. "If I only knew where to send to," said the poor woman, "I would certainly inquire whether any accident can have befallen them." Al-

though fully persuaded that her fears were without foundation, I felt as much at a loss as the whole household to guess the true reason of his non-appearance. Twelve o'clock struck, still no tidings had reached us, and I began really to believe that the train had blown up, when the waiter, who had for the last half hour been posted sentry before the door, came running towards me, crying out, "Here he is, here he comes!"

"Who wants me?" asked Raoul as he entered. But scarcely had his foot crossed the threshold, than, recognising me, he exclaimed, "Bless me, M. Jules! why, what brings you in our neighbourhood this morning?" He had evidently not the slightest suspicion that it was on his account I had come, and I endeavoured to lead him still further from guessing the true nature of my visit. "So, friend!" said I, "so you are a *liberal*, are you?"

"A *liberal!*"

"Yes, even so; and you are further accused——but this is no place for conversation. Can I speak to you alone?"

"Certainly; step up to the room on the first floor, and I will follow you in a minute."

I did so, after having by signs instructed my agents to keep a strict eye over Raoul, and to take him into custody if he discovered the least disposition to quit the house. However, the unhappy man had no intention of escape, for in a very few minutes he joined me, and, with a look and manner expressive of jovial content, desired I would let him into the mighty mystery of my proceedings.

"Well, then," said I, "now that we can converse without interruption, I will frankly explain the cause of my present visit. But tell me first, can you not partly guess it?"

"Not I, upon my honour."

"You have already experienced great inconveniences

on account of those *goguettes** which you have persisted in holding in your cabaret, spite of the formal prohibition issued by the police against them. Information has been given that every Sunday there are meetings held in your house, at which seditious toasts and songs libelling government are permitted. Not only is it known that you countenance the assembling of a mass of suspicious characters, but it is understood that this very day a more than usual number is expected to collect within these walls from twelve to four o'clock. You see there is no blinding the police as to your goings on. This is not all; you are further accused of having in your possession a vast quantity of disloyal and immoral songs, which are so carefully con-

* In the years 1815 and 1816, there were in Paris a great number of singing clubs, called *goguettes*. This species of political rat-trap was at first formed under the auspices of the police, who peopled it with their agents. There it was, that, whilst drinking with mechanics and persons composing the inferior class, these spies of government worked upon them in order to involve them in false conspiracies. I have witnessed several of these mock patriotic meetings, at which those who pretended to the greatest share of enthusiasm were the tools of the police, and were easily distinguished by the gross and vulgar hatred expressed in their songs against the royal family. These intemperate rhapsodies were the productions of the same authors as the hymns of Saint Louis and Saint Charles, and were paid for out of the *secret funds* of the Rue de Jerusalem. Since the time of the late Chevalier Piïs, M. Esménard, and M. Chaget, it has been well understood that the bards of the Quai du Nord possess the privilege of contradictory inspirations. The police has its laureates, its minstrels, and its troubadours; it is, as may be seen, an institution of great gaiety and hilarity, but unfortunately not always in a state sufficiently harmonious to bear celebrating in verse. Three heads were by these machinations brought to the scaffold,—those of Carbonneau, Pleignier, and Tolleron; after which the *goguettes* were closed—there was no further occasion for them—sufficient blood had been shed.

cealed by you, that my orders were not to appear before you except in a disguise, that would have prevented your recognising my person, and to defer my operations till the gentlemen of the *goguette* should have opened their meeting. I am truly concerned to be charged with so very unpleasant a mission. Had I been apprized that you were the person alluded to, I should most certainly have declined the office; for with you, what would a disguise avail me?"

Raoul smiled, "I think, master Jules," said he, "I should have been much amused at seeing you attempt to deceive me that way."

"Still," continued I, "it is better for you that I should be employed on this business than a stranger; you know very well that I have no ill will against you. So take my advice, and give me up every song in your possession; and further, to dispel the present doubts against you, refuse admission to every person whose presence here might, in the most trifling degree, compromise your safety."

"Upon my word," said Raoul, "I had no notion before how deep a politician you were."

"Why, as to that, friend," cried I, "a little of every thing is a useful trade, and I for one, find that if I desire to get on in this world, I must be able to ride on any saddle."

"Well," replied Raoul, "you can't help it, Master Jules, but as true as my name is Clair Raoul, I swear to you that I am wrongly accused. People have surely gone mad! I, who think of nothing but just how to earn a bit of honest bread! What a world is this! Nothing but envy and spite against those who seem likely to meet with any thing like success!—however, M. Jules, if you doubt my word, you can easily judge for yourself—just make up your mind to stay here with your people; observe us well throughout the day, and form your own opinion of our principles and loyalty."

"Agreed," said I, "but hark ye, friend Raoul, no

gammon if you please; you are just the chap to destroy all these objectionable songs, and nothing would be easier than for you to give a hint to your company, that would effectually silence the *goguette* singers from committing themselves in my hearing."

"Who do you take me for, sir?" exclaimed Raoul with quickness. "I am incapable of such conduct; if I promise you to let every thing proceed as if you were not present, nothing could induce me to deviate from it; you can either believe me or not, at your pleasure, but to convince you of my honour in the business, you shall remain by my side the whole of the day; I pledge myself not to breathe one word respecting you to a living soul, not even to my wife when she comes home, so that you may be very sure;—however, you will, I hope, see no objection to my attending to my customers as usual."

"Assuredly not; let every thing go on as usual, and to lull all suspicion I don't care if I lend you a helping hand."

"Your offer is too agreeable to be refused," replied Raoul; "so if you please, M. Jules, we will proceed to work at once."

"Come on then," said I, and we descended the stairs together. Raoul prepared his huge carving-knife, and, with my sleeves tucked up, and a napkin fastened before me, I aided him in carving the veal, which, with the accompaniment of sorrel sauce, was destined for the banquet of the Luculluses of the cabaret. From the veal we proceeded to the mutton; we set out some dozens of chops in the most tempting manner, and trimmed up the leg, that delicate morsel so generally relished and longed for. I next assisted in preparing some turkeys for the spit, after which we cleared away the litter, and repaired to the wine cellar, where I made myself equally useful, by helping my companion to manufacture *genuine wine* at six sols the flask.

During this operation I was quite alone with Raoul, who passed me off to every one as his most intimate

friend. I stuck as close to him as his very shadow, and he himself appeared as unable to dispense with me as with his large carving knife. I must confess that several times I trembled lest he should suspect the motive of my watching him so closely; had he done so, he would certainly have murdered me, and I must have perished beneath his violence, without any human creature being able to assist me; happily he saw in me only a familiar of the political inquisition, and as to the seditious imputations urged against him, he was perfectly at his ease.

Up to four o'clock I continued my assistance as second in office, when the commissary of police, (now head of the second division,) whom I had informed of the affair, arrived. I was on the ground floor, when I perceived him at a distance, and hastening to him, I begged he would not make his appearance for a few minutes. I then returned to Raoul, and affecting to be exceedingly angry, "The devil take them!" cried I, "the police have just sent to me to say that our business lies at your house in Paris, and that we must remove thither instantly."

"Oh, if that be all," said Raoul, "let us go there at once."

"Yes," replied I, "and when we are there we shall be ordered back again here; faith, they do not stand very nice as to the trouble they give us with the contradictory orders! if I were in your place, since we are in your house, I would send to request the commissary of police to allow your premises to be searched; it would be a convincing argument that you were wrongly accused."

Raoul applauded this advice as most excellent, did as I recommended, and having obtained the commissary's consent, the strictest search took place, without, however, its producing anything to criminate him.

"Well," cried he, (when the whole was concluded,) with that tone of exultation which might have sprung from a man of conscious integrity; "Well, gentlemen, I

hope you are now satisfied. Upon my word, I do not think myself at all well used to be suspected and searched in this manner. Why you could not have done more had I committed murder!"

The assurance with which the latter part of the sentence was pronounced really startled me, and for a moment I repented of having ever suspected him, but the many reasons I had for concluding him guilty quickly effaced my regret. Still it was frightful to consider that a robber and murderer like himself, whose hands were yet reeking with the blood of his victim, could, without a shudder, utter words which thus recalled his guilt. Raoul was calm and almost triumphant in his manner; and when we were seated in the hackney-coach which was to transport us to Paris, an indifferent spectator might have supposed he was proceeding to a festival; he rubbed his hands, and said with all the glee imaginable, "I am thinking how my wife will be astonished at seeing me return to her in such good company." It happened to be his wife who opened the door; at the sight of us her countenance underwent not the slightest alteration; she presented us with seats, but as we had but little time to lose, the commissary and myself immediately set to work to perform our task of examining the house. Raoul did not appear desirous of quitting us for a moment, but guided us through our search with the utmost complaisance.

In order to give a colouring to the story I had first told him, we affected the greatest solicitude respecting his papers; he gave me the key of his escritoire. I seized upon a bundle of papers, and the first upon which I cast my eyes was a direction, part of which had been torn off. Instantly the shape of the torn fragment, on which was written the address found on the place of murder, and affixed by the magistrates of Corbeil to their *procès verbal*, occurred to my recollection. The piece now before me had evidently formed part of it. The commissary to whom I communicated my opinion coincided with me in it. Raoul

had at first seen us take up the note and examine it, with perfect indifference: possibly, he might not himself recollect, just at that moment, its fatal signification; but as he observed our scrutiny more and more directed to it, his memory evidently refreshed him with its full force: his countenance changed in an instant; the muscles of his face contracted; a ghastly paleness came over him; and springing towards a drawer in which were his loaded pistols, he endeavoured to seize them; when, by an equally rapid movement, my agents and myself threw ourselves upon him, and soon deprived him of all power of resistance.

It was nearly midnight when Raoul and his wife were conducted to the prefecture;—Court arrived there a quarter of an hour afterwards. The two accomplices were separately confined. Up to this period there had been nothing but presumptive evidence against them; I therefore undertook to obtain their own confession whilst they remained in their first stupor. It was on Court that I first employed my eloquence. I worked him, as it is called, in every possible way. I used every species of argument to convince him that it was to his own interest to make a full avowal.

"Take my advice," said I to him, "declare the truth of the matter; why should you persist in endeavouring to conceal what is known to every one? you will find, by the very first question put to you at your examination, that your judges are much better informed than you think for—death has not sealed the lips of all the persons you have attacked. Many of those you believed your victims will produce overwhelming proofs against you; you may be silent if you please, but your silence will not prevent your condemnation; public execution is not all you expose yourself to; think of the punishments and severity with which your obstinacy will be visited; justly irritated against you, the magistrates will show you no mercy up to the hour of your execution; you will be watched, tormented, worse even than by the tortures of a slow consuming fire: if you persist in

your obstinate refusal to make a full confession, your prison will be a perfect hell to you. On the contrary, by avowing your past iniquities, expressing sorrow and contrition for them, and meeting your fate with resignation, (since you cannot hope to escape from it,) you will at least have a chance of exciting the pity of mankind, and the humane consideration of those appointed to try you."

I had carefully forebome mentioning to Court of what murder he was accused; fully impressed with the idea of his having been accessary to more than one, I avoided specifying that of which he then stood charged. I hoped that, by using only vague words, and refraining from every precise detail, I might be enabled to draw him on to the confession of other crimes besides the one for which he was then in custody. Court reflected for a moment—

"Well, then," said he, "since you advise it, I will acknowledge that it was I who murdered the travelling poulterer.—Why, his soul must have stuck faster to his body than I guessed it could—poor devil! and did he really come back to life after such a dressing as I gave him? I'll tell you, M. Jules, how the thing happened, and I wish I may die if I tell a lie about it:—A number of Normans were returning home, after having sold their wares at Paris. I fancied they must be loaded with money, and in consequence lay in wait for them. I stopped the two first who came by, but found little or nothing upon them. I was at that time in the most extreme necessity: want drove me on to the deed, for my wife was destitute of every thing, and the thoughts of her wretched state wrung my heart. At last, whilst I was giving myself up to despair, I heard the noise of wheels: I hastened to meet it; it was a poulterer's cart; the poor wretch was half asleep when I called to him to deliver up his purse. He emptied his pockets. I felt in them myself, but his whole possessions were 80 francs!—80 francs! what was that to me who was in debt to every one? I owed two

quarters' rent, and my landlord was hourly threatening to turn us out of doors. To heighten my misery, I was dunned by other creditors equally merciless. What was I to do with this paltry supply of 80 francs? Rage took possession of me. I seized my pistols, and, without one moment's reflection, discharged them both at my gentleman's heart. A fortnight afterwards I learned that he still lived! you may imagine, therefore, that my present situation does not surprise me; for, since the moment I have been describing to you, I have never enjoyed one hour's peace, in the fear of his paying me off sooner or later."

"Your fears were well founded," said I, "but this unfortunate dealer in poultry is not your only victim; what do you expect from the butcher whom you pierced through and through with your knife, after having carried off his purse?"

"Oh, as to that," exclaimed the villain, "may God receive his soul! I will answer for it, that if he witnesses against me, it can only be at the last judgment."

"You are mistaken, the butcher did not die of his wounds, any more than the former victim you were speaking of."

"Ah! so much the better," cried Court.

"No, he lives; and I must warn you that he has pointed out both you and your accomplices, in a manner too distinct to admit of any mistake."

Court endeavoured to persist in affirming that he had no accomplices; but he became weary of his own falsehood, and at length admitted that Clair Raoul had participated in the crime for which he was accused. I urged him (but in vain) to name others as well: he maintained the same story, and I was compelled to content myself with what I had already drawn from him; however, in the fear of his retracting, I summoned the commissary, in whose presence Court repeated, and even enlarged upon, what he had previously told me.

To have brought Court to an acknowledgment of his crime, and to obtain from him a written declaration of it, was no doubt an important point gained; but a more difficult battle remained to be fought ere Raoul could be persuaded to follow his example. To effect this, I stole softly to the room in which he was confined. He was sleeping; and, stepping cautiously in the fear of awaking him, I placed myself beside him, and whispered gently in his ear, in the hope of leading him, as under the influence of a dream, to answer the questions thus put to him. Without raising the low tone in which I had first addressed him, I interrogated him as to the particulars of the murder. Some unintelligible words escaped him, but it was impossible to make any sense of them. This scene lasted for nearly a quarter of an hour, when, at my asking him "What became of the knife with which you murdered your victim?" he gave a sudden start, uttered some inarticulate sounds, and, flinging himself from the bed on which he was lying, opened his wild and glaring eyes full upon me, as if he dreaded the apparition of some horrid vision.

From the terror and astonishment with which he continued to regard me, even after he had recognised my person, it might easily be perceived that he dreaded my having been the witness to his late severe internal struggle, and I could readily see in his eyes the eagerness with which he sought to divine how far his restless guilty conscience had betrayed him during his unquiet slumbers. A cold perspiration covered his face, he was deathly pale, and whilst he endeavoured to force a smile, his teeth chattered and ground together in spite of him; he presented an exact representation of a damned spirit in all the tortures of an agonizing conscience—a second Orestes pursued by the furies. Ere the last vapours of his uneasy dreams had passed away, I wished to turn the circumstance to account; it was not the first time I had called the night-mare to my aid.

"You appear," said I to Raoul, "to have had a frightful dream; you have been talking a great deal, and seemed to be in great pain: I could not bear to see you suffer so much, and woke you to dispel the anguish and remorse to which you seemed a prey. Do not feel displeased at this language—it is in vain to dissimulate further; the confessions of your friend, Court, have informed us of every thing—justice is in full possession of every circumstance relative to the crime whereof you are accused. Do not seek to palliate your participation in it,—the evidence of your accomplice cannot be invalidated by any thing you can say; if you seek to save yourself by a system of denial, the voice of your unhappy associate will confound you in the presence of your judges; and if that be not sufficient, the butcher whom you murdered near Milly will appear as your accuser."

At these words I steadily examined the countenance of Raoul; a slight discomposure was observable in his features, but it soon passed away, and recovering himself, he replied with firmness:—

"M. Jules, you are trying to entrap me; you only throw away your time; you are deep and cunning, but I know my own innocence. As to what you say of Court, you will not persuade me that he is guilty; still less do I believe that he can have implicated my name, when there exists not the slightest appearance of probability of his doing so."

I again declared to Raoul that it was useless for him to seek to conceal the truth from me—"Well, then," said I, "if nothing else will do, you shall be confronted with your friend; we shall then see whether you will venture to persist in denying the facts he has sworn to."

"Let him come," cried Raoul, "I do not ask for any thing better; I am confident that Court is incapable of a bad or dishonourable action.—Why should he accuse himself of a crime he has not committed, and implicate me in it for mere wantonness? unless indeed he has lost his senses, which is not very likely.—Hark ye, M.

Jules; I am so certain of what I assert, that if he says he committed this murder, and that I had a share in it, I consent to pass for the greatest scoundrel that ever walked the earth.—I will acknowledge, as true, whatever he may say; and, I further engage, either to clear my innocence through his means, or to ascend the same scaffold with him.—I do not dread the guillotine, whether its blow descend for this or any other offence; if Court confirms what you have said, be it so—all is over—the veil is raised, and two heads will fall at once."

I quitted him in these dispositions, and went to propose the interview to his comrade: this latter, however, refused, declaring that, after the confession he had made, he had not the courage to encounter Raoul.—"Since I have regularly signed and attested my deposition," said he, "let it be read to him, it will suffice to convince him; besides, he will recognise my writing."

This repugnance, which I was far from expecting, vexed me so much the more, as I have frequently known the thoughts of a man arraigned of crime to change in an instant from one opinion to the opposite extreme. I exerted all my influence to overcome Court's objections, and at length succeeded in deciding him to act as I wished. After a trifling delay, the two friends found themselves in each other's presence: they embraced; and the ingenuity of Court suggested to him a *ruse* by which to palliate his having involved his coadjutor in his acknowledgment of guilt; and this, without having originated in my advice, materially assisted my plans:—"Friend Raoul," cried Court, "I am informed you have followed my example, and made a full confession of our unfortunate crime. It was the very best thing we could either of us do; for, as M. Jules observes, there are too many convincing proofs against us, to make further denial of any avail."

The person to whom these words were addressed stood for an instant as if petrified with astonishment;

but, quickly gathering his spirits,—"Faith, M. Jules!" exclaimed he, "you have managed well—we are both completely drawn! Now, then, as I am a man of my word, I will keep that I gave you, by concealing nothing;" and immediately he began a recital which fully confirmed that of his associate. These new revelations having received the usual forms of law, I remained in conversation with the two assassins, who bore their part in it with inexhaustible mirth and hilarity, the general effect of confession with the greatest criminals. I supped with them, and although they ate heartily they drank very moderately. Their countenances had resumed their usual calmness, and no vestige was perceptible of the late catastrophe; they looked upon it as a settled thing, that by their confession they had undertaken to pay their debt to offended justice.

After supper I informed them that we should set out in the night for Corbeil. "In that case," said Raoul, "it is not worth while going to bed;" and he begged of me to procure him a pack of cards. When the vehicle which was to convey us was ready, they were as deeply engaged with their game of piquet, as any two peaceful citizens of Paris could have been.

They ascended the carriage without appearing to suffer the least emotion at so doing, and we had scarcely reached the Barrière d'Italie, when they were happily asleep and snoring; nor had they aroused themselves, when, at eight o'clock in the morning, we entered Corbeil.

CHAPTER XLIII.

Arrival at Corbeil—Popular legends—A crowd—The gossips—Good company—Poulailler and Captain Picard—A disgust for grandeur—The dealer in turkeys—General Beaufort—Public opinion of myself—Extreme terror of a sous préfet—Assassins and their victim—Repentance—Another supper—Place the knives—Important discoveries &c. &c.

The noise of our arrival was quickly spread abroad, and the inhabitants flocked to have a view of the assassins of the butcher, whose story had excited so much commiseration. I was equally an object of curiosity to them, and was pleased with the present opportunity of learning the opinion entertained of me at the distance of six leagues from Paris. I hastened to mingle in the crowd assembled before the prison gates, from whence I could easily overhear the most amusing observations: "There he is, that is he," exclaimed the spectators, raising themselves on tip toe every time the wicket opened to allow ingress or egress to any of my agents.

"Look look, do you see him?" said one of them, "that little hop o' my thumb there, scarcely five feet high."

"Stuff! a shrimp like that! I could put fifty such in my pocket."

"Shrimp as you call him, he is more than a match for you; he is a first-rate boxer, and has a sort of a back throw that would astonish you."

"All fudge, I dare say; do you suppose he is the only one that knows a good thing?"

"No no!" bawled out a second spectator, "this is he, this tall slender fellow with the red hair."

"What a lath!" cried out the next bystander, "why with one hand in my pocket I could double him in two."

"You could?"

"Yes, I could!"

"And do you fancy that he would allow you to lay your fingers upon him? No, no! you have mistaken your man;—he comes sometimes as if meaning to speak amicably to one, and just the moment you least expect it comes a *dig in the bread basket*, or, as he may happen to prefer, a *pelt of the conk*, which will make you see fifty candles at once."

"The gentleman who spoke last is perfectly right," said an old citizen, eyeing me through his spectacles; "this Vidocq is a most extraordinary character; I have been told that when he wishes to seize a man, he has a certain blow, which once aimed never fails to deprive the person against whom it is directed of all power of resistance."

"And I have been told," said a carman, joining in the conversation, "that he never goes without large *clouts* in the soles of his shoes, and whilst he is giving you a punch of the head, he breaks your shins with a kick a thousand times heavier than any horse."

"Mind where you are walking, you great clod-hopper," exclaimed a young girl, whose corns the clumsy carman had been most unceremoniously stamping on.

"Just a little treat for you, my pretty one," replied the rustic; "Never mind trifles like that, you are not quite killed. I dare say if Vidocq were to give you a gentle taste of the heel of his boot upon your favourite toe you might indeed call out."

"Indeed, I should like to see him dare to do so."

"Ah! he would spoil your dancing, I can promise you—but who is that coming from the prison? look."

At this instant I addressed the carman. "I hope," said I, "that the sparkling eyes of my pretty neighbour here would ensure her safety from Vidocq, wicked as he may be."

"Yes, yes!" rejoined the carman, "I believe he is vastly civil to the women. I have been told that he is a merry fellow enough with them, and bears an excellent reputation. Although many a pretty girl has lost hers through the honour of his good company." These

words were accompanied by a loud horse-laugh, in which the rest of the company joined.

"What is the matter there?" cried some who were not sufficiently nigh the scene of action to understand the cause of the burst of voices which assailed their ears.

"Hats off."

"Do you observe that man in the wig?"

"Are those the murderers?"

"There he is, there he is!"

"Who? who?"

"Do not crowd so dreadfully."

"Take your hands off, you blackguard."

"Knock him down! down with him!"

"How wrong of females to risk their lives by coming to a scene like this."

"Here, climb up on my shoulder."

"Down there, you are not made of glass."

"Are they all mad to make such a noise?"

"Oh, it is nobody after all, only a guardsman!"

"Are any of the spies amongst them?"

"Spies? Yes, four I have been told."

By the time these different exclamations were ended, the flux and reflux of the multitude had borne me away to the midst of a fresh group, where a dozen gossips were busily conversing of me in the following manner:—

First gossip. (This speaker appeared, by his silvery locks, of venerable age.) "Yes, sir, he was condemned to the galleys for a hundred and one years—commuted from sentence of death."

Second gossip. "A hundred and one years! bless me, why that is more than an age!"

An old woman. "The lord be good unto me, what is that you favoured me by saying? A hundred and one years! indeed, as the other gentleman observed, that is rather more than a day!"

Third gossip. "No, no; something more than a day indeed; upon my credit, a tolerably long lease of it."

Fourth gossip. "And so he had committed murder, had he?"

FIFTH GOSSIP. "Why did not you know that? bless you, he is a villain loaded with every sort of crime, he has been guilty of every enormity by turns, each of which has merited the guillotine; but he is a deep rascal, and has managed to keep his head on his shoulders to the surprise of every one."

ANOTHER GOSSIP. (In what order his speech was made I do not now remember, I recollect only that he was dressed in black, and from the style of his dress and hair I concluded him to be one of the churchwardens of the parish).

THE FLEUR DE LIS. "No, better still! I am informed by my friend the commissary, that this Vidocq always accustoms himself to wear a ring round his leg—is it not strange?"

MYSELF. "Come, do not seek to *gammon* us with your stories of rings, do you suppose we could not perceive it, if it were worn as you say."

THE GOSSIP IN BLACK. (Gravely.) "No, sir, you could not see it; in the first place, you are not to imagine it an iron ring of four or five pounds weight. No, it is a golden ring, as light as possible, and nearly imperceptible. Ah! indeed, if like me he wore short knee breeches, you would soon discover it, but those trowsers hide every thing.—Trowsers indeed! an absurd fashion. We may thank the revolution for that introduction as well as for cropped heads, hair *à la Titus* as they term it, which no longer leave it possible to discover a gentleman from one who has tugged at the galleys. I only ask you, gentlemen, whether if this Vidocq were to introduce himself amongst you, you would feel particularly flattered by his company?"

"Pray," asked the old woman who had before spoken, "is it true that he was publicly branded?"

"Certainly, madam; that too with a red hot iron on both shoulders. I will answer for it that if he were stripped, you would read the mark in all its brightness. I ask you once more, my friends, what would you say were this fellow to presume to show himself here?"

A Chevalier of Saint Louis. "I can't say I should particularly desire the honour of his company; what think you, M. de la Potonière?"

M. de la Potoniere. "Upon the word of a gentleman, my only wish would be to rid myself of it as soon as possible. A galley-slave, and, what is still worse, a spy of the police! If he only employed himself in arresting villains similar to those he has brought to our town to-day, he would be earning honourable bread; but do you know on what condition he was removed from the Bagne? To obtain his liberty he has engaged to deliver up to justice a hundred individuals a month; whether guilty or innocent matters little to him; the number must be made up, or he would speedily be re-conducted from whence he came. On the other hand, should he exceed his engagement, he receives a premium for each one above the required quantity. Is this the way these things are managed in England, Sir Wilson?"

Sir Wilson.* "No, the British government has not yet adopted a similar commutation of punishment. I do not know this M. Vidocq; but in my opinion, however great a villain he may be, he is still preferable to those who merely suspend the sword of justice over his head, that it may fall with redoubled violence directly he finds it impossible to fulfil his disgraceful bargain. O'Meara, who is no greater friend than myself to our ministry, will attest that it has not yet reached this point of degradation. You are silent, doctor; why don't you speak?"

Doctor O'Meara. "They would only have had to select from amongst the heroes of Tyburn and Botany Bay fit agents to undertake to preserve London in safety; but when a thief is set to catch a thief, who can answer for it that they may not join trades? and then what becomes of your system?"

* Most probably M. Vidocq means Sir Robert Wilson.—Trans.

THE CHEVALIER ST. LOUIS. "A very just observation. It is, indeed, an inconceivable thing why the police have never employed any but men of blemished character. Surely a sufficient number of honest ones might be found!"

MYSELF. "Perhaps *you*, sir, would not object to fill the post now occupied by Vidocq!"

THE CHEVALIER. "I, sir! God preserve me from such an employment."

MYSELF. "Then, my good sir, why propose impossibilities?"

SIR WILSON. "And impossibilities they will remain, till the police of France, which is *now* nothing but a gloomy institution, a series of continual devices and plots, shall have ceased to encourage spies, and shall have adopted other means than those at present employed to preserve public order and general safety."

AN ENGLISH LADY (surrounded by a host of half-pay officers, who appeared most anxious to pay their court to her, and who, I believe, was Lady Owenson.*) "Ah, general, you know few people understand these things as well as you do."

ONE OF THE OFFICERS. "See! yonder is General Beaufort, with the Picard family!"

LADY OWENSON. "Good day to you, general. I beg to condole with you upon the affair of your snuff-box, of which I have just heard the history. We have an old proverb in our language which signifies, 'That it is wiser to keep ourselves awake over our cups, than to expose oneself to a long nap in the nearest ditch!'"

THE GENERAL (with bitterness.) "That proverb might have been taught with profit to the unfortunate butcher every person seems talking so much about."

LADY OWENSON. "And not have come amiss to you either, general; but, joking apart, why do you not apply to Vidocq to recover your snuff-box for you?"

* Possibly meant for Lady Morgan, formerly Miss Owenson.—TRANS.

THE GENERAL. "To Vidocq! a thief! a scamp! a beggarly scoundrel! If I only fancied I had ever breathed the same air with him, I should hang myself the moment I discovered it. Me apply to Vidocq!"

CAPTAIN PICARD. "And why not, if he could procure the restitution of your lost property?"

THE GENERAL (with a tone of assumed consequence.) "That is exactly like your advice. You!—but really, friend Picard, you have a monstrously odd way of beating about the bush."

CAPTAIN PICARD. "General, I am at a loss to comprehend your meaning."

THE GENERAL. "Why, I mean that you have such a roundabout way of going to work, 'tis like your telling a story. There is no getting you to proceed in a straight line. Now in that account you have begun at least fifty times of your father having arrested the famous Poulailler ——."

LADY OWENSON. "The famous Poulailler! Oh! M. Picard, tell us all about it; do, there is a dear entertaining man. The famous Poulailler! pray begin; I am all curiosity to hear your amusing account of it."

M. PICARD. "At your desire, madam, certainly; although 'tis an old story, and I fear you will find it somewhat too lengthy for a lady's patience."

LADY OWENSON. "Nay, M. Picard, I entreat the favour of your relating it."

M. PICARD. "Well then, madam, you must first understand that this Poulailler was the most adroit robber that had appeared since the time of Cartouche. I should never have finished were I to relate only the fourth part of what I have heard my mother repeat concerning him; for though my parent is nearly four-score years of age, she has a famous memory."

THE GENERAL. "Come, come, captain, don't lose the thread of your discourse already."

LADY OWENSON. "Now pray, general, do not interrupt us. Go on, M. Picard—I am all attention."

M. PICARD. "To make the story as brief as possible,

I will just proceed to inform you that, at the time in which my story happened, the court was at Fontainebleau, celebrating, with more than usual splendour, a royal marriage which had just taken place. My father, who was a police officer, received one night an express, announcing to him that one night, at the close of a ball, several individuals, dressed as noblemen, had disappeared, carrying with them the greater part of the diamond ornaments belonging to the ladies who had figured in the quadrilles. These thefts amounted to a very considerable sum; they had been effected with so much audacity, subtilty, and precision, that it was unanimously decided none but the bold and daring Poulailler could have been the author of them. He had been seen at the head of six men, superbly equipped, taking the road to Paris. These were presumed to have been the thieves, and that they would pass on to Essonne. My father lost no time in repairing thither, and there he learnt that the whole cavalcade had alighted at the sign of the Grand Cerf, that deserted house now known by the name of the Farm. When my father reached the auberge I have been speaking of, they had retired to bed, leaving their fine horses carefully locked in the stable. My father determined, as a first step, to seize the horses, which he found ready saddled and bridled. They were shod the reverse way, so as to lead any person pursuing them into the idea of their having gone by a directly opposite road to that they had in reality taken."

Lady Owenson. "What a deep trick! These robbers appear to have been a match for even your respected father, M. Picard."

M. Picard. "My father caused the girths to be cut, and then ascended to the chamber of Poulailler; but this latter, warned by one of his spies, had already flown, and the rest of the band were dispersed about the country: nor could he at present spare the necessary time for their pursuit. My father hastened to the Cour de France, where he learnt that a smart gentle-

man, dressed in a coat covered with gold, and having fine waving plumes in his hat, had been seen to enter a little roadside public-house. Doubtlessly this was Poulailler, at least so thought my father; when, upon entering the cottage, he perceived the object of his search. 'In the king's name, I arrest you,' exclaimed my father. 'Ah, my good sir,' replied his prisoner, 'for mercy's sake do not arrest me; I am not the person you are in search of, but a poor devil going to Paris with a flock of turkeys. On my road I met a gentleman, who bought them of me, and exchanged his coat for mine. I did not lose by the bargain, without reckoning the fifteen bright Louis d'ors he paid me for my turkeys. Pray, sir, if you are looking for *him*, do not harm him, for he is a charming gentleman; he spoke so gently and scholar-like about his being tired of living with the great, and how he meant to have a taste of rural simplicity, I think he called it. If you should meet him on the road, you would fancy he had been a turkey-driver all his life; he dabs among them with his long pole. My conscience! the poor birds have never had so strict a master. Little fear, I think, of their being lost on the way for want of being looked after.' My father had no sooner received these particulars, than he galloped after the pretended turkey-merchant, whom he quickly overtook. Poulailler, finding himself discovered, endeavoured to fly; but my father was more than his equal in speed. The robber then fired off a brace of pistols; but my father, not in the least intimidated, leaped from his horse, seized Poulailler by the throat, threw him on the ground, and succeeded in fastening his hands behind him. I can assure you that it required no small strength, as well as courage, to effect all this, for Poulailler was a most powerful man; however, in the present instance he had met with his match."

General Beaufort. "Well, Captain Picard, have you finished? Your way of telling a story is just what I have heard called *spinning a long yarn*."

Myself, (addressing General Beaufort.) "Genera , I ask your pardon ; but the more I look at you, the more I feel assured that I have had the honour of knowing you. Allow me to inquire whether you did not command the gendarmes at Mons ?"

The General. "Yes, friend, in 1793. We were with Dumouriez and the then duke of Orleans."

Myself. "There it was then, general, that I had the honour to serve under you."

The General (extending his hand to me with enthusiasm.) "Ah, my noble comrade, come to my arms. You must positively eat your dinner with me. Gentlemen, I beg to present to you one of my old soldiers ; he is tolerably strong built, is he not? Ah, I had many fine fellows under me ; but never mind. I say, M. Picard, I think my friend here could have arrested even your gigantic M. Poulailler."

Whilst the worthy general was pressing my hands in his, and reiterating his request that I should dine with him, a gendarme, who had been seeking me amongst the spectators, approached me, and, gently touching my shoulder, said, "M. Vidocq, the king's solicitor has been inquiring for you, and wishes to see you immediately." It was really ludicrous to see how every countenance changed at these words. "What! can it be Vidocq?" exclaimed my late audience, with lengthened faces. "Vidocq! Vidocq!" shouted out others, and immediately all was fighting, struggling, and confusion, to endeavour to force a passage for the eager looks of those who were not sufficiently near to gratify their eye-sight with a view of the so much coveted monster, for such they certainly expected to find me. Some even climbed on the shoulders of their neighbours, to satisfy themselves as to whether I really was a human creature or not ; of this I had convincing proofs by the following flying remarks which reached my ears :—

"Bless me! light complexion! I fancied him quite dark. I heard he was ill-looking. I see nothing so

very ugly about him. What a strange manner of walking he has!"

These and similar observations were made by the crowd, whose sole interest now seemed centered in noting down every particular relative to my personal appearance. So great was the concourse of gazers, that I had much difficulty in forcing my way along to the procureur. This magistrate wished me to conduct the accused persons before the interrogating judge. Court, whom I first led thither, appeared intimidated at finding himself in the presence of so many persons, I exhorted him to keep up his courage, and to confirm his confessions. This he did without any great difficulty, as far as related to the assassination of the butcher; but when questioned on the subject of the poulterer he retracted all his previous declarations, and it was impossible to lead him to confess that he had had any other accomplices than Raoul. This latter when introduced into the chamber, unhesitatingly confirmed every fact mentioned in the *procès verbal*, which had been drawn up after his arrest. He related in full detail, and with the most imperturbable sang froid, all that had passed between the unfortunate Fontaine and his murderers, up to the moment of his striking the first blow at his victim.

"The man," said he, "was only stunned by the two blows he received from a stick; when I saw that they had not sufficed to bring him to the ground, I drew near, as if to support him, holding in my hand the knife which is lying upon that table;" pronouncing these words, he sprang towards the desk, abruptly seized the instrument of his crime, made two steps backwards, and rolling his eyes, sparkling with fury, he assumed a menacing attitude. This movement, which was wholly unexpected, filled with terror all who were present; the sous préfet was nearly fainting, and I myself underwent some alarm. Nevertheless, I felt the necessity of concealing from Raoul the effect he had produced, and

I even sought to attribute his violent gestures to a good motive. "Gentlemen!" cried I, smiling, "what is it you fear? Raoul is incapable of acting like a coward, and abusing the confidence reposed in him; he merely took up the knife, the better to explain his share in the business." "Thanks, M. Jules!" cried he, delighted with my explanation, and quietly laying down the knife on the table, he added, "I only wished to show you how I made use of it."

To complete the preliminaries it only remained to confront the accused with Fontaine; the surgeon was applied to, to ascertain whether the sick man was sufficiently recovered to bear so trying a scene, and he having replied in the affirmative, Court and Raoul were taken to the hospital. Introduced into the apartment occupied by the butcher, their eyes eagerly sought their victim. Fontaine with his head and face nearly covered with bandages, and his whole person wrapped in linen cloths, was indeed scarcely to be recognised; but beside him were displayed the clothes and shirt worn by him on the night he was so cruelly assaulted. "Ah! poor Fontaine!" cried Court, falling on his knees at the foot of the bed, decorated by these bloody trophies; "forgive the miserable wretches who have reduced you to this condition; that you still survive is a striking interposition of Providence, who has been pleased to preserve you the better to punish us as our crimes deserve."

Whilst he was expressing himself thus, Raoul, who had likewise knelt down, preserved a deep silence, and appeared plunged in the deepest affliction.

"Stand up, both of you, and look the sick man in the face;" said the judge who accompanied them. They rose up—

"Take those murderers from my sight!" shrieked Fontaine, "their countenances and voice are but too familiar to me."

This recognition, and the manner of the culprits, was

more than sufficient to establish the fact of Court and Raoul having been the actors in this frightful tragedy; but, I was firmly persuaded that they had other crimes besides this, with which to reproach themselves, and that, in order to commit them, they must have been more than two in number. This was a secret of the greatest importance. I determined to exert myself to the utmost to come at the truth; and not to quit them till I induced them to unload their consciences by a full confession of their past misdeeds. On our return to the prison after this meeting, I caused supper to be served for the accused and myself. The porter inquired whether he should place knives on the table.

"Yes, yes!" cried I, "set knives to each gentleman, by all means."

My two guests eat their meals with as great an appearance of appetite, as though they had been the most honest men breathing. When they had drunk a few glasses of wine, I dexterously brought back the conversation to the subject of their crime.

"You are not naturally bad fellows," said I to them, "I'll engage that you have been led into all this by some scoundrel or other; why not own it? From the confession and repentance you displayed at the sight of Fontaine, it is easily seen that you would willingly recall, at the price of your own blood, the violence he received at your hands. And do you not consider that by concealing your accomplices you are responsible for all the crimes they may commit. Many persons who have come forward to depose against you, have declared that you were at least four in number in all your expeditions."

"They were mistaken then," exclaimed Raoul; "I give you my word of honour, M. Jules, that they were; we were never more than three, the other is an old officer of the customs, named Pons Gerard; he lives just on the frontier, in a little village between Capelle and Hirson in the department of the Aisne; but if

you think to catch him, I must warn you that he is not to be caught napping, he always sleeps with one eye open whilst the other is shut."

"No!" said Court, "it would be no easy job to nab him, and if you do not set your wits to work you will only get your labour for your pains."

"Oh, he is a queer hand indeed," cried Raoul; "you are no bungler yourself, M. Jules, but ten like you would not frighten him; at any rate you must be on your guard if he gets scent of your being in search of him; he is not far from Belgium, and will soon be off; if you surprise him he will make a desperate resistance, so try if you cannot manage to take him asleep."

"Yes, if you could find out that he ever does sleep," added Court.

I made strict inquiries as to the usual habits of Pons Gérard, and obtained a full description both of them and his person. As soon as I had learned every particular requisite for being secure of identifying my man, thinking to stamp the confession I had just elicited with all possible authenticity, I proposed to the two prisoners to write off immediately for a magistrate to receive their depositions. Raoul instantly took up his pen, and when his letter was completed, I carried the letter myself to the king's solicitor, it was conceived in the following terms:—

"Sir,—Being now in a frame of mind more suitable to our unhappy condition, and resolving to profit by the advice you bestowed upon us, we have come to the resolution of acknowledging to you every crime of which we are guilty, and to point out to you a sharer in them, whose name is at present unknown to you. We entreat of you, therefore, to have the kindness to visit us in our prison, in order to receive our depositions."

The magistrate lost no time in acceding to their request, and Court as well as Raoul repeated before him all that they had previously told me of Pons Gérard.

This latter now occupied all my thoughts, and as it would not do to allow him time to learn the destruction of his comrade's schemes, I instantly obtained an order to arrest him.

CHAPTER XLIV.

A journey to the frontiers—A robber—Mother Bardou—Assisted by a child—A deliberation—I address the object of my search—A feigned recognition—A pleasant fellow—The two make a pair—The false smuggler—False advice—A brigand astonished—We should not tempt the devil—I deliver the country from a scourge—Hercules with the skin of a bear—A great devourer of tobacco.

Disguised as a dealer in horses, I set out with my agents Clement and Goury, who passed for my ostlers; and such was the diligence used by us, that, spite of the severity of the season and the badness of the roads, (for it was in the midst of winter,) we arrived at La Capelle on the evening of the following day, which happened, fortunately for my purpose, to be the eve of a large fair. Having traversed the country more than once during my military career, I required but a very short time to arrange my plan of action, and to assume the dialect of the place. All the inhabitants to whom I spoke of Pons Gérard described him to me as a robber, who subsisted only by fraud and rapine; his very name was sufficient to excite universal terror, and the authorities of the place, although daily furnished with proofs of his enormities, durst take no steps to repress them. In a word, he was one of those terrible beings who compel obedience from all who summoned them; for my own part, little accustomed to draw back from a perilous enterprise, these particulars only stimulated me the more to enter upon the undertaking. My vanity was piqued to accomplish a task which appeared to vie in difficulty with the labours of Hercules, but did I know that success would attend my arduous attempt? As yet I was ignorant of many

essential points, but trusting for the best, I sat down to breakfast with my agents, and when we had sufficiently fortified our stomachs, we set out in search of the hardened accomplice of Court and Raoul. These latter had pointed out to me a lone auberge as the favourite haunt of Pons. This house was the rendezvous of a nest of smugglers, and the woman who kept it, considering Pons as one of her best customers, felt great interest in all that concerned him. So well had this auberge been described to me, that I required no further directions to find it; I therefore repaired thither with my two companions, and entering, seated myself without any ceremony, assuming the tone and manner of one well used to the ways of the house.

"Good day to you, Mother Bardou, how goes all with you?"

"The same to you, my good friends, and many of them. You are welcome to my poor place; thank God, we are all pretty comfortable, thanks for your inquiry. What would you please to have, gentlemen?"

"Dinner, dinner! my good soul; we are starving with hunger."

"You shall have it directly, sirs;—please to step into the next room, where you will find a good fire."

Whilst she was employed in laying the cloth, I drew her into the following conversation:—

"I begin to fancy, my good hostess, that you have forgotten my features."

"Wait a little till I have time to look well at you."

"Why what a memory you must have to forget how I used to come with Pons to your house last winter, many a time have we paid you a *moonshine* visit.

"Bless me! now I begin to recollect."

"To be sure you do, look again."

"Oh! now I remember you perfectly."

"Well, how is our jolly cove Gérard, how is he getting on? quite strong and hearty, eh?"

"I'faith is he, he was here only this morning, and

took a glass or two on his way to Lamare house, where he had employment."

Of this house, or of its situation, I was utterly ignorant, nevertheless as I had given myself out as a person well acquainted with the neighbourhood, I was careful not to betray myself by risking any inquiry. Still I trusted that, without directly asking the question, I should be enabled to lead my voluble friend, by indirect means, to the point at which I wished to arrive. Accident favoured me, for scarcely had we swallowed a few mouthfuls of our dinner, than Mother Bardou entered the room, "You were talking of Gérard just now," said she, "his daughter has just called in."

"Indeed! which of the daughters?"

"The youngest."

I rose immediately, and running up to the child embraced her before she had time even to look at me; and rapidly naming each member of her family, made many and warm inquiries after their health. When she had replied to them, I cut short the parley by giving her a trifle of money, and recommending her to hasten home whither I would accompany her, as I was extremely anxious to present myself to her excellent mother; beckoning to my companions, we left the house, following the footsteps of our little guide, who, surprised at the novelty of the rencontre, was making with all speed for the dwelling of her mother. No sooner, however, had we got out of sight of the auberge, than I called to the girl, "Hark ye, my little one, do you know the place they call Lamare house?"

"It stands just down there," said she, pointing with her finger to the other side of Hirson.

"Well, then, I'll tell you what you shall do; just run on and let your mother know that you have met three particular friends of your father's, and that we shall return to sup with him. So that she may as well have it all ready for four of us.—That's right—make the best of your way; good evening, my pretty maid."

The daughter of Gérard pursued her way, and we

were not slow in following the road she had described to us, which brought us nearly facing the house we sought, but no persons were to be seen about, and upon questioning a countryman whom we met, he informed us that Pons was at work with a number of labourers at a short distance from thence; we proceeded onwards, and having gained an eminence, obtained a view of about thirty men employed in repairing the high road. Gérard, by virtue of his office of overseer, was in the midst of this group. We advanced within fifty steps of the workmen, when I made my agents observe an individual whose countenance and general appearance exactly corresponded with the description we had received of the ferocious Pons; although we entertained no doubt of his being the man, we durst not attempt to seize him, for should his companions undertake his rescue, we, of course, should come off but badly, and even his single arm, when impelled by the fear of being taken prisoner, might be more than a match for my small party. Our situation was embarrassing enough, yet had we displayed the least symptom of it, Gérard would either have made us pay dearly for our temerity in daring to attack him, or he would escape our grasp by a hasty retreat to the frontier. Never had I felt a greater need of prudence and self-possession. I consulted with my agents, two firm and intrepid men. "Act as you think proper," said they, "and rest assured of our seconding you in whatever steps you may take."

"Well then," cried I, "follow me, and do nothing till a fit opportunity arrives; perhaps we may turn out the more cunning party of the two, although the enemy may have the advantage of superior strength."

I walked directly up to the individual whom I supposed to be Gérard, my two companions keeping at a little distance. The nearer I approached the more assured did I feel that I had not mistaken my man; thus convinced, and without further hesitation, I hurried up to Pons, and embracing him with every demonstration of regard, exclaimed, "Pons, my good fellow, how are

you? how is your excellent wife, and all your family? quite well, I trust?"

Astonished at this unexpected salutation, Pons remained in silent examination of my face for some minutes; "Devil take me," said he at last, "if I know who or what you are; where the deuce did you spring from?"

"What!" said I, "not recollect me? am I then indeed so much altered?"

"Not I, I do not remember ever seeing you in all my life; can't you just tell me your name? Stay, now I look again, I feel certain that I have met that face of yours somewhere or other, although where I have seen you is more than I can tell."

"I am a friend of Raoul and Court," said I, whispering in his ear, "and am sent to you by them."

"Ah!" cried he, pressing my hands warmly in both of his, and turning to the workmen who were gazing in wonder at this unexpected change of his reception of me, "I must have lost my senses, I think, not to remember one of my best friends! Not to recognise my dear friend! the devil must have flown away with my memory. My dear fellow! let me embrace you;" and, suiting the action to the word, he gave me such an emphatic hug as well nigh stifled me.

During this scene my agents had insensibly advanced nearer to the spot where we stood. Pons perceiving them, inquired if they belonged to me? "They are two of my ostlers," said I.

"I thought so, but you must stand greatly in need of refreshment, and those gentlemen yonder would, I dare say, have no objection to a glass of something good;—what say you?"

"With all my heart. A bottle of your best wine will do us no harm."

"Well, then, let us go; but in this cursed place, which produces nothing but wolves, there is nothing to be had; however, if you don't mind walking over to Hirson, (which, to be sure, is a good league from hence,)

we shall get as good a bottle of wine as ever was uncorked."

"Come along then, let us go to Hirson."

Pons bade adieu to his comrades, and we set out together. As we walked along I could not help confessing that the immense strength of this man did not appear to have been at all exaggerated by Raoul or Court; he was but of middling height, probably not more than five feet four inches at the utmost, but square built, and exhibiting every indication of muscular power. His swarthy face, embrowned still more by a constant exposure to the sun and wind, was distinguished by deeply-marked features, expressive of energy and determination; he had enormous limbs, and a strong, sinewy throat, in strict accordance with the whole of his robust frame; in addition to this he wore immense whiskers, and a more than usual quantity of beard; his hands were short, thick, and covered with hair, even to the fingers' ends; his harsh and pitiless air seemed to belong to a countenance which might exhibit a mechanical relaxation of the risible muscles, but had never once smiled from an internal feeling of benevolence or good-will.

Whilst I was intently occupied in making these observations, I could perceive that Pons was regarding me with equal attention; at last stopping suddenly, as if to take a closer view, he exclaimed, "Why you really are a very fine fellow, and fill out your clothes as well as I have ever seen a man! I think you and I should make an excellent pair, for I am none of the slightest figures any more than yourself; not like that little hop-o'-my-thumb," added he, pointing to Clement, (who was the smallest man amongst my agents;) "why I could swallow a dozen such as he at my breakfast."

"Don't flatter yourself," said I; "you might not find it so easy a task as you may fancy."

"Very possibly," replied he; "these undersized chaps are frequently all nerve and muscle."

After these trifling remarks, Pons inquired after his friends. I told him that they were quite well; but that not having seen him since *the affair of Avesnes*, I had left them very uneasy as to what had become of him. (The affair of Avesnes was a murder. When I alluded to it, his countenance exhibited not the slightest emotion.)

"Well, and what brings you to this part of the country?" asked he; "are you after a *bit of moonshine*, eh?"

"You have just hit it, my friend," said I. "My business here is to endeavour to dispose of a string of broken-down horses, which are famously doctored up for taking-in the knowing ones. Our friends told me that you could lend me a helping hand."

"Ah, to be sure, you may depend on me," protested Pons.

With this sort of conversation we reached Hirson, where we halted at the house of a clock-maker who sold wine. We were soon placed round a table; our wine was brought, and, whilst we were drinking it, I led the conversation back to Court and Raoul. "Poor fellows," said I, "I fear that at this present moment they are very queerly situated."

"How so?" asked he.

"Why I did not wish to tell you all at once; but the fact is, they are in considerable trouble; they have been arrested, and I greatly fear that they are now in prison."

"On what account?"

"Of that I am ignorant; all I know is, that I was breakfasting with Court and Raoul, when the police broke in upon us, and, after closely interrogating us all three, they allowed me to go about my business. As for our two poor friends, they were detained in solitary confinement; nor would you have learned their misfortune, had not Raoul, in returning from his examination, managed to whisper a few words to me unobserved, begging of me to warn you to be on your guard, for

that they had been closely questioned as to their acquaintance with you. I cannot give you any further particulars."

"And who arrested you?" inquired Pons, who seemed thunderstruck at the intelligence.

"Vidocq."

"Oh! the scoundrel, the scamp! But who is this Vidocq, of whom we hear so much? I have never been able to meet him face to face; once only I perceived him following an individual into the house of Causette. I was told it was him, but I forget all about him; and I would cheerfully give half-a-dozen bottles of wine to any one who would procure me a good stare at him."

"Bless you, it is easy enough to meet with him," replied I; "he is always about in one place or another."

"Well, I would advise him to keep out of my reach," exclaimed Pons. "If he were here, I'll engage he would pass the worst quarter of an hour he ever experienced in his life."

"Oh! you are like all the rest of them, talking of what you would do; and yet if he were before you at this moment, you would sit perfectly still, and be the first to offer him a glass of wine." (At the time I was saying this I held out my glass, which he filled.)

"I! I offer him wine! May a thousand devils seize me first!"

"Yes, you, I say, would invite him to drink with you."

"I tell you I would die sooner."

"Then you may die as soon as you please, for *I* am Vidocq, and I arrest you!"

"How, how; what is this?

"Yes, I arrest you!" and approaching my face to his, "I tell you, villain, I arrest you, you are *done;* and if you dare to stir one step, I will tweak off your rascally nose. Clement, handcuff this worthy gentleman."

The astonishment of Pons defies description. Every feature appeared distorted, his eyes starting from their

sockets, his cheeks quivering, his teeth chattered, and his hair stood on end; by degrees these symptoms of a general convulsion, which had affected only the upper part of his frame, gave way to a fresh revulsion of nature. After his arms were fastened, he remained for nearly half an hour motionless, and as though petrified. His lips were apart, and his tongue glued to the palate of his mouth; and it was only after repeated efforts that he succeeded in detaching it; in vain his parched and swollen tongue sought a moisture, which the dried up lips were unable to afford, and the countenance of the ruffian exhibited alternately the pale, livid, cadaverous hues of a corpse; at last, recovering from his lethargy, Pons articulated these words:—

"What, are you Vidocq? ah, had I but known it when you first spoke to me, I would have rid the earth of such a sneaking beggar."

"Well," said I, "I thank you all the same for your kind intentions; meanwhile, as you have fallen into the trap, you owe me the six bottles of wine you promised to whoever would show you Vidocq, and you cannot deny my having done so. Another time I advise you not to tempt the devil."

The gendarmes who were called in after the arrest of Pons, could scarcely credit their eyes; during the search we had been directed to make throughout his house, the mayor of the place begged to see us, that he might express his grateful sense of the service we had rendered to the whole province.

"You have," said he, "delivered us from a frightful scourge, from a wretch who was our torment and dread."

All the inhabitants joined in expressing their joy at the capture of their late foe, as well as their astonishment at the ease with which it had been effected.

The search over, we removed to sleep at La Capelle. Pons was closely handcuffed to one of my agents, who had orders not to quit him night or day; at our first halt, I caused him to be undressed, in order to ascertain whether or not he had any concealed arms about him.

When he was stripped I really doubted his belonging to the human race; the whole of his body was covered with a thick bushy glossy hair; he might, indeed, have been mistaken for the Hercules Farnèse, enveloped in the skin of a bear.

Pons appeared perfectly tranquil, nor did anything more than common arise till the following day, when I ascertained that, during the night, he had eaten more than a quarter of a pound of tobacco. I had, from previous observation, noticed, that men who are greatly accustomed to the use of either tobacco or snuff, make an immoderate use of it in times of great peril or emergency. I knew well that a pipe is never more quickly consumed than when in the hands of a condemned criminal, whether it be immediately after receiving his sentence, or on the eve of its being put into execution; but I had never yet seen a prisoner, situated as Pons was, introduce into his stomach a substance, which, taken in so large a quantity, might produce the most fatal effects. I very much feared that he would suffer from his excess, and even suspected he had committed it in the hope of its acting as poison. I, therefore, took from him what tobacco he had remaining, and gave orders that it should only be dealt out to him in small doses, and this on condition that he would engage only to chew it. Pons yielded with a tolerably good grace to this regulation; he ceased to devour his tobacco, although I never had any reason to suppose he had experienced the slightest inconvenience from what he had previously taken.

CHAPTER XLV.

A visit to Versailles—Great talking and little doing—Resignation—A criminal's agony—We make our own fate—The sleep of a murderer—New converts—They invite me to witness their execution—Reflections on a gold box—A Supreme Being—Nothing to be ashamed of—The fatal hour—We shall meet again—The Carline—The crucifixes—I embrace two death's heads—The spirit of vengeance—A last adieu—Eternity.

I RETURNED directly to Paris, and then proceeded with Pons to Versailles, where Court and Raoul were confined; immediately upon my arrival I went to see them.

"Well," said I to them, "our man is taken!"

"You have caught him!" exclaimed Court, "so much the better."

"But," inquired Raoul, "tell us how you managed to cage him, you must have had a fine business to tame so fierce a creature."

"He fierce!" said I, "on the contrary, he has been gentle as a lamb."

"What, did he make no defence? ha! ha! Raoul, do you hear that? he did not even defend himself!"

"The particulars you gave me of him," said I, "were not thrown away upon me."

Before quitting Versailles, I wished to show my sense of the kindness of the prisoners in thus aiding me in the capture of the ferocious Pons, and, accordingly, invited them to dine with me. My invitation was accepted with the most lively satisfaction, and during the remainder of the time we passed together, not the least gloom or sadness could be observed on their countenances; they appeared entirely resigned to their fate, and even their language seemed to have undergone some change, indicative of better feelings having resumed their empire over their minds.

"It must be confessed, my friend," said Court, "that we were following a rascally trade."

"Oh!" returned the other, "do not mention it; it makes no one rich in the end but the executioner."

"And that is not the worst part of it—to be in continual misery from constant alarm—never to know one moment's tranquillity—to tremble at the sight of a stranger."

"True, indeed! I used to fancy I saw spies or disguised gendarmes in all who approached me, and the least noise, nay, my own shadow, would sometimes frighten me out of my senses."

"And, for my part, if I perceived myself an object of notice to any person, I instantly supposed he was taking down the description of my person, and the blood would rush to my face with such impetuosity as to suffuse my eyeballs with a guilty blush."

"Little, indeed, are the pangs of remorse and the terrors of a guilty conscience guessed by those who are innocent of crime; for my own part, rather than endure them as I have done for years past, I would blow out my brains."

"I have two children, but if I thought they were likely to tread in the steps of their unhappy father, I would implore of their mother to strangle them."

"Ah, my friend! had we but employed half the care and reflection in doing well it has cost us to prosecute our wicked schemes, we might now be enjoying a very different lot, and anticipating far brighter prospects than those before us."

"Well, well! 'tis useless repining, I suppose it was our fate."

"Don't tell me that, there is no such thing as fate; we are the workers of our own destinies, depend upon it; and I do not seek such a weak excuse for my crimes; no, I acknowledge that to a love of bad company alone I may attribute my being the wretch I am: do you not remember how, after every fresh act of wickedness, I sought to drown the whispers of a reproachful conscience by drunken excess? I felt as though the weight of a mountain were upon me, and had I swallowed gallons it would have been insufficient to remove it."

"And, for my part, I used to feel as though I had a hot iron gnawing my very vitals; if I fell into a short sleep, a thousand devils seemed dancing around me; sometimes I fancied myself discovered in clothes dyed in blood, burying the corpse of a victim; or stopped whilst in the act of conveying it away on my shoulders: shuddering I have awoke, bathed in perspiration, wrung from me by the horrid visions of my tortured spirit; drops of agony, which might have been gathered in spoonsful, stood upon my aching brow; in vain have I sought by any change of position to taste a quiet sleep; turning upon my pillow, which seemed filled with thorns, even the pressure of my nightcap has appeared to my throbbing brain like the sharp points of an iron band, which drove its rugged teeth through my temples."

"Ah! I know well what all that is, I have felt as though a thousand needles were piercing every nerve."

"Possibly, what you have described, may be what is generally styled remorse."

"Remorse or not, it has been a fiery torment—a torment, M. Jules, which I am weary of;—I can bear it no longer, and it is time to end my misery. Some persons might owe you a grudge for the part you have acted towards us, but for my part I consider that you have done us a service; what say you, Raoul?

"Since our confession, I feel as though I were in paradise in comparison with my former sufferings. I know that we have a trying scene to go through, but our poor victims suffered as much at our hands, and it is but fair that we should serve as examples to others."

At the moment of separating from them, Raoul and Court begged of me to do them the kindness to come and see them directly they had received their sentence; this I promised, and I kept my word. Two days after they had been condemned to death, I went to them. When I entered their dungeon, they both uttered a cry of joy, and made its gloomy walls echo with the joyful welcome of their "liberator," as they termed me. They

assured me that my visit afforded them the greatest pleasure they were capable of receiving, and entreated me to bestow on them one friendly embrace, in token of my forgiveness of their past, and satisfaction at their present, conduct. I had not the heart to refuse them. They were fastened to a camp bed, with their hands and feet heavily fettered. I advanced towards them, and they pressed me in their arms with all the warmth and enthusiasm with which the sincerest friends would welcome each other after a long separation. A friend of mine, who was present at this interview, experienced considerable alarm at seeing me in a manner entirely at the mercy of two assassins.

"Fear nothing," said I.

"No, no," exclaimed Raoul, "fear nothing, there is little chance of our wishing to injure our good friend M. Jules."

"M. Jules!" cried Court, "no, indeed, he is our only friend, and what is more, he does not forsake us now!"

As I was leaving them, I perceived two small books lying beside them, one of which was half open, and was entitled "Christian Meditations."

"You have been reading, my friends," said I, "is religion a favourite study with you?"

"Oh no," said Raoul, "I know very little about it; these books were left us this morning by a clergyman who has been to visit us. I have just opened them, and certainly if people would follow the precepts they contain, the world would be better than it now is."

"Yes, so I think," said Court, "I am beginning to see that religion is not such a humbug as I once thought it; depend upon it we were not sent into the world to live and die like brutes."

I congratulated the new converts upon the happy change which had taken place in them.

"Who would have thought, two months back," resumed Court, "that I should suffer myself to be noodled by a priest!"

" And you know," rejoined Raoul, " my contempt for them and their sermons, but when men stand in our present awful extremity, it becomes them to look well about them; not that death alarms me; I care as little for it, as I do for this cup of water. You will see whether I dread merely leaving this world, M. Jules."

" Ah yes!" said Court to me, " you must come."

" I will do so, I promise you."

" Honour."

" I pledge you my honour, I will be present."

The day appointed for the execution I repaired to Versailles, it was ten o'clock in the morning when I entered the prison, the two unhappy men were deeply engaged with their confessors. They no sooner perceived me, than precipitately rising, they approached me.

Raoul, (taking my hand.) " You do not know what pleasure the sight of you affords me, my friend; we were just preparing to leave this world with a clear conscience."

Myself. " Pray do not let me interfere with so sacred and important a duty."

Court. " You disturb us, M. Jules! surely you are jesting."

Raoul. " Our time draws to a close, we have but a poor ten minutes before us. (Turning to the ministers.) These gentlemen will excuse us."

Raoul's confessor. " Proceed, my son, proceed!"

Court. " There are but very few in the world like M. Jules; nevertheless he it was who caged us—but that is nothing."

Raoul. " If he had not done so, some one else would."

Court. " Yes, and some person, in all probability, who would not have treated us half so well."

Raoul. " Ah! M. Jules, I shall never forget all your kindness to me."

Court. " No friend could have done more."

Raoul. " And to come and witness the last concluding scene into the bargain."

MYSELF, (offering some snuff in the hope of changing the conversation.) "Come my friend, take a pinch, you will find it very good."

RAOUL, (taking a hearty pinch.) "Not so bad; (he sneezes several times;) this is *notice to quit*, is it not M. Jules?"

MYSELF. "I fear you may, indeed, look upon it as such."

At this moment Raoul opened the box, which he had taken into his own hands, looked at it attentively, and offering it to Court, inquired his opinion of it. "It is a fine thing of the sort, is it not, Court? tell me of what material it is composed?"

COURT, (turning away and shuddering.) "It's gold."

RAOUL. "You are right to avert your eyes from the sight of that fatal metal, which has caused the ruin of man since its first introduction: alas! we are melancholy instances of the pernicious effects it has produced."

COURT. "To say that for such trash we should draw down so much trouble and suffering upon ourselves; how much better had we devoted our time to honest labour. We had both of us excellent parents; what are we now but a disgrace to them and our families?"

RAOUL. "That is not my greatest grief at this awful moment. Think of the gentlemen whose *wee sands* we have cut! the unfortunate beings! my heart bitterly reproaches me for their sufferings."

COURT, (embracing him.) "But you sincerely repent of your past offences, and are about to pay with your own life for those lives you have taken.—'He who sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed.' I think that was what the worthy father here was read to me as M. Jules entered."

COURT'S CONFESSOR. "Come, my children, time is hastening on."

RAOUL. "'Tis all in vain; the Supreme Being (if there really be one) can never pardon such guilty wretches as we are."

COURT'S CONFESSOR. "God's mercy is inexhaustible. Jesus Christ dying on the cross interceded with his father for the penitent thief."

COURT. "May he be pleased to intercede for us likewise."

ONE OF THE CONFESSORS. "Raise your soul to God, my children, prostrate yourselves in humble prayer before him."

The two sufferers looked at me as if to discover what they ought to do. They appeared to fear my ridiculing any devotional feelings as the result of cowardice or weakness.

MYSELF. "Let no false shame prevent your obeying the reverend father."

RAOUL (to his comrade.) "My friend, let us recommend our souls to our Maker."

Both Raoul and Court kneeled down, and remained for about a quarter of an hour in that position. They seemed rather collected than absorbed. The clock struck half past eleven, they looked at each other, and both speaking together, exclaimed, "In half an hour it will be all over with us." As they pronounced these words they rose; I saw that they wished to speak with me, I therefore drew aside, and they approached me. "M. Jules," said Court, "we would beg a last favour in addition to those we already owe you."

"What is it? depend upon my readiness to perform whatever you may require."

"We have each of us a wife in Paris.—My kind wife! the thoughts of her breaks my heart,—it overcomes me! tears filled his eyes, his voice became inarticulate, and he could not proceed.

"Come, Court," said Raoul, "what is the matter with you? Come, never play the baby; after all, you astonish me! can you be the brave fellow I took you for? Have not I a wife as well as you? Come, my boy, courage, courage!"

"'Tis over now," resumed Court, "what I had to say to M. Jules was respecting some commis-

sions we would fain intrust him with for our poor widows."

I pledged my word for the exact fulfilment of their desires; and when they had made known their wishes, I renewed the assurance of their being strictly performed.

RAOUL. "I was quite sure that you would not refuse us."

COURT. "Ah, M. Jules, how can we hope to repay your kindness?"

RAOUL. "If what our ghostly friend here asserts be true, we shall meet in another and a better world."

MYSELF. "I trust so; and sooner perhaps than we at present think for."

COURT. "Ah, 'tis a journey that must be taken sooner or later. We are upon the eve of our departure."

RAOUL. "M. Jules, is your watch correct?"

MYSELF. "I believe it is too fast." (I drew it from my pocket.)

RAOUL. "Let us see—twelve o'clock."

COURT. "The hour for our execution; heavens! how the time gallops on!"

RAOUL. "Look, the large hand is just about to overtake the small one! We shall never be weary of talking with you, M. Jules, but still we must part;—here, take these *prattlers*, we have no further need of them." (The *prattlers* were the books I have before described.)

COURT. "And these two crucifixes, take them also; they will at least serve to remind you of us."

A noise of carriages was heard, the two culprits turned pale.

RAOUL. "It is a wise plan to repent of our sins, but what if I determine to die *game*?—No; let me not turn bravado as many have done, but meet my fate with the courage of a man, and the resignation of a sinner."

COURT. "Well said, my friend, let us be firm, yet contrite."

The executioner arrived at the moment for ascending the fatal cart, and the sufferers bade me adieu.

"You have just embraced two death's heads," said Raoul, as he followed his friend.

The procession moved on towards the place of punishment. Raoul and Court were intently listening to their confessor, when, all at once, I saw them start;—a voice, never to be forgotten, had struck upon their ear; it was that of Fontaine, who, recovered from his wounds, had mingled with the spectators; animated by the spirit of vengeance, he abandoned himself to the most ferocious expressions of joy. Raoul recognised him, and casting a look towards me, full of contempt and pity for the unmanly exultation displayed by the man to whom he was making all the atonement in his power, he seemed to express that the presence of Fontaine was unpleasant and painful to him. As the vindictive butcher had taken his station close by me, I lost not an instant in compelling him to withdraw, and by a slight movement of the head, both Raoul and his companion testified their grateful sense of this attention to their wishes.

Court was first executed; even when he had ascended the scaffold his eye sought mine, as if to inquire whether I was satisfied with him. Raoul displayed equal firmness, he was in the very prime of life; twice did his head rebound upon the fatal plank, and the blood spirted out with so much violence as to cover the spectators even at the distance of twenty paces!

Such was the end of these two men, whose villany was less the effect of natural depravity than the consequence of having associated with dissolute characters, who in the very bosom of society form a distinct race, possessing their own principles, virtues, and vices. Raoul was only thirty-eight years of age, tall, active, agile, and vigorous; his eyebrows were high and arched, his eye small, lively, and of a sparkling black; his forehead, without being depressed, retreated backwards a little, and his ears, which stood out from his head, appeared as though grafted upon two protuberances, like the generality of the Italians, whom he likewise re-

sembled in the olive tint of his complexion. Court possessed one of those countenances which defy the rules of physiognomy; he had a half squint with one eye, and the whole of his features could be said to boast of neither a good nor a bad expression; unless the sharp angles and projecting cheek bones might be construed into an indication of ferocity. Probably these symptoms of a bloodthirsty disposition had developed themselves through the constant murders and other atrocious acts in which he was constantly engaged. Court was forty-five years of age, and from his youth had been continually involved in guilty courses ;—to have gone on so long with impunity must have required a more than ordinary supply of boldness and cunning.

The commissions intrusted to me by the two murderers were of a nature to prove that their hearts were yet accessible to good feeling. I discharged them with punctuality; as to the presents which they made me, I have preserved them and can still show the books and the two crucifixes.

Pons Gérard, whom it was impossible to convict of the murder, was sentenced to perpetual hard labour.

END OF VOL. III.

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