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The Works of
Victor Hugo

Complete Edition
Edited by Hippolyte
Hugot, Smith
and Helen B. Dale

Les Misérables
Volume II

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS
2011 ISBN 978-0-226-31137-2 Hb \$39.95
978-0-226-31138-9 Pb \$19.95



M. GILLENORMAND NEVER ADDRESS'D THIS
CHILD EXCEPT IN A SEVERE VOICE

—THE LIFE OF M. GILLENORMAND—

—BY M. GILLENORMAND—

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The Works of
Victor Hugo

Copyrighted Translations by
Isabel F. Hapgood,
Huntington Smith
and Helen B. Dole

Les Misérables
Volume II

THE KELMSCOTT SOCIETY
PUBLISHERS : : NEW YORK

MARIUS.

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MARIUS

BOOK FIRST.—PARIS STUDIED IN ITS ATOM

CHAPTER I

PARVULUS

PARIS has a child, and the forest has a bird; the bird is called the sparrow; the child is called the gamin.

Couple these two ideas which contain, the one all the furnace, the other all the dawn; strike these two sparks together, Paris, childhood; there leaps out from them a little being. *Homuncio*, Plautus would say.

This little being is joyous. He has not food every day, and he goes to the play every evening, if he sees good. He has no shirt on his body, no shoes on his feet, no roof over his head; he is like the flies of heaven, who have none of these things. He is from seven to thirteen years of age, he lives in bands, roams the streets, lodges in the open air, wears an old pair of trousers of his father's, which descend below his heels, an old hat of some other father, which descends below his ears, a single suspender of yellow listing; he runs, lies in wait, rummages about, wastes time, blaekens pipes, swears like a convict, haunts the wine-shop, knows thieves, calls gay women *thou*, talks slang, sings obscene songs, and has no evil in his heart. This is because he has in his heart a pearl, innocence; and pearls are not to be dissolved in mud. So long as man is in his childhood, God wills that he shall be innocent.

If one were to ask that enormous city: "What is this?" she would reply: "It is my little one."

CHAPTER II

SOME OF HIS PARTICULAR CHARACTERISTICS

THE gamin—the street Arab—of Paris is the dwarf of the giant.

Let us not exaggerate, this cherub of the gutter sometimes has a shirt, but, in that case, he owns but one; he sometimes has shoes, but then they have no soles; he sometimes has a lodging, and he loves it, for he finds his mother there; but he prefers the street, because there he finds liberty. He has his own games, his own bits of mischief, whose foundation consists of hatred for the bourgeois; his peculiar metaphors: to be dead is *to eat dandelions by the root*; his own occupations, calling hackney-coaches, letting down carriage-steps, establishing means of transit between the two sides of a street in heavy rains, which he calls *making the bridge of arts*, crying discourses pronounced by the authorities in favor of the French people, cleaning out the cracks in the pavement; he has his own coinage, which is composed of all the little morsels of worked copper which are found on the public streets. This curious money, which receives the name of *loques*—rags—has an invariable and well-regulated currency in this little Bohemia of children.

Lastly, he has his own fauna, which he observes attentively in the corners; the lady-bird, the death's-head plant-louse, the daddy-long-legs, "the devil," a black insect, which menaces by twisting about its tail armed with two horns. He has his fabulous monster, which has scales under its belly, but is not a lizard, which has pustules on its back, but is not a toad, which inhabits the nooks of old lime-kilns and wells that have run dry, which is black, hairy, sticky, which crawls sometimes slowly, sometimes rapidly, which has no cry, but which has a look, and is so terrible that no one has ever beheld it; he calls this monster "the deaf thing." The search for these "deaf things" among the stones is a joy of formidable nature. Another pleasure consists in suddenly prying up a paving-

stone, and taking a look at the wood-lice. Each region of Paris is celebrated for the interesting treasures which are to be found there. There are ear-wigs in the timber-yards of the Ursulines, there are millepedes in the Pantheon, there are tadpoles in the ditches of the Champs-de-Mars.

As far as sayings are concerned, this child has as many of them as Talleyrand. He is no less cynical, but he is more honest. He is endowed with a certain indescribable, unexpected joviality; he upsets the composure of the shopkeeper with his wild laughter. He ranges boldly from high comedy to farce.

A funeral passes by. Among those who accompany the dead there is a doctor. "Hey there!" shouts some street Arab, "how long has it been eustomary for doctors to carry home their own work?"

Another is in a crowd. A grave man, adorned with spectacles and trinkets, turns round indignantly: "You good-for-nothing, you have seized my wife's waist!"—"I, sir? Search me!"

CHAPTER III

HE IS AGREEABLE

IN the evening, thanks to a few sous, which he always finds means to procure, the *homuncio* enters a theatre. On crossing that magic threshold, he becomes transfigured; he was the street Arab, he becomes the titi.¹ Theatres are a sort of ship turned upside down with the keel in the air. It is in that keel that the titi huddle together. The titi is to the gamin what the moth is to the larva; the same being endowed with wings and soaring. It suffices for him to be there, with his radiance of happiness, with his power of enthusiasm and joy, with his hand-clapping, which resembles a clapping of wings, to confer on that narrow, dark, fetid, sordid, unhealthy, hideous, abominable keel, the name of Paradise.

Bestow on an individual the useless and deprive him of the necessary, and you have the gamin.

¹*Chicken*: slang allusion to the noise made in calling poultry.

The gamin is not devoid of literary intuition. His tendency, and we say it with the proper amount of regret, would not constitute classic taste. He is not very academic by nature. Thus, to give an example, the popularity of Mademoiselle Mars among that little audience of stony children was seasoned with a touch of irony. The gamin called her *Mademoiselle Muche*—"hide yourself."

This being bawls and scoffs and ridicules and fights, has rags like a baby and tatters like a philosopher, fishes in the sewer, hunts in the cesspool, extracts mirth from foulness, whips up the squares with his wit, grins and bites, whistles and sings, shouts and shrieks, tempers Alleluia with Matantururette, chants every rhythm from the *De Profundis* to the Jack-pudding, finds without seeking, knows what he is ignorant of, is a Spartan to the point of thieving, is mad to wisdom, is lyrical to filth, would crouch down on Olympus, wallows in the dunghill and emerges from it covered with stars. The gamin of Paris is Rabelais in this youth.

He is not content with his trousers unless they have a watch-pocket.

He is not easily astonished, he is still less easily terrified, he makes songs on superstitions, he takes the wind out of exaggerations, he twits mysteries, he thrusts out his tongue at ghosts, he takes the poetry out of stilted things, he introduces caricature into epic extravaganzas. It is not that he is prosaic; far from that; but he replaces the solemn vision by the farcical phantasmagoria. If Adamastor were to appear to him, the street Arab would say: "Hi there! The bugaboo!"

CHAPTER IV

HE MAY BE OF USE

PARIS begins with the lounge and ends with the street Arab, two beings of which no other city is capable; the passive acceptance, which contents itself with gazing, and the inexhaustible initiative; Prudhomme and Fouillou. Paris alone

has this in its natural history. The whole of the monarchy is contained in the lounge; the whole of anarchy in the gamin.

This pale child of the Parisian faubourgs lives and develops, makes connections, "grows supple" in suffering, in the presence of social realities and of human things, a thoughtful witness. He thinks himself heedless; and he is not. He looks and is on the verge of laughter; he is on the verge of something else also. Whoever you may be, if your name is Prejudice, Abuse, Ignorance, Oppression, Iniquity, Despotism, Injustice, Fanaticism, Tyranny, beware of the gaping gamin.

The little fellow will grow up.

Of what clay is he made? Of the first mud that comes to hand. A handful of dirt, a breath, and behold Adam. It suffices for a God to pass by. A God has always passed over the street Arab. Fortune labors at this tiny being. By the word "fortune" we mean chance, to some extent. That pigmy kneaded out of common earth, ignorant, unlettered, giddy, vulgar, low. Will that become an Ionian or a Bœotian? Wait, *currit rota*, the spirit of Paris, that demon which creates the children of chance and the men of destiny, reversing the process of the Latin potter, makes of a jug an amphora.

CHAPTER V

HIS FRONTIERS

THE gamin loves the city, he also loves solitude, since he has something of the sage in him. *Urbis amator*, like Fuscus; *ruris amator*, like Flaccus.

To roam thoughtfully about, that is to say, to lounge, is a fine employment of time in the eyes of the philosopher; particularly in that rather illegitimate species of campaign, which is tolerably ugly but odd and composed of two natures, which surrounds certain great cities, notably Paris. To study the suburbs is to study the amphibious animal. End of the trees, beginning of the roofs; end of the grass, beginning of the

pavements; end of the furrows, beginning of the shops; end of the wheel-ruts, beginning of the passions; end of the divine murmur, beginning of the human uproar; hence an extraordinary interest.

Hence, in these not very attractive places, indelibly stamped by the passing stroller with the epithet: *melancholy*, the apparently objectless promenades of the dreamer.

He who writes these lines has long been a prowler about the barriers of Paris, and it is for him a source of profound souvenirs. That close-shaven turf, those pebbly paths, that chalk, those pools, those harsh monotonies of waste and fallow lands, the plants of early market-garden suddenly springing into sight in a bottom, that mixture of the savage and the citizen, those vast desert nooks where the garrison drums practise noisily, and produce a sort of lisp of battle, those hermits by day and cut-throats by night, that clumsy mill which turns in the wind, the hoisting-wheels of the quarries, the tea-gardens at the corners of the cemeteries; the mysterious charm of great, sombre walls squarely intersecting immense, vague stretches of land inundated with sunshine and full of butterflies,—all this attracted him.

There is hardly any one on earth who is not acquainted with those singular spots, the Glacière, the Cunette, the hideous wall of Grenelle all speckled with balls, Mont-Parnasse, the Fosseaux-Loups, Aubiers on the bank of the Marne, Mont-Souris, the Tombe-Issoire, the Pierre-Plate de Châtillon, where there is an old, exhausted quarry which no longer serves any purpose except to raise mushrooms, and which is closed, on a level with the ground, by a trap-door of rotten planks. The campagna of Rome is one idea, the banlieue of Paris is another; to behold nothing but fields, houses, or trees in what a stretch of country offers us, is to remain on the surface; all aspects of things are thoughts of God. The spot where a plain effects its junction with a city is always stamped with a certain piercing melancholy. Nature and humanity both appeal to you at the same time there. Local originalities there make their appearance.

Any one who, like ourselves, has wandered about in these solitudes contiguous to our faubourgs, which may be designated as the limbos of Paris, has seen here and there, in the most desert spot, at the most unexpected moment, behind a meagre hedge, or in the corner of a lugubrious wall, children grouped tumultuously, fetid, muddy, dusty, ragged, dishevelled, playing hide-and-seek, and crowned with corn-flowers. All of them are little ones who have made their escape from poor families. The outer boulevard is their breathing space; the suburbs belong to them. There they are eternally playing truant. There they innocently sing their repertory of dirty songs. There they are, or rather, there they exist, far from every eye, in the sweet light of May or June, kneeling round a hole in the ground, snapping marbles with their thumbs, quarrelling over half-farthings, irresponsible, volatile, free and happy; and, no sooner do they catch sight of you than they recollect that they have an industry, and that they must earn their living, and they offer to sell you an old woollen stocking filled with cockchafers, or a bunch of lilacs. These encounters with strange children are one of the charming and at the same time poignant graces of the environs of Paris.

Sometimes there are little girls among the throng of boys,—are they their sisters?—who are almost young maidens, thin, feverish, with sunburnt hands, covered with freckles, crowned with poppies and ears of rye, gay, haggard, barefooted. They can be seen devouring cherries among the wheat. In the evening they can be heard laughing. These groups, warmly illuminated by the full glow of midday, or indistinctly seen in the twilight, occupy the thoughtful man for a very long time, and these visions mingle with his dreams.

Paris, centre, banlieue, circumference; this constitutes all the earth to those children. They never venture beyond this. They can no more escape from the Parisian atmosphere than fish can escape from the water. For them, nothing exists two leagues beyond the barriers: Ivry, Gentilly, Arcueil, Belleville, Aubervilliers, Menilmontant, Choisy-le-Roi, Billancourt, Meudon, Issy, Vanvres, Sèvres, Puteaux, Neuilly, Gennevilliers,

Colombes, Romainville, Chatou, Asnières, Bougival, Nanterre, Enghien, Noisy-le-Sec, Nogent, Gournay, Draney, Gonesse; the universe ends there.

CHAPTER VI

A BIT OF HISTORY

At the epoch, nearly contemporary by the way, when the action of this book takes place, there was not, as there is to-day, a policeman at the corner of every street (a benefit which there is no time to discuss here); stray children abounded in Paris. The statistics give an average of two hundred and sixty homeless children picked up annually at that period, by the police patrols, in unenclosed lands, in houses in process of construction, and under the arches of the bridges. One of these nests, which has become famous, produced "the swallows of the bridge of Arcola." This is, moreover, the most disastrous of social symptoms. All crimes of the man begin in the vagabondage of the child.

Let us make an exception in favor of Paris, nevertheless. In a relative measure, and in spite of the souvenir which we have just recalled, the exception is just. While in any other great city the vagabond child is a lost man, while nearly everywhere the child left to itself is, in some sort, sacrificed and abandoned to a kind of fatal immersion in the public vices which devour in him honesty and conscience, the street boy of Paris, we insist on this point, however defaced and injured on the surface, is almost intact on the interior. It is a magnificent thing to put on record, and one which shines forth in the splendid probity of our popular revolutions, that a certain incorruptibility results from the idea which exists in the air of Paris, as salt exists in the water of the ocean. To breathe Paris preserves the soul.

What we have just said takes away nothing of the anguish of heart which one experiences every time that one meets one

of these children around whom one fancies that he beholds floating the threads of a broken family. In the civilization of the present day, incomplete as it still is, it is not a very abnormal thing to behold these fractured families pouring themselves out into the darkness, not knowing clearly what has become of their children, and allowing their own entrails to fall on the public highway. Hence these obscure destinies. This is called, for this sad thing has given rise to an expression, "to be cast on the pavements of Paris."

Let it be said by the way, that this abandonment of children was not discouraged by the ancient monarchy. A little of Egypt and Bohemia in the lower regions suited the upper spheres, and compassed the aims of the powerful. The hatred of instruction for the children of the people was a dogma. What is the use of "half-lights"? Such was the countersign. Now, the erring child is the corollary of the ignorant child.

Besides this, the monarchy sometimes was in need of children, and in that case it skimmed the streets.

Under Louis XIV., not to go any further back, the king rightly desired to create a fleet. The idea was a good one. But let us consider the means. There can be no fleet, if, beside the sailing ship, that plaything of the winds, and for the purpose of towing it, in case of necessity, there is not the vessel which goes where it pleases, either by means of oars or of steam; the galleys were then to the marine what steamers are to-day. Therefore, galleys were necessary; but the galley is moved only by the galley-slave; hence, galley-slaves were required. Colbert had the commissioners of provinces and the parliaments make as many convicts as possible. The magistracy showed a great deal of complaisance in the matter. A man kept his hat on in the presence of a procession—it was a Huguenot attitude; he was sent to the galleys. A child was encountered in the streets; provided that he was fifteen years of age and did not know where he was to sleep, he was sent to the galleys. Grand reign; grand century.

Under Louis XV. children disappeared in Paris; the police carried them off, for what mysterious purpose no one knew.

People whispered with terror monstrous conjectures as to the king's baths of purple. Barbier speaks ingenuously of these things. It sometimes happened that the exempts of the guard, when they ran short of children, took those who had fathers. The fathers, in despair, attacked the exempts. In that case, the parliament intervened and had some one hung. Who? The exempts? No, the fathers.

CHAPTER VII

THE GAMIN SHOULD HAVE HIS PLACE IN THE CLASSIFICATIONS OF INDIA

THE body of street Arabs in Paris almost constitutes a caste. One might almost say: Not every one who wishes to belong to it can do so.

This word *gamin* was printed for the first time, and reached popular speech through the literary tongue, in 1834. It is in a little work entitled *Claude Gueux* that this word made its appearance. The horror was lively. The word passed into circulation.

The elements which constitute the consideration of the gamins for each other are very various. We have known and associated with one who was greatly respected and vastly admired because he had seen a man fall from the top of the tower of Notre-Dame; another, because he had succeeded in making his way into the rear courtyard where the statues of the dome of the Invalides had been temporarily deposited, and had "prigged" some lead from them; a third, because he had seen a diligence tip over; still another, because he "knew" a soldier who came near putting out the eye of a citizen.

This explains that famous exclamation of a Parisian gamin, a profound epiphonema, which the vulgar herd laughs at without comprehending,—*Dieu de Dieu! What ill-luck I do have! to think that I have never yet seen anybody tumble from a*

fifth-story window! (*I have pronounced I've and fifth pronounced fift'.*)

Surely, this saying of a peasant is a fine one: "Father So-and-So, your wife has died of her malady; why did you not send for the doctor?" "What would you have, sir, we poor folks *die of ourselves.*" But if the peasant's whole passivity lies in this saying, the whole of the free-thinking anarchy of the brat of the faubourgs is, assuredly, contained in this other saying. A man condemned to death is listening to his confessor in the tumbrel. The child of Paris exclaims: "He is talking to his black cap! Oh, the sneak!"

A certain audacity on matters of religion sets off the gamin. To be strong-minded is an important item.

To be present at executions constitutes a duty. He shows himself at the guillotine, and he laughs. He calls it by all sorts of pet names: The End of the Soup, The Growler, The Mother in the Blue (the sky), The Last Mouthful, etc., etc. In order not to lose anything of the affair, he seals the walls, he hoists himself to balconies, he ascends trees, he suspends himself to gratings, he clings fast to chimneys. The gamin is born a tiler as he is born a mariner. A roof inspires him with no more fear than a mast. There is no festival which comes up to an execution on the Place de Grève. Samson and the Abbé Montès are the truly popular names. They hoot at the victim in order to encourage him. They sometimes admire him. Lacenaire, when a gamin, on seeing the hideous Dautin die bravely, uttered these words which contain a future: "I was jealous of him." In the brotherhood of gamins Voltaire is not known, but Papavoine is. "Politicians" are confused with assassins in the same legend. They have a tradition as to everybody's last garment. It is known that Tolleron had a fireman's cap, Avril an otter cap, Losvel a round hat, that old Delaporte was bald and bare-headed, that Castaing was all ruddy and very handsome, that Bories had a romantic small beard, that Jean Martin kept on his suspenders, that Lecouffé and his mother quarrelled. "Don't reproach each other for your basket," shouted a gamin to them. Another, in

order to get a look at Debacker as he passed, and being too small in the crowd, caught sight of the lantern on the quay and climbed it. A gendarme stationed opposite frowned. "Let me climb up, m'sieu le gendarme," said the gamin. And, to soften the heart of the authorities, he added: "I will not fall." "I don't care if you do," retorted the gendarme.

In the brotherhood of gamins, a memorable accident counts for a great deal. One reaches the height of consideration if one chances to cut one's self very deeply, "to the very bone."

The fist is no mediocre element of respect. One of the things that the gamin is fondest of saying is: "I am fine and strong, come now!" To be left-handed renders you very enviable. A squint is highly esteemed.

CHAPTER VIII

IN WHICH THE READER WILL FIND A CHARMING SAYING OF THE LAST KING

IN summer, he metamorphoses himself into a frog; and in the evening, when night is falling, in front of the bridges of Austerlitz and Jena, from the tops of coal wagons, and the washerwomen's boats, he hurls himself headlong into the Seine, and into all possible infractions of the laws of modesty and of the police. Nevertheless the police keep an eye on him, and the result is a highly dramatic situation which once gave rise to a fraternal and memorable cry: that cry which was celebrated about 1830, is a strategic warning from gamin to gamin; it scans like a verse from Homer, with a notation as inexpressible as the eleusiac chant of the Panathenæa, and in it one encounters again the ancient Evohe. Here it is: "Ohé, Titi, ohéée! Here comes the bobby, here comes the p'lice, pick up your duds and be off, through the sewer with you!"

Sometimes this gnat—that is what he calls himself—knows how to read; sometimes he knows how to write; he always knows how to daub. He does not hesitate to acquire, by no one knows what mysterious mutual instruction, all the talents which can be of use to the public; from 1815 to 1830, he imitated the cry of the turkey; from 1830 to 1848, he scrawled pears on the walls. One summer evening, when Louis Philippe was returning home on foot, he saw a little fellow, no higher than his knee, perspiring and climbing up to draw a gigantic pear in charcoal on one of the pillars of the gate of Neuilly; the King, with that good-nature which came to him from Henry IV., helped the gamin, finished the pear, and gave the child a louis, saying: "The pear is on that also."¹ The gamin loves uproar. A certain state of violence pleases him. He execrates "the curés." One day, in the Rue de l'Université, one of these scamps was putting his thumb to his nose at the carriage gate of No. 69. "Why are you doing that at the gate?" a passer-by asked. The boy replied: "There is a curé there." It was there, in fact, that the Papal Nuncio lived.

Nevertheless, whatever may be the Voltairianism of the small gamin, if the occasion to become a chorister presents itself, it is quite possible that he will accept, and in that case he serves the mass civilly. There are two things to which he plays Tantalus, and which he always desires without ever attaining them: to overthrow the government, and to get his trousers sewed up again.

The gamin in his perfect state possesses all the policemen of Paris, and can always put the name to the face of any one which he chances to meet. He can tell them off on the tips of his fingers. He studies their habits, and he has special notes on each one of them. He reads the souls of the police like an open book. He will tell you fluently and without flinching: "Such an one is a *traitor*; such another is very *malicious*; such another is *great*; such another is *ridiculous*." (All these

¹Louis XVIII. is represented in comic pictures of that day as having a pear-shaped head.

words: traitor, malicious, great, ridiculous, have a particular meaning in his mouth.) That one imagines that he owns the Pont-Neuf, and he prevents *people* from walking on the cornice outside the parapet; that other has a mania for pulling *person's* ears; etc., etc.

CHAPTER IX

THE OLD SOUL OF GAUL

THERE was something of that boy in Poquelin, the son of the fish-market; Beaumarchais had something of it. Gaminerie is a shade of the Gallie spirit. Mingled with good sense, it sometimes adds force to the latter, as alcohol does to wine. Sometimes it is a defect. Homer repeats himself eternally, granted; one may say that Voltaire plays the gamin. Camille Desmoulins was a native of the faubourgs. Championnet, who treated miracles brutally, rose from the pavements of Paris; he had, when a small lad, inundated the porticos of Saint-Jean de Beauvais, and of Saint-Étienne du Mont; he had addressed the shrine of Sainte-Geneviève familiarly to give orders to the phial of Saint Januarius.

The gamin of Paris is respectful, ironical, and insolent. He has villainous teeth, because he is badly fed and his stomach suffers, and handsome eyes because he has wit. If Jehovah himself were present, he would go hopping up the steps of paradise on one foot. He is strong on boxing. All beliefs are possible to him. He plays in the gutter, and straightens himself up with a revolt; his effrontery persists even in the presence of grape-shot; he was a seapegrace, he is a hero; like the little Theban, he shakes the skin from the lion; Barra the drummer-boy was a gamin of Paris; he shouts: "Forward!" as the horse of Scripture says "Vah!" and in a moment he has passed from the small brat to the giant.

This child of the puddle is also the child of the ideal.

Measure that spread of wings which reaches from Molière to Barra.

To sum up the whole, and in one word, the gamin is a being who amuses himself, because he is unhappy.

CHAPTER X

ECCE PARIS, ECCE HOMO

To sum it all up once more, the Paris gamin of to-day, like the *græculus* of Rome in days gone by, is the infant populace with the wrinkle of the old world on his brow.

The gamin is a grace to the nation, and at the same time a disease; a disease which must be eured, how? By light.

Light renders healthy.

Light kindles.

All generous social irradiations spring from science, letters, arts, education. Make men, make men. Give them light that they may warm you. Sooner or later the splendid question of universal education will present itself with the irresistible authority of the absolute truth; and then, those who govern under the superintendence of the French idea will have to make this choice; the children of France or the gamins of Paris; flames in the light or will-o'-the-wisps in the gloom.

The gamin expresses Paris, and Paris expresses the world.

For Paris is a total. Paris is the ceiling of the human race. The whole of this prodigious city is a foreshortening of dead manners and living manners. He who sees Paris thinks he sees the bottom of all history with heaven and constellations in the intervals. Paris has a capital, the Town-Hall, a Parthenon, Notre-Dame, a Mount Aventine, the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, an Asinarium, the Sorbonne, a Pantheon, the Pantheon, a Via Sacra, the Boulevard des Italiens, a temple of the winds, opinion; and it replaces the Gemoniæ by ridicule. Its *majo* is called "faraud," its Transteverin is the

man of the faubourgs, its *hammal* is the market-porter, its lazzarone is the pègre, its cockney is the native of Ghent. Everything that exists elsewhere exists at Paris. The fish-woman of Dumarsais can retort on the herb-seller of Euripides, the discobols Vejanus lives again in the Forioso, the tight-rope dancer. Therapontigonus Miles could walk arm in arm with Vadeboncœur the grenadier, Damasippus the second-hand dealer would be happy among bric-à-brac merchants, Vincennes could grasp Socrates in its fist as just as Agora could imprison Diderot, Grimod de la Reynière discovered larded roast beef, as Curtillus invented roast hedgehog, we see the trapeze which figures in Plautus reappear under the vault of the Arc of l'Etoile, the sword-eater of Pœcilus encountered by Apuleius is a sword-swallower on the Pont-Neuf, the nephew of Rameau and Curculio the parasite make a pair, Ergasilus could get himself presented to Cambacères by d'Aigrefeuille; the four dandies of Rome: Aleesimarchus, Phædromus, Diabolus, and Argyrippus, descend from Courtille in Labatut's posting-chaise; Aulus Gellius would halt no longer in front of Congrio than would Charles Nodier in front of Punchinello; Marto is not a tigress, but Pardalisca was not a dragon; Pantolabus the wag jeers in the Café Anglais at Nomentanus the fast liver, Hermogenus is a tenor in the Champs-Élysées, and round him, Thracius the beggar, clad like Bobèche, takes up a collection; the bore who stops you by the button of your coat in the Tuileries makes you repeat after a lapse of two thousand years Thesprion's apostrophe: *Quis properantem meprehendit pallio?* The wine on Surêne is a parody of the wine of Alba, the red border of Desaugiers forms a balance to the great cutting of Balatro, Père Lachaise exhales beneath nocturnal rains same gleams as the Esquilæ, and the grave of the poor bought for five years, is certainly the equivalent of the slave's hived coffin.

Seek something that Paris has not. The vat of Trophonius contains nothing that is not in Mesmer's tub; Ergaphilas lives again in Cagliostro; the Brahmin Vâsaphantâ become incarnate in the Comte de Saint-Germain; the cemetery of

Saint-Médard works quite as good miraeles as the Mosque of Oumoumié at Damascus.

Paris has an Æsop-Mayeux, and a Canidia, Mademoiselle Lenormand. It is terrified, like Delphos at the fulgurating realities of the vision; it makes tables turn as Dodona did tripods. It places the grisette on the throne, as Rome placed the courtesan there; and, taking it altogether, if Louis XV. is worse than Claudian, Madame Dubarry is better than Mesalina. Paris combines in an unprecedented type, which has existed and which we have elbowed, Grecian nudity, the Hebraic ulcer, and the Gaseon pun. It mingles Diogenes, Job, and Jack-pudding, dresses up a spectre in old numbers of the *Constitutional*, and makes Chodruc Duclos.

Although Plutarch says: *the tyrant never grows old*, Rome, under Sylla as under Domitian, resigned itself and willingly put water in its wine. The Tiber was a Lethe, if the rather doctrinary eulogium made of it by Varus Vibiscus is to be credited: *Contra Gracchos Tiberim habemus, Bibere Tiberim, id est seditionem oblivisci*. Paris drinks a million litres of water a day, but that does not prevent it from occasionally beating the general alarm and ringing the tocsin.

With that exception, Paris is amiable. It accepts everything royally; it is not too particular about its Venus; its Callipyge is Hottentot; provided that it is made to laugh, it eondones; ugliness cheers it, deformity provokes it to laughter, vice diverts it; be eeccentric and you may be an eeccentric; even hypocrisy, that supreme cynicism, does not disgust it; it is so literary that it does not hold its nose before Basile, and is no more scandalized by the prayer of Tartuffe than Horace was repelled by the "hiccup" of Priapus. No trait of the universal face is lacking in the profile of Paris. The bal Mabile is not the polymuia dance of the Janiculum, but the dealer in ladies' wearing apparel there devours the lorette with her eyes, exactly as the procuress Staphyla lay in wait for the virgin Planesium. The Barrière du Combat is not the Coliseum, but people are as ferocious there as though Cæsar were looking on. The Syrian hostess has more grace than Mother Saguet, but,

if Virgil haunted the Roman wine-shop, David d'Angers, Balzac and Charlet have sat at the tables of Parisian taverns. Paris reigns. Geniuses flash forth there, the red tails prosper there. Adonai passes on his eharriot with its twelve wheels of thunder and lightning; Silenus makes his entry there on his ass. For Silenus read Ramponneau.

Paris is the synonym of Cosmos, Paris is Athens, Sybaris, Jerusalem. Pantin. All civilizations are there in an abridged form, all barbarisms also. Paris would greatly regret it if it had not a guillotine.

A little of the Place de Grève is a good thing. What would all that eternal festival be without this seasoning? Our laws are wisely provided, and thanks to them, this blade drips on this Shrove Tuesday.

CHAPTER XI

TO SCOFF, TO REIGN

THERE is no limit to Paris. No city has had that domination which sometimes derides those whom it subjugates. To please you, O Athenians! exclaimed Alexander. Paris makes more than the law, it makes the fashion; Paris sets more than the fashion, it sets the routine. Paris may be stupid, if it sees fit; it sometimes allows itself this luxury; then the universe is stupid in company with it; then Paris awakes, rubs its eyes, says: "How stupid I am!" and bursts out laughing in the face of the human race. What a marvel is such a city! it is a strange thing that this grandioseness and this burlesque should be amicable neighbors, that all this majesty should not be thrown into disorder by all this parody, and that the same mouth can to-day blow into the trump of the Judgment Day, and to-morrow into the reed-flute! Paris has a sovereign joviality. Its gayety is of the thunder and its farce holds a sceptre.

Its tempest sometimes proceeds from a grimaec. Its explosions, its days, its masterpieces, its prodigies, its epics, go

forth to the bounds of the universe, and so also do its cock-and-bull stories. Its laugh is the mouth of a volcano which spatters the whole earth. Its jests are sparks. It imposes its caricatures as well as its ideal on people; the highest monuments of human civilization accept its ironies and lend their eternity to its mischievous pranks. It is superb; it has a prodigious 14th of July, which delivers the globe; it forces all nations to take the oath of tennis; its night of the 4th of August dissolves in three hours a thousand years of feudalism; it makes of its logic the musele of unanimous will; it multiplies itself under all sorts of forms of the sublime; it fills with its light Washington, Kosciusko, Bolivar, Bozzaris, Riego, Bem, Manin, Lopez, John Brown, Garibaldi; it is everywhere where the future is being lighted up, at Boston in 1779, at the Isle de Léon in 1820, at Pesth in 1848, at Palermo in 1860, it whispers the mighty countersign: Liberty, in the ear of the American abolitionists grouped about the boat at Harper's Ferry, and in the ear of the patriots of Ancona assembled in the shadow, to the Archi before the Gozzi inn on the seashore; it creates Canaris; it creates Quiroga; it creates Pisacane; it irradiates the great on earth; it was while proceeding whither its breath urge them, that Byron perished at Missolonghi, and that Mazet died at Barcelona; it is the tribune under the feet of Mirabeau, and a crater under the feet of Robespierre; its books, its theatre, its art, its science, its literature, its philosophy, are the manuals of the human race; it has Pascal, Régnier, Corneille, Descartes, Jean-Jacques: Voltaire for all moments, Molière for all centuries; it makes its language to be talked by the universal mouth, and that language becomes the word; it constructs in all minds the idea of progress, the liberating dogmas which it forges are for the generations trusty friends, and it is with the soul of its thinkers and its poets that all heroes of all nations have been made since 1789; this does not prevent vagabondism, and that enormous genius which is called Paris, while transfiguring the world by its light, sketches in charcoal Bouginier's nose on the wall of the temple of Theseus and writes *Credeville the thief* on the Pyramids.

Paris is always showing its teeth; when it is not scolding it is laughing.

Such is Paris. The smoke of its roofs forms the ideas of the universe. A heap of mud and stone, if you will, but, above all, a moral being. It is more than great, it is immense. Why? Because it is daring.

To dare; that is the price of progress.

All sublime conquests are, more or less, the prizes of daring. In order that the Revolution should take place, it does not suffice that Montesquieu should foresee it, that Diderot should preach it, that Beaumarchais should announce it, that Condorcet should calculate it, that Arouet should prepare it, that Rousseau should premeditate it; it is necessary that Danton should dare it.

The cry: *Audacity!* is a *Fiat lux*. It is necessary, for the sake of the forward march of the human race, that there should be proud lessons of courage permanently on the heights. Daring deeds dazzle history and are one of man's great sources of light. The dawn dares when it rises. To attempt, to brave, to persist, to persevere, to be faithful to one's self, to grasp fate bodily, to astound catastrophe by the small amount of fear that it occasions us, now to affront unjust power, again to insult drunken victory, to hold one's position, to stand one's ground; that is the example which nations need, that is the light which electrifies them. The same formidable lightning proceeds from the torch of Prometheus to Cambronne's short pipe.

CHAPTER XII

THE FUTURE LATENT IN THE PEOPLE

As for the Parisian populace, even when a man grown, it is always the street Arab; to paint the child is to paint the city; and it is for that reason that we have studied this eagle in this arrant sparrow. It is in the faubourgs, above all, we maintain, that the Parisian race appears; there is the pure blood; there is the true physiognomy; there this people toils and suffers,

and suffering and toil are the two faces of man. There exist there immense numbers of unknown beings, among whom swarm types of the strangest, from the porter of la Râpée to the knacker of Montfaucon. *Pex urbis*, exclaims Cicero: *mob*, adds Burke, indignantly; rabble, multitude, populace. These are words and quickly uttered. But so be it. What does it matter? What is it to me if they do go barefoot! They do not know how to read; so much the worse. Would you abandon them for that? Would you turn their distress into a malediction? Cannot the light penetrate these masses? Let us return to that cry: Light! and let us obstinately persist therein! Light! Light! Who knows whether these opacities will not become transparent? Are not revolutions transfigurations? Come, philosophers, teach, enlighten, light up, think aloud, speak aloud, hasten joyously to the great sun, fraternize with the public place, announce the good news, spend your alphabets lavishly, proclaim rights, sing the Marseillaises, sow enthusiasms, tear green boughs from the oaks. Make a whirlwind of the idea. This crowd may be rendered sublime. Let us learn how to make use of that vast conflagration of principles and virtues, which sparkles, bursts forth and quivers at certain hours. These bare feet, these bare arms, these rags, these ignorances, these abjectnesses, these darknesses, may be employed in the conquest of the ideal. Gaze past the people, and you will perceive truth. Let that vile sand which you trample under foot be cast into the furnace, let it melt and seethe there, it will become a splendid crystal, and it is thanks to it that Galileo and Newton will discover stars.

CHAPTER XIII

LITTLE GAVROCHE

EIGHT or nine years after the events narrated in the second part of this story, people noticed on the Boulevard du Temple, and in the regions of the Château-d'Eau, a little boy eleven or twelve years of age, who would have realized with tolerable

accuracy that ideal of the gamin sketched out above, if, with the laugh of his age on his lips, he had not had a heart absolutely sombre and empty. This child was well muffled up in a pair of man's trousers, but he did not get them from his father, and a woman's chemise, but he did not get it from his mother. Some people or other had clothed him in rags out of charity. Still, he had a father and a mother. But his father did not think of him, and his mother did not love him.

He was one of those children most deserving of pity, among all, one of those who have father and mother, and who are orphans nevertheless.

This child never felt so well as when he was in the street. The pavements were less hard to him than his mother's heart.

His parents had despatched him into life with a kick.

He simply took flight.

He was a boisterous, pallid, nimble, wide-awake, jeering, lad, with a vivacious but sickly air. He went and came, sang, played at hopscotch, scraped the gutters, stole a little, but, like cats and sparrows, gayly laughed when he was called a rogue, and got angry when called a thief. He had no shelter, no bread, no fire, no love; but he was merry because he was free.

When these poor creatures grow to be men, the millstones of the social order meet them and crush them, but so long as they are children, they escape because of their smallness. The tiniest hole saves them.

Nevertheless, abandoned as this child was, it sometimes happened, every two or three months, that he said, "Come, I'll go and see mamma!" Then he quitted the boulevard, the Cirque, the Porte Saint-Martin, descended to the quays, crossed the bridges, reached the suburbs, arrived at the Salpêtrière, and came to a halt, where? Precisely at that double number 50-52 with which the reader is acquainted—at the Gorbeau hovel.

At that epoch, the hovel 50-52 generally deserted and eternally decorated with the placard: "Chambers to let," chanced to be, a rare thing, inhabited by numerous individuals who, however, as is always the case in Paris, had no connection with each other. All belonged to that indigent class which begins to



GAVROCHE.

separate from the lowest of petty bourgeoisie in straitened circumstances, and which extends from misery to misery into the lowest depths of society down to those two beings in whom all the material things of civilization end, the sewer-man who sweeps up the mud, and the ragpicker who collects scraps.

The "principal lodger" of Jean Valjean's day was dead and had been replaced by another exactly like her. I know not what philosopher has said: "Old women are never lacking."

This new old woman was named Madame Bourgon, and had nothing remarkable about her life except a dynasty of three paroquets, who had reigned in succession over her soul.

The most miserable of those who inhabited the hovel were a family of four persons, consisting of father, mother, and two daughters, already well grown, all four of whom were lodged in the same attic, one of the cells which we have already mentioned.

At first sight, this family presented no very special feature except its extreme destitution; the father, when he hired the chamber, had stated that his name was Jondrette. Some time after his moving in, which had borne a singular resemblance to *the entrance of nothing at all*, to borrow the memorable expression of the principal tenant, this Jondrette had said to the woman, who, like her predecessor, was at the same time portress and stair-sweeper: "Mother So-and-So, if any one should chance to come and inquire for a Pole or an Italian, or even a Spaniard, perchance, it is I."

This family was that of the merry barefoot boy. He arrived there and found distress, and, what is still sadder, no smile: a cold hearth and cold hearts. When he entered, he was asked: "Whence come you?" He replied: "From the street." When he went away, they asked him: "Whither are you going?" He replied: "Into the streets." His mother said to him: "What did you come here for?"

This child lived, in this absence of affection, like the pale plants which spring up in cellars. It did not cause him suffering, and he blamed no one. He did not know exactly how a father and mother should be.

Nevertheless, his mother loved his sisters.

We have forgotten to mention, that on the Boulevard du Temple this child was called Little Gavroche. Why was he called Little Gavroche?

Probably because his father's name was Jondrette.

It seems to be the instinct of certain wretched families to break the thread.

The chamber which the Jondrettes inhabited in the Gorbeau hovel was the last at the end of the corridor. The cell next to it was occupied by a very poor young man who was called M. Marius.

Let us explain who this M. Marius was.

BOOK SECOND.—THE GREAT BOURGEOIS

CHAPTER I

NINETY YEARS AND THIRTY-TWO TEETH

IN the Rue Boucherat, Rue de Normandie, and the Rue de Saintonge there still exist a few ancient inhabitants who have preserved the memory of a worthy man named M. Gillenormand, and who mention him with complaisance. This good man was old when they were young. This silhouette has not yet entirely disappeared—for those who regard with melancholy that vague swarm of shadows which is called the past—from the labyrinth of streets in the vicinity of the Temple to which, under Louis XIV., the names of all the provinces of France were appended exactly as in our day, the streets of the new Tivoli quarter have received the names of all the capitals of Europe; a progression, by the way, in which progress is visible.

M. Gillenormand, who was as much alive as possible in 1831, was one of those men who had become curiosities to be viewed, simply because they have lived a long time, and who are strange because they formerly resembled everybody, and now resemble nobody. He was a peculiar old man, and in very truth, a man of another age, the real, complete and rather haughty bourgeois of the eighteenth century, who wore his good, old bourgeoisie with the air with which marquises wear their marquises. He was over ninety years of age, his walk was erect, he talked loudly, saw clearly, drank neat, ate, slept, and snored. He had all thirty-two of his teeth. He only wore spectacles when he read. He was of an amorous disposition, but declared that, for the last ten years, he had wholly and de-

aidedly renounced women. He could no longer please, he said; he did not add: "I am too old," but: "I am too poor." He said: "If I were not ruined—Héécé!" All he had left, in fact, was an income of about fifteen thousand francs. His dream was to come into an inheritance and to have a hundred thousand livres income for mistresses. He did not belong, as the reader will perceive, to that puny variety of octogenaries who, like M. de Voltaire, have been dying all their life; his was no longevity of a cracked pot; this jovial old man had always had good health. He was superficial, rapid, easily angered. He flew into a passion at everything, generally quite contrary to all reason. When contradicted, he raised his cane; he beat people as he had done in the great century. He had a daughter over fifty years of age, and unmarried, whom he chastised severely with his tongue, when in a rage, and whom he would have liked to whip. She seemed to him to be eight years old. He boxed his servants' ears soundly, and said: "Ah! carogne!" One of his oaths was: "By the pantoufliche of the pantouflochade!" He had singular freaks of tranquillity; he had himself shaved every day by a barber who had been mad and who detested him, being jealous of M. Gillenormand on account of his wife, a pretty and coquettish barberess. M. Gillenormand admired his own discernment in all things, and declared that he was extremely sagacious; here is one of his sayings: "I have, in truth, some penetration; I am able to say when a flea bites me, from what woman it came."

The words which he uttered the most frequently were: *the sensible man*, and *nature*. He did not give to this last word the grand acceptation which our epoch has accorded to it, but he made it enter, after his own fashion, into his little chimney-corner satires: "Nature," he said, "in order that civilization may have a little of everything, gives it even specimens of its amusing barbarism. Europe possesses specimens of Asia and Africa on a small scale. The cat is a drawing-room tiger, the lizard is a pocket crocodile. The dancers at the opera are pink female savages. They do not eat men, they crunch them; or, magicians that they are, they transform them into oysters and

swallow them. The Caribbeans leave only the bones, they leave only the shell. Such are our morals. We do not devour, we gnaw; we do not exterminate, we elaw."

CHAPTER II

LIKE MASTER, LIKE HOUSE

HE lived in the Marais, Rue des Filles-du-Calvaire, No. 6. He owned the house. This house has since been demolished and rebuilt, and the number has probably been changed in those revolutions of numeration which the streets of Paris undergo. He occupied an ancient and vast apartment on the first floor, between street and gardens, furnished to the very ceilings with great Gobelins and Beauvais tapestries representing pastoral scenes; the subjects of the ceilings and the panels were repeated in miniature on the arm-chairs. He enveloped his bed in a vast, nine-leaved screen of Coromandel lacquer. Long, full curtains hung from the windows, and formed great, broken folds that were very magnificent. The garden situated immediately under his windows was attached to that one of them which formed the angle, by means of a staircase twelve or fifteen steps long, which the old gentleman ascended and descended with great agility. In addition to a library adjoining his chamber, he had a boudoir of which he thought a great deal, a gallant and elegant retreat, with magnificent hangings of straw, with a pattern of flowers and fleurs-de-lys made on the galleys of Louis XIV. and ordered of his convicts by M. de Vivonne for his mistress. M. Gille-normand had inherited it from a grim maternal great-aunt, who had died a centenarian. He had had two wives. His manners were something between those of the courtier, which he had never been, and the lawyer, which he might have been. He was gay, and caressing when he had a mind. In his youth he had been one of those men who are always deceived by their wives and never by their mistresses, because they are, at the same time, the most sullen of husbands and the most charming

of lovers in existence. He was a connoisseur of painting. He had in his chamber a marvellous portrait of no one knows whom, painted by Jordaens, executed with great dashes of the brush, with millions of details, in a confused and hap-hazard manner. M. Gillenormand's attire was not the habit of Louis XIV. nor yet that of Louis XVI.; it was that of the Incroyables of the Directory. He had thought himself young up to that period and had followed the fashions. His coat was of light-weight cloth with voluminous revers, a long swallow-tail and large steel buttons. With this he wore knee-breeches and buckle shoes. He always thrust his hands into his fobs. He said authoritatively: "The French Revolution is a heap of blackguards."

CHAPTER III

LUC-ESPRIT

AT the age of sixteen, one evening at the opera, he had had the honor to be stared at through opera-glasses by two beauties at the same time—ripe and celebrated beauties then, and sung by Voltaire, the Camargo and the *sallé*. Caught between two fires, he had beaten a heroic retreat towards a little dancer, a young girl named Nahenry, who was sixteen like himself, obscure as a cat, and with whom he was in love. He abounded in memories. He was accustomed to exclaim: "How pretty she was—that Guimard-Guimardini-Guimardinette, the last time I saw her at Longchamps, her hair curled in sustained sentiments, with her come-and-see of turquoises, her gown of the color of persons newly arrived, and her little agitation muff!" He had worn in his young manhood a waistcoat of Nain-Londrin, which he was fond of talking about effusively. "I was dressed like a Turk of the Levant Levantin," said he. Madame de Boufflers, having seen him by chance when he was twenty, had described him as "a charming fool." He was horrified by all the names which he saw in politics and in power, regarding them as vulgar and bourgeois. He read the journals, the *newspapers*, the *gazettes* as he said, stifling out-

bursts of laughter the while. "Oh!" he said, "what people these are! Corbière! Humann! Casimir Périer! There's a minister for you! I can imagine this in a journal: 'M. Gillenormand, minister!' that would be a farce. Well! They are so stupid that it would pass"; he merrily called everything by its name, whether decent or indecent, and did not restrain himself in the least before ladies. He uttered coarse speeches, obscenities, and filth with a certain tranquillity and lack of astonishment which was elegant. It was in keeping with the unceremoniousness of his century. It is to be noted that the age of periphrase in verse was the age of crudities in prose. His god-father had predicted that he would turn out a man of genius, and had bestowed on him these two significant names: Lue-Esprit.

CHAPTER IV

A CENTENARIAN ASPIRANT

HE had taken prizes in his boyhood at the College of Moulins, where he was born, and he had been crowned by the hand of the Duc de Nivernais, whom he called the Duc de Nevers. Neither the Convention, nor the death of Louis XVI., nor the Napoleon, nor the return of the Bourbons, nor anything else had been able to efface the memory of this crowning. *The Duc de Nevers* was, in his eyes, the great figure of the century. "What a charming grand seigneur," he said, "and what a fine air he had with his blue ribbon!"

In the eyes of M. Gillenormand, Catherine the Second had made reparation for the crime of the partition of Poland by purchasing, for three thousand roubles, the secret of the elixir of gold, from Bestucheff. He grew animated on this subject: "The elixir of gold," he exclaimed, "the yellow dye of Bestucheff, General Lamotte's drops, in the eighteenth century,—this was the great remedy for the catastrophes of love, the panacea against Venus, at one louis the half-ounce phial. Louis XV. sent two hundred phials of it to the Pope." He would have been greatly irritated and thrown off his balance, had

any one told him that the elixir of gold is nothing but the perchloride of iron. M. Gillenormand adored the Bourbons, and had a horror of 1789; he was forever narrating in what manner he had saved himself during the Terror, and how he had been obliged to display a vast deal of gayety and cleverness in order to escape having his head cut off. If any young man ventured to pronounce an eulogium on the Republic in his presence, he turned purple and grew so angry that he was on the point of swooning. He sometimes alluded to his ninety years, and said, "I hope that I shall not see ninety-three twice." On these occasions, he hinted to people that he meant to live to be a hundred.

CHAPTER V

BASQUE AND NICOLETTE

HE had theories. Here is one of them: "When a man is passionately fond of women, and when he has himself a wife for whom he cares but little, who is homely, cross, legitimate, with plenty of rights, perched on the code, and jealous at need, there is but one way of extricating himself from the quandry and of procuring peace, and that is to let his wife control the purse-strings. This abdication sets him free. Then his wife busies herself, grows passionately fond of handling coin, gets her fingers covered with verdigris in the process, undertakes the education of half-share tenants and the training of farmers, convokes lawyers, presides over notaries, harangues scriveners, visits limbs of the law, follows lawsuits, draws up leases, dictates contracts, feels herself the sovereign, sells, buys, regulates, promises and compromises, binds fast and annuls, yields, concedes and retrocedes, arranges, disarranges, hoards, lavishes; she commits follies, a supreme and personal delight, and that consoles her. While her husband disdains her, she has the satisfaction of ruining her husband." This theory M. Gillenormand had himself applied, and it had become his history. His wife—the second one—had admin-

istered his fortune in such a manner that, one fine day, when M. Gillenormand found himself a widower, there remained to him just sufficient to live on, by sinking nearly the whole of it in an annuity of fifteen thousand francs, three-quarters of which would expire with him. He had not hesitated on this point, not being anxious to leave a property behind him. Besides, he had noticed that patrimonies are subject to adventures, and, for instance, become *national property*; he had been present at the avatars of consolidated three per cents, and he had no great faith in the Great Book of the Public Debt. "All that's the Rue Quincampoix!" he said. His house in the Rue Filles-du-Clavaire belonged to him, as we have already stated. He had two servants, "a male and a female." When a servant entered his establishment, M. Gillenormand re-baptized him. He bestowed on the men the name of their province: Nîmois, Comtois, Poitevin, Picard. His last valet was a big, foundered, short-winded fellow of fifty-five, who was incapable of running twenty paces; but, as he had been born at Bayonne, M. Gillenormand called him *Basque*. All the female servants in his house were called Nicolette (even the Magnon, of whom we shall hear more farther on). One day, a haughty cook, a cordon bleu, of the lofty race of porters, presented herself. "How much wages do you want a month?" asked M. Gillenormand. "Thirty francs." "What is your name?" "Olympie." "You shall have fifty francs, and you shall be called Nicolette."

CHAPTER VI

IN WHICH MAGNON AND HER TWO CHILDREN ARE SEEN

WITH M. Gillenormand, sorrow was converted into wrath; he was furious at being in despair. He had all sorts of prejudices and took all sorts of liberties. One of the facts of which his exterior relief and his internal satisfaction was composed, was, as we have just hinted, that he had remained a brisk spark, and that he passed energetically for such. This he

called having "royal renown." This royal renown sometimes drew down upon him singular windfalls. One day, there was brought to him in a basket, as though it had been a basket of oysters, a stout, newly born boy, who was yelling like the deuce, and duly wrapped in swaddling-clothes, which a servant-maid, dismissed six months previously, attributed to him. M. Gillenormand had, at that time, fully completed his eighty-fourth year. Indignation and uproar in the establishment. And whom did that bold hussy think she could persuade to believe that? What audacity! What an abominable calumny! M. Gillenormand himself was not at all enraged. He gazed at the brat with the amiable smile of a good man who is flattered by the calumny, and said in an aside: "Well, what now? What's the matter? You are finely taken aback, and really, you are excessively ignorant. M. le Duc d'Angoulême, the bastard of his Majesty Charles IX., married a silly jade of fifteen when he was eighty-five; M. Virginal, Marquis d'Alluye, brother to the Cardinal de Sourdis, Archbishop of Bordeaux, had, at the age of eighty-three, by the maid of Madame la Presidente Jaquin, a son, a real child of love, who became a Chevalier of Malta and a counsellor of state; one of the great men of this century, the Abbé Tabaraud, is the son of a man of eighty-seven. There is nothing out of the ordinary in these things. And then, the Bible! Upon that I declare that this little gentleman is none of mine. Let him be taken care of. It is not his fault." This manner of procedure was good-tempered. The woman, whose name was Magnon, sent him another parcel in the following year. It was a boy again. Thereupon, M. Gillenormand capitulated. He sent the two brats back to their mother, promising to pay eighty francs a month for their maintenance, on the condition that the said mother would not do so any more. He added: "I insist upon it that the mother shall treat them well. I shall go to see them from time to time." And this he did. He had had a brother who was a priest, and who had been rector of the Academy of Poitiers for three and thirty years, and had died at seventy-nine. "I lost him young," said he. This

brother, of whom but little memory remains, was a peaceable miser, who, being a priest, thought himself bound to bestow alms on the poor whom he met, but he never gave them anything except bad or demonetized sous, thereby discovering a means of going to hell by way of paradise. As for M. Gillenormand the elder, he never haggled over his almsgiving, but gave gladly and nobly. He was kindly, abrupt, charitable, and if he had been rich, his turn of mind would have been magnificent. He desired that all which concerned him should be done in a grand manner, even his rogueries. One day, having been cheated by a business man in a matter of inheritance, in a gross and apparent manner, he uttered this solemn exclamation: "That was indecently done! I am really ashamed of this pilfering. Everything has degenerated in this century, even the rascals. *Morbleu!* this is not the way to rob a man of my standing. I am robbed as though in a forest, but badly robbed. *Silvæ sint consule dignæ!*" He had had two wives, as we have already mentioned; by the first he had had a daughter, who had remained unmarried, and by the second another daughter, who had died at about the age of thirty, who had wedded, through love, or chance, or otherwise, a soldier of fortune who had served in the armies of the Republic and of the Empire, who had won the cross at Austerlitz and had been made colonel at Waterloo. "*He is the disgrace of my family,*" said the old bourgeois. He took an immense amount of snuff, and had a particularly graceful manner of plucking at his lace ruffle with the back of one hand. He believed very little in God.

CHAPTER VII

RULE: RECEIVE NO ONE EXCEPT IN THE EVENING

SUCH was M. Luc-Esprit Gillenormand, who had not lost his hair,—which was gray rather than white,—and which was always dressed in "dog's ears." To sum up, he was venerable in spite of all this.

He had something of the eighteenth century about him; frivolous and great.

In 1814 and during the early years of the Restoration, M. Gillenormand, who was still young,—he was only seventy-four,—lived in the Faubourg Saint Germain, Rue Servandoni, near Saint-Sulpice. He had only retired to the Marais when he quitted society, long after attaining the age of eighty.

And, on abandoning society, he had immured himself in his habits. The principal one, and that which was invariable, was to keep his door absolutely closed during the day, and never to receive any one whatever except in the evening. He dined at five o'clock, and after that his door was open. That had been the fashion of his century, and he would not swerve from it. "The day is vulgar," said he, "and deserves only a closed shutter. Fashionable people only light up their minds when the zenith lights up its stars." And he barricaded himself against every one, even had it been the king himself. This was the antiquated elegance of his day.

CHAPTER VIII

TWO DO NOT MAKE A PAIR

WE have just spoken of M. Gillenormand's two daughters. They had come into the world ten years apart. In their youth they had borne very little resemblance to each other, either in character or countenance, and had also been as little like sisters to each other as possible. The youngest had a charming soul, which turned towards all that belongs to the light, was occupied with flowers, with verses, with music, which fluttered away into glorious space, enthusiastic, ethereal, and was wedded from her very youth, in ideal, to a vague and heroic figure. The elder had also her chimera; she espied in the azure some very wealthy purveyor, a contractor, a splendidly stupid husband, a million made man, or even a prefect; the receptions of the Prefecture, an usher in the antechamber with a chain on his neck, official balls, the harangues of the town-hall, to be

“Madame la Préfète,”—all this had created a whirlwind in her imagination. Thus the two sisters strayed, each in her own dream, at the epoch when they were young girls. Both had wings, the one like an angel, the other like a goose.

No ambition is ever fully realized, here below at least. No paradise becomes terrestrial in our day. The younger wedded the man of her dreams, but she died. The elder did not marry at all.

At the moment when she makes her entrance into this history which we are relating, she was an antique virtue, an incombustible prude, with one of the sharpest noses, and one of the most obtuse minds that it is possible to see. A characteristic detail; outside of her immediate family, no one had ever known her first name. She was called *Mademoiselle Gillenormand, the elder*.

In the matter of *cant*, Mademoiselle Gillenormand could have given points to a miss. Her modesty was carried to the other extreme of blackness. She cherished a frightful memory of her life; one day, a man had beheld her garter.

Age had only served to accentuate this pitiless modesty. Her guimpe was never sufficiently opaque, and never ascended sufficiently high. She multiplied clasps and pins where no one would have dreamed of looking. The peculiarity of prudery is to place all the more sentinels in proportion as the fortress is the less menaced.

Nevertheless, let him who can explain these antique mysteries of innocence, she allowed an officer of the Lancers, her grand nephew, named Théodule, to embrace her without displeasure.

In spite of this favored Lancer, the label: *Prude*, under which we have classed her, suited her to absolute perfection. Mademoiselle Gillenormand was a sort of twilight soul. Prudery is a demi-virtue and a demi-vice.

To prudery she added bigotry, a well-assorted lining. She belonged to the society of the Virgin, wore a white veil on certain festivals, mumbled special orisons, revered “the holy blood,” venerated “the sacred heart,” remained for hours in

contemplation before a rococo-jesuit altar in a chapel which was inaccessible to the rank and file of the faithful, and there allowed her soul to soar among little clouds of marble, and through great rays of gilded wood.

She had a chapel friend, an ancient virgin like herself, named Mademoiselle Vanbois, who was a positive blockhead, and beside whom Mademoiselle Gillenormand had the pleasure of being an eagle. Beyond the Agnus Dei and Ave Maria, Mademoiselle Vaubois had no knowledge of anything except of the different ways of making preserves. Mademoiselle Vaubois, perfect in her style, was the ermine of stupidity without a single spot of intelligence.

Let us say it plainly, Mademoiselle Gillenormand had gained rather than lost as she grew older. This is the case with passive natures. She had never been malicious, which is relative kindness; and then, years wear away the angles, and the softening which comes with time had come to her. She was melancholy with an obscure sadness of which she did not herself know the secret. There breathed from her whole person the stupor of a life that was finished, and which had never had a beginning.

She kept house for her father. M. Gillenormand had his daughter near him, as we have seen that Monseigneur Bienvenu had his sister with him. These households comprised of an old man and an old spinster are not rare, and always have the touching aspect of two weaknesses leaning on each other for support.

There was also in this house, between this elderly spinster and this old man, a child, a little boy, who was always trembling and mute in the presence of M. Gillenormand. M. Gillenormand never addressed this child except in a severe voice, and sometimes, with uplifted cane: "Here, sir! rascal, scoundrel, come here!—Answer me, you scamp! Just let me see you, you good-for-nothing!" etc., etc. He idolized him.

This was his grandson. We shall meet with this child again later on.

BOOK THIRD.—THE GRANDFATHER AND THE GRANDSON

CHAPTER I

AN ANCIENT SALON

WHEN M. Gillenormand lived in the Rue Servandoni, he had frequented many very good and very aristocratic salons. Although a bourgeois, M. Gillenormand was received in society. As he had a double measure of wit, in the first place, that which was born with him, and secondly, that which was attributed to him, he was even sought out and made much of. He never went anywhere except on condition of being the chief person there. There are people who will have influence at any price, and who will have other people busy themselves over them; when they cannot be oracles, they turn wags. M. Gillenormand was not of this nature; his domination in the Royalist salons which he frequented cost his self-respect nothing. He was an oracle everywhere. It had happened to him to hold his own against M. de Bonald, and even against M. Bengy-Puy-Vallée.

About 1817, he invariably passed two afternoons a week in a house in his own neighborhood, in the Rue Férou, with Madame la Baronne de T., a worthy and respectable person, whose husband had been Ambassador of France to Berlin under Louis XVI. Baron de T., who, during his lifetime, had gone very passionately into ecstasies and magnetic visions, had died bankrupt, during the emigration, leaving, as his entire fortune, some very curious Memoirs about Mesmer and his tub, in ten manuscript volumes, bound in red morocco and gilded on the edges. Madame de T. had not published the memoirs.

out of pride, and maintained herself on a meagre income which had survived no one knew how.

Madame de T. lived far from the Court; "a very mixed society," as she said, in a noble isolation, proud and poor. A few friends assembled twice a week about her widowed hearth, and these constituted a purely Royalist salon. They sipped tea there, and uttered groans or cries of horror at the century, the charter, the Bonapartists, the prostitution of the blue ribbon, or the Jacobinism of Louis XVIII., according as the wind veered towards elegy or dithyrambs; and they spoke in low tones of the hopes which were presented by Monsieur, afterwards Charles X.

The songs of the fishwomen, in which Napoleon was called *Nicolas*, were received there with transports of joy. Duchesses, the most delicate and charming women in the world, went into ecstasies over couplets like the following, addressed to "the federates":—

Refoncez dans vos eulottes¹
Le bout d' chemis' qui vous pend.
Qu'on n' dis' pas qu' les patriotes
Ont arboré l' drapeau blanc?

There they amused themselves with puns which were considered terrible, with innocent plays upon words which they supposed to be venomous, with quatrains, with distiches even; thus, upon the Dessolles ministry, a moderate cabinet, of which MM. Decazes and Deserre were members:—

Pour raffermir le trone ébranlé sur sa base,²
Il faut changer de sol, et de serre et de ease.

Or they drew up a list of the chamber of peers, "an abominably Jacobin chamber," and from this list they combined alliances of names, in such a manner as to form, for example, phrases like the following: *Damas. Sabran. Gouvion-Saint-*

¹Tuck into your trousers the shirt-tail that is hanging out. Let it not be said that patriots have hoisted the white flag.

²In order to re-establish the shaken throne firmly on its base, soil (*Des solles*), greenhouse and house (*Decazes*) must be changed.

Cyr.—All this was done merrily. In that society, they parodied the Revolution. They used I know not what desires to give point to the same wrath in inverse sense. They sang their little *Ça ira*:—

Ah! ça ira ça ira ça ira!
Les Bonapartistes à la lanterne!

Songs are like the guillotine; they chop away indifferently, to-day this head, to-morrow that. It is only a variation.

In the Fualdès affair, which belongs to this epoch, 1816, they took part for Bastide and Jausion, because Fualdès was “a Buonapartist.” They designated the liberals as *friends and brothers*; this constituted the most deadly insult.

Like certain church towers, Madame de T.’s salon had two cocks. One of them was M. Gillenormand, the other was Comte de Lamothe-Valois, of whom it was whispered about, with a sort of respect: “Do you know? That is the Lamothe of the affair of the necklace.” These singular amnesties do occur in parties.

Let us add the following: in the bourgeoisie, honored situations decay through too easy relations; one must beware whom one admits; in the same way that there is a loss of caloric in the vicinity of those who are cold, there is a diminution of consideration in the approach of despised persons. The ancient society of the upper classes held themselves above this law, as above every other. Marigny, the brother of the Pompadour, had his entry with M. le Prince de Soubise. In spite of? No, because. Du Barry, the god-father of the Vaubernier, was very welcome at the house of M. le Maréchal de Richelieu. This society is Olympus. Mercury and the Prince de Guéménéce are at home there. A thief is admitted there, provided he be a god.

The Comte de Lamothe, who, in 1815, was an old man seventy-five years of age, had nothing remarkable about him except his silent and sententious air, his cold and angular face, his perfectly polished manners, his coat buttoned up to his

cravat, and his long legs always crossed in long, flabby trousers of the hue of burnt sienna. His face was the same color as his trousers.

This M. de Lamothe was "held in consideration" in this salon on account of his "celebrity" and, strange to say, though true, because of his name of Valois.

As for M. Gillenormand, his consideration was of absolutely first-rate quality. He had, in spite of his levity, and without its interfering in any way with his dignity, a certain manner about him which was imposing, dignified, honest, and lofty, in a bourgeois fashion; and his great age added to it. One is not a century with impunity. The years finally produce around a head a venerable dishevelment.

In addition to this, he said things which had the genuine sparkle of the old rock. Thus, when the King of Prussia, after having restored Louis XVIII., came to pay the latter a visit under the name of the Count de Ruppin, he was received by the descendant of Louis XIV. somewhat as though he had been the Marquis de Brandebourg, and with the most delicate impertinence. M. Gillenormand approved: "All kings who are not the King of France," said he, "are provincial kings." One day, the following question was put and the following answer returned in his presence: "To what was the editor of the *Courrier Français* condemned?" "To be suspended." "*Sus* is superfluous," observed M. Gillenormand.¹ Remarks of this nature found a situation.

At the Te Deum on the anniversary of the return of the Bourbons, he said, on seeing M. de Talleyrand pass by: "There goes his Excellency the Evil One."

M. Gillenormand was always accompanied by his daughter, that tall mademoiselle, who was over forty and looked fifty, and by a handsome little boy of seven years, white, rosy, fresh, with happy and trusting eyes, who never appeared in that salon without hearing voices murmur around him: "How handsome he is! What a pity! Poor child!" This child was the one of whom we dropped a word a while ago. He was

¹*Suspendu*, suspended; *pendu*, hung.

called "poor child," because he had for a father "a brigand of the Loire."

This brigand of the Loire was M. Gillenormand's son-in-law, who has already been mentioned, and whom M. Gillenormand called "the disgrace of his family."

CHAPTER II

ONE OF THE RED SPECTRES OF THAT EPOCH

ANY one who had chanced to pass through the little town of Vernon at this epoch, and who had happened to walk across that fine monumental bridge, which will soon be succeeded, let us hope, by some hideous iron cable bridge, might have observed, had he dropped his eyes over the parapet, a man about fifty years of age wearing a leather cap, and trousers and a waistcoat of coarse gray cloth, to which something yellow which had been a red ribbon, was sewn, shod with wooden sabots, tanned by the sun, his face nearly black and his hair nearly white, a large scar on his forehead which ran down upon his cheek, bowed, bent, prematurely aged, who walked nearly every day, hoe and sickle in hand, in one of those compartments surrounded by walls which abut on the bridge, and border the left bank of the Seine like a chain of terraces, charming enclosures full of flowers of which one could say, were they much larger: "these are gardens," and were they a little smaller: "these are bouquets." All these enclosures abut upon the river at one end, and on a house at the other. The man in the waistcoat and the wooden shoes of whom we have just spoken, inhabited the smallest of these enclosures and the most humble of these houses about 1817. He lived there alone and solitary, silently and poorly, with a woman who was neither young nor old, neither homely nor pretty, neither a peasant nor a bourgeoisie, who served him. The plot of earth which he called his garden was celebrated in the town for the beauty of the flowers which he cultivated there. These flowers were his occupation.

By dint of labor, of perseveranee, of attention, and of buckets of water, he had succeeded in ereating after the Creator, and he had invented certain tulips and certain dahlias which seemed to have been forgotten by nature. He was ingenious: he had forestalled Soulange Bodin in the formation of little elumps of earth of heath mould, for the eultivation of rare and preecious shrubs from America and China. He was in his alleys from the break of day, in summer, planting, eutting, hoeing, watering, walking amid his flowers with an air of kindness, sadness, and sweetness, sometimes standing motionless and thoughtful for hours, listening to the song of a bird in the trees, the babble of a ehild in a house, or with his eyes fixed on a drop of dew at the tip of a spear of grass, of which the sun made a earbunele. His table was very plain, and he drank more milk than wine. A ehild eould make him give way, and his servant seolded him. He was so timid that he seemed shy, he rarely went out, and he saw no one but the poor people who tapped at his pane and his euré, the Abbé Mabeuf, a good old man. Nevertheless, if the inhabitants of the town, or strangers, or any ehance eomers, eurious to see his tulips, rang at his little eottage, he opened his door with a smile. He was the "brigand of the Loire."

Any one who had, at the same time, read military memoirs, biographies, the *Moniteur*, and the bulletins of the grand army, would have been struck by a name which occurs there with tolerable frequeny, the name of Georges Pontmery. When very young, this Georges Pontmery had been a soldier in Saintonge's regiment. The revolution broke out. Saintonge's regiment formed a part of the army of the Rhine; for the old regiments of the monarehy preserved their names of provinces even after the fall of the monarehy, and were only divided into brigades in 1794. Pontmery fought at Spire, at Worms, at Neustadt, at Turkheim, at Alzey, at Mayenee, where he was one of the two hundred who formed Houehard's rearguard. It was the twelfth to hold its ground against the corps of the Princee of Hesse, behind the old

rampart of Andernach, and only rejoined the main body of the army when the enemy's cannon had opened a breach from the cord of the parapet to the foot of the glacis. He was under Kléber at Marchiennes and at the battle of Mont-Palissel, where a ball from a biscaien broke his arm. Then he passed to the frontier of Italy, and was one of the thirty grenadiers who defended the Col de Tende with Joubert. Joubert was appointed its adjutant-general, and Pontmercy sub-lieutenant. Pontmercy was by Berthier's side in the midst of the grape-shot of that day at Lodi which caused Bonaparte to say: "Berthier has been cannoneer, cavalier, and grenadier." He beheld his old general, Joubert, fall at Novi, at the moment when, with uplifted sabre, he was shouting: "Forward!" Having been embarked with his company in the exigencies of the campaign, on board a pinnace which was proceeding from Genoa to some obscure port on the coast, he fell into a wasps'-nest of seven or eight English vessels. The Genoese commander wanted to throw his cannon into the sea, to hide the soldiers between decks, and to slip along in the dark as a merchant vessel. Pontmercy had the colors hoisted to the peak, and sailed proudly past under the guns of the British frigates. Twenty leagues further on, his audacity having increased, he attacked with his pinnace, and captured a large English transport which was carrying troops to Sicily, and which was so loaded down with men and horses that the vessel was sunk to the level of the sea. In 1805 he was in that Malher division which took Günzberg from the Archduke Ferdinand. At Weltingen he received into his arms, beneath a storm of bullets, Colonel Maupetit, mortally wounded at the head of the 9th Dragoons. He distinguished himself at Austerlitz in that admirable march in echelons effected under the enemy's fire. When the cavalry of the Imperial Russian Guard crushed a battalion of the 4th of the line, Pontmercy was one of those who took their revenge and overthrew the Guard. The Emperor gave him the cross. Pontmercy saw Wurmser at Mantua, Mélas, and Alexandria, Mack at Ulm, made prisoners in succession. He formed a part of the eighth

corps of the grand army which Mortier commanded, and which captured Hamburg. Then he was transferred to the 55th of the line, which was the old regiment of Flanders. At Eylau he was in the cemetery where, for the space of two hours, the heroic Captain Louis Hugo, the uncle of the author of this book, sustained alone with his company of eighty-three men every effort of the hostile army. Pontmercy was one of the three who emerged alive from that cemetery. He was at Friedland. Then he saw Moscow. Then La Bérésina, then Lutzen, Bautzen, Dresden, Wachau, Leipzig, and the defiles of Gelenhausen: then Montmirail, Château-Thierry, Craon, the banks of the Marne, the banks of the Aisne, and the redoubtable position of Laon. At Arnay-Le-Duc, being then a captain, he put ten Cossacks to the sword, and saved, not his general, but his corporal. He was well slashed up on this occasion, and twenty-seven splinters were extracted from his left arm alone. Eight days before the capitulation of Paris he had just exchanged with a comrade and entered the cavalry. He had what was called under the old regime, *the double hand*, that is to say, an equal aptitude for handling the sabre or the musket as a soldier, or a squadron or a battalion as an officer. It is from this aptitude, perfected by a military education, which certain special branches of the service arise, the dragoons, for example, who are both cavalry-men and infantry at one and the same time. He accompanied Napoleon to the Island of Elba. At Waterloo, he was chief of a squadron of cuirassiers, in Dubois' brigade. It was he who captured the standard of the Lunenburg battalion. He came and cast the flag at the Emperor's feet. He was covered with blood. While tearing down the banner he had received a sword-cut across his face. The Emperor, greatly pleased, shouted to him: "You are a colonel, you are a baron, you are an officer of the Legion of Honor!" Pontmercy replied: "Sire, I thank you for my widow." An hour later, he fell in the ravine of Ohain. Now, who was this Georges Pontmercy? He was this same "brigand of the Loire."

We have already seen something of his history. After

Waterloo, Pontmercy, who had been pulled out of the hollow road of Ohain, as it will be remembered, had succeeded in joining the army, and had dragged himself from ambulance to ambulance as far as the cantonments of the Loire.

The Restoration had placed him on half-pay, then had sent him into residence, that is to say, under surveillance, at Vernon. King Louis XVIII., regarding all that which had taken place during the Hundred Days as not having occurred at all, did not recognize his quality as an officer of the Legion of Honor, nor his grade of colonel, nor his title of baron. He, on his side, neglected no occasion of signing himself "Colonel Baron Pontmercy." He had only an old blue coat, and he never went out without fastening to it his rosette as an officer of the Legion of Honor. The Attorney for the Crown had him warned that the authorities would prosecute him for "illegal" wearing of this decoration. When this notice was conveyed to him through an officious intermediary, Pontmercy retorted with a bitter smile: "I do not know whether I no longer understand French, or whether you no longer speak it; but the fact is that I do not understand." Then he went out for eight successive days with his rosette. They dared not interfere with him. Two or three times the Minister of War and the general in command of the department wrote to him with the following address: *A Monsieur le Commandant Pontmercy.*" He sent back the letters with the seals unbroken. At the same moment, Napoleon at Saint Helena was treating in the same fashion the missives of Sir Hudson Lowe addressed to *General Bonaparte.* Pontmercy had ended, may we be pardoned the expression, by having in his mouth the same saliva as his Emperor.

In the same way, there were at Rome Carthaginian prisoners who refused to salute Flaminius, and who had a little of Hannibal's spirit.

One day he encountered the district-attorney in one of the streets of Vernon, stepped up to him, and said: "Mr. Crown Attorney, am I permitted to wear my scar?"

He had nothing save his meagre half-pay as chief of squad-

ron. He had hired the smallest house which he could find at Vernon. He lived there alone, we have just seen how. Under the Empire, between two wars, he had found time to marry Mademoiselle Gillenormand. The old bourgeois, thoroughly indignant at bottom, had given his consent with a sigh, saying: "The greatest families are forced into it." In 1815, Madame Pontmercy, an admirable woman in every sense, by the way, lofty in sentiment and rare, and worthy of her husband, died, leaving a child. This child had been the colonel's joy in his solitude; but the grandfather had imperatively claimed his grandson, declaring that if the child were not given to him he would disinherit him. The father had yielded in the little one's interest, and had transferred his love to flowers.

Moreover, he had renounced everything, and neither stirred up mischief nor conspired. He shared his thoughts between the innocent things which he was then doing and the great things which he had done. He passed his time in expecting a pink or in recalling Austerlitz.

M. Gillenormand kept up no relations with his son-in-law. The colonel was "a bandit" to him. M. Gillenormand never mentioned the colonel, except when he occasionally made mocking allusions to "his Baronship." It had been expressly agreed that Pontmercy should never attempt to see his son nor to speak to him, under penalty of having the latter handed over to him disowned and disinherited. For the Gillenormands, Pontmercy was a man afflicted with the plague. They intended to bring up the child in their own way. Perhaps the colonel was wrong to accept these conditions, but he submitted to them, thinking that he was doing right and sacrificing no one but himself.

The inheritance of Father Gillenormand did not amount to much; but the inheritance of Mademoiselle Gillenormand the elder was considerable. This aunt, who had remained unmarried, was very rich on the maternal side, and her sister's son was her natural heir. The boy, whose name was Marius, knew that he had a father, but nothing more. No one opened

his mouth to him about it. Nevertheless, in the society into which his grandfather took him, whispers, innuendoes, and winks, had eventually enlightened the little boy's mind; he had finally understood something of the case, and as he naturally took in the ideas and opinions which were, so to speak, the air he breathed, by a sort of infiltration and slow penetration, he gradually came to think of his father only with shame and with a pain at his heart.

While he was growing up in this fashion, the colonel slipped away every two or three months, came to Paris on the sly, like a criminal breaking his ban, and went and posted himself at Saint-Sulpice, at the hour when Aunt Gillenormand led Marius to the mass. There, trembling lest the aunt should turn round, concealed behind a pillar, motionless, not daring to breathe, he gazed at his child. The searred veteran was afraid of that old spinster.

From this had arisen his connection with the curé of Vernon, M. l'Abbé Mabeuf.

That worthy priest was the brother of a warden of Saint-Sulpice, who had often observed this man gazing at his child, and the sear on his cheek, and the large tears in his eyes. That man, who had so manly an air, yet who was weeping like a woman, had struck the warden. That face had clung to his mind. One day, having gone to Vernon to see his brother, he had encountered Colonel Pontmercy on the bridge, and had recognized the man of Saint-Sulpice. The warden had mentioned the circumstance to the curé, and both had paid the colonel a visit, on some pretext or other. This visit led to others. The colonel, who had been extremely reserved at first, ended by opening his heart, and the curé and the warden finally came to know the whole history, and how Pontmercy was sacrificing his happiness to his child's future. This caused the curé to regard him with veneration and tenderness, and the colonel, on his side, became fond of the curé. And moreover, when both are sincere and good, no men so penetrate each other, and so amalgamate with each other, as an old priest and an old soldier. At bottom, the man is the same.

The one has devoted his life to his country here below, the other to his country on high; that is the only difference.

Twice a year, on the first of January and on St. George's day, Marius wrote duty letters to his father, which were dictated by his aunt, and which one would have pronounced to be copied from some formula; this was all that M. Gillenormand tolerated; and the father answered them with very tender letters which the grandfather thrust into his pocket unread.

CHAPTER III

REQUIESCANT

MADAME DE T.'s salon was all that Marius Pontmercy knew of the world. It was the only opening through which he could get a glimpse of life. This opening was sombre, and more cold than warmth, more night than day, came to him through this skylight. This child, who had been all joy and light on entering this strange world, soon became melancholy, and, what is still more contrary to his age, grave. Surrounded by all those singular and imposing personages, he gazed about him with serious amazement. Everything conspired to increase this astonishment in him. There were in Madame de T.'s salon some very noble ladies named Mathan, Noé, Lévis, —which was pronounced Lévi,—Cambis, pronounced Cambyse. These antique visages and these Biblical names mingled in the child's mind with the Old Testament which he was learning by heart, and when they were all there, seated in a circle around a dying fire, sparsely lighted by a lamp shaded with green, with their severe profiles, their gray or white hair, their long gowns of another age, whose lugubrious colors could not be distinguished, dropping, at rare intervals, words which were both majestic and severe, little Marius stared at them with frightened eyes, in the conviction that he beheld not women, but patriarchs and magi, not real beings, but phantoms.

With these phantoms, priests were sometimes mingled, frequenters of this ancient salon, and some gentlemen; the Marquis de Sass****, private secretary to Madame de Berry, the Vicomte de Val***, who published, under the pseudonyme of *Charles-Antoine*, monorhymed odes, the Prince de Beauff*****, who, though very young, had a gray head and a pretty and witty wife, whose very low-necked toilettes of scarlet velvet with gold torsades alarmed these shadows, the Marquis de C*****d'E*****, the man in all France who best understood "proportioned politeness," the Comte d'Am*****, the kindly man with the amiable chin, and the Chévalier de Port-de-Guy, a pillar of the library of the Louvre, called the King's cabinet, M. de Port-de-Guy, bald, and rather aged than old, was wont to relate that in 1793, at the age of sixteen, he had been put in the galleys as refractory and chained with an octogenarian, the Bishop of Mirepoix, also refractory, but as a priest, while he was so in the capacity of a soldier. This was at Toulon. Their business was to go at night and gather up on the scaffold the heads and bodies of the persons who had been guillotined during the day; they bore away on their backs these dripping corpses, and their red galley-slave blouses had a clot of blood at the back of the neck, which was dry in the morning and wet at night. These tragic tales abounded in Madame de T.'s salon, and by dint of cursing Marat, they applauded Trestaillon. Some deputies of the undiscoverable variety played their whist there; M. Thibord du Chalard, M. Lemarchant de Gomicourt, and the celebrated scoffer of the right, M. Cornet-Dincourt. The bailiff de Ferrette, with his short breeches and his thin legs, sometimes traversed this salon on his way to M. de Talleyrand. He had been M. le Comte d'Artois' companion in pleasures and unlike Aristotle crouching under Campaspe, he had made the Guimard crawl on all fours, and in that way he had exhibited to the ages a philosopher avenged by a bailiff. As for the priests, there was the Abbé Halma, the same to whom M. Larose, his collaborator on *la Foudre*, said: "Bah! Who is there who is not fifty years old? a few greenhorns perhaps?" The Abbé

Letourneur, preacher to the King, the Abbé Frayssinous, who was not, as yet, either count, or bishop, or minister, or peer, and who wore an old cassock whose buttons were missing, and the Abbé Keravenant, Curé of Saint-Germain-des-Prés; also the Pope's Nuncio, then Monsignor Macchi, Archbishop of Nisibi, later on Cardinal, remarkable for his long, pensive nose, and another Monsignor, entitled thus: Abbate Palmieri, domestic prelate, one of the seven participant prothonotaries of the Holy See, Canon of the illustrious Liberian basilica, Advocate of the saints, *Postulatore dei Santi*, which refers to matters of canonization, and signifies very nearly: Master of Requests of the section of Paradise. Lastly, two cardinals, M. de la Luzerne, and M. de Cl***** T*****. The Cardinal of Luzerne was a writer and was destined to have, a few years later, the honor of signing in the *Conservateur* articles side by side with Chateaubriand; M. de Cl***** T***** was Archbishop of Toul****, and often made trips to Paris, to his nephew, the Marquis de T*****, who was Minister of Marine and War. The Cardinal of Cl***** T***** was a merry little man, who displayed his red stockings beneath his tucked-up cassock; his specialty was a hatred of the Encyclopædia, and his desperate play at billiards, and persons who, at that epoch, passed through the Rue M***** on summer evenings, where the hotel de Cl***** T***** then stood, halted to listen to the shock of the balls and the piercing voice of the Cardinal shouting to his conclavist, Monseigneur Cotiret, Bishop *in partibus* of Caryste: "Mark, Abbé, I make a cannon." The Cardinal de Cl***** T***** had been brought to Madame de T.'s by his most intimate friend, M. de Roquelaure, former Bishop of Senlis, and one of the Forty. M. de Roquelaure was notable for his lofty figure and his assiduity at the Academy; through the glass door of the neighboring hall of the library where the French Academy then held its meetings, the curious could, on every Tuesday, contemplate the Ex-Bishop of Senlis, usually standing erect, freshly powdered, in violet hose, with his back turned to the door, apparently for the purpose of allowing a better view of

his little collar. All these ecclesiastics, though for the most part as much courtiers as churchmen, added to the gravity of the T. salon, whose seigniorial aspect was accentuated by five peers of France, the Marquis de Vib****, the Marquis de Tal***, the Marquis de Herb*****, the Vicomte Damb***, and the Due de Val*****. This Duc de Val*****, although Prince de Mon***, that is to say, a reigning prince abroad, had so high an idea of France and its peerage, that he viewed everything through their medium. It was he who said: "The Cardinals are the peers of France of Rome; the lords are the peers of France of England." Moreover, as it is indispensable that the Revolution should be everywhere in this century, this feudal salon was, as we have said, dominated by a bourgeois. M. Gillenormand reigned there.

There lay the essence and quintessence of the Parisian white society. There reputations, even Royalist reputations, were held in quarantine. There is always a trace of anarchy in renown. Chateaubriand, had he entered there, would have produced the effect of Père Duchêne. Some of the scoffed-at did, nevertheless, penetrate thither on sufferance. Comte Beug*** was received there, subject to correction.

The "noble" salons of the present day no longer resemble those salons. The Faubourg Saint-Germain reeks of the fagot even now. The Royalists of to-day are demagogues, let us record it to their credit.

At Madame de T.'s the society was superior, taste was exquisite and haughty, under the cover of a great show of politeness. Manners there admitted of all sorts of involuntary refinements which were the old régime itself, buried but still alive. Some of these habits, especially in the matter of language, seem eccentric. Persons but superficially acquainted with them would have taken for provincial that which was only antique. A woman was called *Madame la Générale*. *Madame la Colonelle* was not entirely disused. The charming Madame de Léon, in memory, no doubt, of the Duchesses de Longueville and de Chevreuse, preferred this appellation to her title of Princesse. The Marquise de Créquy was also called *Madame la Colonelle*.

It was this little high society which invented at the Tuileries the refinement of speaking to the King in private as *the King*, in the third person, and never as *Your Majesty*, the designation of *Your Majesty* having been "soiled by the usurper."

Men and deeds were brought to judgment there. They jeered at the age, which released them from the necessity of understanding it. They abetted each other in amazement. They communicated to each other that modicum of light which they possessed. Methuselah bestowed information on Epimenides. The deaf man made the blind man acquainted with the course of things. They declared that the time which had elapsed since Coblentz had not existed. In the same manner that Louis XVIII. was by the grace of God, in the five and twentieth year of his reign, the emigrants were, by rights, in the five and twentieth year of their adolescence.

All was harmonious; nothing was too much alive; speech hardly amounted to a breath; the newspapers, agreeing with the salons, seemed a papyrus. There were some young people, but they were rather dead. The liveries in the antechamber were antiquated. These utterly obsolete personages were served by domestics of the same stamp.

They all had the air of having lived a long time ago, and of obstinately resisting the sepulchre. Nearly the whole dictionary consisted of *Conserver, Conservation, Conservateur; to be in good odor*,—that was the point. There are, in fact, aromatics in the opinions of these venerable groups, and their ideas smelled of it. It was a mummified society. The masters were embalmed, the servants were stuffed with straw.

A worthy old marquise, an *émigrée* and ruined, who had but a solitary maid, continued to say: "My people."

What did they do in Madame de T.'s salon? They were ultra.

To be ultra; this word, although what it represents may not have disappeared, has no longer any meaning at the present day. Let us explain it.

To be ultra is to go beyond. It is to attack the sceptre in the name of the throne, and the mitre in the name of the altar;

it is to ill-treat the thing which one is dragging, it is to kick over the traces; it is to cavil at the fagot on the score of the amount of cooking received by heretics; it is to reproach the idol with its small amount of idolatry; it is to insult through excess of respect; it is to discover that the Pope is not sufficiently papish, that the King is not sufficiently royal, and that the night has too much light; it is to be discontented with alabaster, with snow, with the swan and the lily in the name of whiteness; it is to be a partisan of things to the point of becoming their enemy; it is to be so strongly for, as to be against.

The ultra spirit especially characterizes the first phase of the Restoration.

Nothing in history resembles that quarter of an hour which begins in 1814 and terminates about 1820, with the advent of M. de Villèle, the practical man of the Right. These six years were an extraordinary moment; at one and the same time brilliant and gloomy, smiling and sombre, illuminated as by the radiance of dawn and entirely covered, at the same time, with the shadows of the great catastrophes which still filled the horizon and were slowly sinking into the past. There existed in that light and that shadow, a complete little new and old world, comic and sad, juvenile and senile, which was rubbing its eyes; nothing resembles an awakening like a return; a group which regarded France with ill-temper, and which France regarded with irony; good old owls of marquises by the streetful, who had returned, and of ghosts, the "former" subjects of amazement at everything, brave and noble gentlemen who smiled at being in France but wept also, delighted to behold their country once more, in despair at not finding their monarchy; the nobility of the Crusades treating the nobility of the Empire, that is to say, the nobility of the sword, with scorn; historic races who had lost the sense of history; the sons of the companions of Charlemagne disdaining the companions of Napoleon. The swords, as we have just remarked, returned the insult; the sword of Fontenoy was laughable and nothing but a scrap of rusty iron; the sword of Marengo was odious

and was only a sabre. Former days did not recognize Yesterday. People no longer had the feeling for what was grand. There was some one who called Bonaparte Scapin. This Society no longer exists. Nothing of it, we repeat, exists to-day. When we select from it some one figure at random, and attempt to make it live again in thought, it seems as strange to us as the world before the Deluge. It is because it, too, as a matter of fact, has been engulfed in a deluge. It has disappeared beneath two Revolutions. What billows are ideas! How quickly they cover all that it is their mission to destroy and to bury, and how promptly they create frightful gulfs!

Such was the physiognomy of the salons of those distant and candid times when M. Martainville had more wit than Voltaire.

These salons had a literature and politics of their own. They believed in Fiévée. M. Agier laid down the law in them. They commentated M. Colnet, the old bookseller and publicist of the Quay Malaquais. Napoleon was to them thoroughly the Corsican Ogre. Later on the introduction into history of M. le Marquis de Bonaparte, Lieutenant-General of the King's armies, was a concession to the spirit of the age.

These salons did not long preserve their purity. Beginning with 1818, doctrinarians began to spring up in them, a disturbing shade. Their way was to be Royalists and to excuse themselves for being so. Where the ultras were very proud, the doctrinarians were rather ashamed. They had wit; they had silence; their political dogma was suitably impregnated with arrogance; they should have succeeded. They indulged, and usefully too, in excesses in the matter of white neckties and tightly buttoned coats. The mistake or the misfortune of the doctrinarian party was to create aged youth. They assumed the poses of wise men. They dreamed of engrafting a temperate power on the absolute and excessive principle. They opposed, and sometimes with rare intelligence, conservative liberalism to the liberalism which demolishes. They were heard to say: "Thanks for Royalism! It has rendered more than one service. It has brought back tradition, worship, re-

ligion, respect. It is faithful, brave, chivalric, loving, devoted. It has mingled, though with regret, the secular grandeurs of the monarchy with the new grandeurs of the nation. Its mistake is not to understand the Revolution, the Empire, glory, liberty, young ideas, young generations, the age. But this mistake which it makes with regard to us,—have we not sometimes been guilty of it towards them? The Revolution, whose heirs we are, ought to be intelligent on all points. To attack Royalism is a misconstruction of liberalism. What an error! And what blindness! Revolutionary France is wanting in respect towards historic France, that is to say, towards its mother, that is to say, towards itself. After the 5th of September, the nobility of the monarchy is treated as the nobility of the Empire was treated after the 8th of July. They were unjust to the eagle, we are unjust to the fleur-de-lys. It seems that we must always have something to proscribe! Does it serve any purpose to ungild the crown of Louis XIV., to scrape the coat of arms of Henry IV.? We scoff at M. de Vaublanc for erasing the N's from the bridge of Jena! What was it that he did? What are we doing? Bouvines belongs to us as well as Marengo. The fleurs-de-lys are ours as well as the N's. That is our patrimony. To what purpose shall we diminish it? We must not deny our country in the past any more than in the present. Why not accept the whole of history? Why not love the whole of France?

It is thus that doctrinarians criticised and protected Royalism, which was displeased at criticism and furious at protection.

The ultras marked the first epoch of Royalism, congregation characterized the second. Skill follows ardor. Let us confine ourselves here to this sketch.

In the course of this narrative, the author of this book has encountered in his path this curious moment of contemporary history; he has been forced to cast a passing glance upon it, and to trace once more some of the singular features of this society which is unknown to-day. But he does it rapidly and without any bitter or derisive idea. Souvenirs both respectful

and affectionate, for they touch his mother, attach him to this past. Moreover, let us remark, this same petty world had a grandeur of its own. One may smile at it, but one can neither despise nor hate it. It was the France of former days.

Marius Pontmercy pursued some studies, as all children do. When he emerged from the hands of Aunt Gillenormand, his grandfather confided him to a worthy professor of the most purely classic innocence. This young soul which was expanding passed from a prude to a vulgar pedant.

Marius went through his years of college, then he entered the law school. He was a Royalist, fanatical and severe. He did not love his grandfather much, as the latter's gayety and cynicism repelled him, and his feelings towards his father were gloomy.

He was, on the whole, a cold and ardent, noble, generous, proud, religious, enthusiastic lad; dignified to harshness, pure to shyness.

CHAPTER IV

END OF THE BRIGAND

THE conclusion of Marius' classical studies coincided with M. Gillenormand's departure from society. The old man bade farewell to the Faubourg Saint-Germain and to Madame de T.'s salon, and established himself in the Marais, in his house of the Rue des Filles-du-Calvaire. There he had for servants, in addition to the porter, that chambermaid, Nicolette, who had succeeded to Magnon, and that short-breathed and puffy Basque, who have been mentioned above.

In 1827, Marius had just attained his seventeenth year. One evening, on his return home, he saw his grandfather holding a letter in his hand.

"Marius," said M. Gillenormand, "you will set out for Vernon to-morrow."

"Why?" said Marius.

"To see your father."

Marius was seized with a trembling fit. He had thought of everything except this—that he should one day be called upon to see his father. Nothing could be more unexpected, more surprising, and, let us admit it, more disagreeable to him. It was forcing estrangement into reconciliation. It was not an affliction, but it was an unpleasant duty.

Marius, in addition to his motives of political antipathy, was convinced that his father, *the slasher*, as M. Gillenormand called him on his amiable days, did not love him; this was evident, since he had abandoned him to others. Feeling that he was not beloved, he did not love. "Nothing is more simple," he said to himself.

He was so astounded that he did not question M. Gillenormand. The grandfather resumed:—

"It appears that he is ill. He demands your presence."

And after a pause, he added:—

"Set out to-morrow morning. I think there is a coach which leaves the Cour des Fontaines at six o'clock, and which arrives in the evening. Take it. He says that here is haste."

Then he crushed the letter in his hand and thrust it into his pocket. Marius might have set out that very evening and have been with his father on the following morning. A diligence from the Rue du Bouloi took the trip to Rouen by night at that date, and passed through Vernon. Neither Marius nor M. Gillenormand thought of making inquiries about it.

The next day, at twilight, Marius reached Vernon. People were just beginning to light their candles. He asked the first person whom he met for "M. Pontmercy's house." For in his own mind, he agreed with the Restoration, and like it, did not recognize his father's claim to the title of either colonel or baron.

The house was pointed out to him. He rang; a woman with a little lamp in her hand opened the door.

"M. Pontmercy?" said Marius.

The woman remained motionless.

"Is this his house?" demanded Marius.

The woman nodded affirmatively.

"Can I speak with him?"

The woman shook her head.

"But I am his son!" persisted Marius. "He is expecting me."

"He no longer expects you," said the woman.

Then he perceived that she was weeping.

She pointed to the door of a room on the ground-floor; he entered.

In that room, which was lighted by a tallow candle standing on the chimney-piece, there were three men, one standing erect, another kneeling, and one lying at full length, on the floor in his shirt. The one on the floor was the colonel.

The other two were the doctor, and the priest, who was engaged in prayer.

The colonel had been attacked by brain fever three days previously. As he had a foreboding of evil at the very beginning of his illness, he had written to M. Gillenormand to demand his son. The malady had grown worse. On the very evening of Marius' arrival at Vernon, the colonel had had an attack of delirium; he had risen from his bed, in spite of the servant's efforts to prevent him, crying: "My son is not coming! I shall go to meet him!" Then he ran out of his room and fell prostrate on the floor of the antechamber. He had just expired.

The doctor had been summoned, and the curé. The doctor had arrived too late. The son had also arrived too late.

By the dim light of the candle, a large tear could be distinguished on the pale and prostrate colonel's cheek, where it had trickled from his dead eye. The eye was extinguished, but the tear was not yet dry. That tear was his son's delay.

Marius gazed upon that man whom he beheld for the first time, on that venerable and manly face, on those open eyes which saw not, on those white locks, those robust limbs, on which, here and there, brown lines, marking sword-thrusts, and a sort of red stars, which indicated bullet-holes, were visible. He contemplated that gigantic scar which stamped heroism on that countenance upon which God had imprinted

goodness. He reflected that this man was his father, and that this man was dead, and a chill ran over him.

The sorrow which he felt was the sorrow which he would have felt in the presence of any other man whom he had chanced to behold stretched out in death.

Anguish, poignant anguish, was in that chamber. The servant-woman was lamenting in a corner, the curé was praying, and his sobs were audible, the doctor was wiping his eyes; the corpse itself was weeping.

The doctor, the priest, and the woman gazed at Marius in the midst of their affliction without uttering a word; he was the stranger there. Marius, who was far too little affected, felt ashamed and embarrassed at his own attitude; he held his hat in his hand; and he dropped it on the floor, in order to produce the impression that grief had deprived him of the strength to hold it.

At the same time, he experienced remorse, and he despised himself for behaving in this manner. But was it his fault? He did not love his father? Why should he!

The colonel had left nothing. The sale of his furniture barely paid the expenses of his burial.

The servant found a scrap of paper, which she handed to Marius. It contained the following, in the colonel's handwriting:—

"For my son.—The Emperor made me a Baron on the battle-field of Waterloo. Since the Restoration disputes my right to this title which I purchased with my blood, my son shall take it and bear it. That he will be worthy of it is a matter of course." Below, the colonel had added: "At that same battle of Waterloo, a sergeant saved my life. The man's name was Thénardier. I think that he has recently been keeping a little inn, in a village in the neighborhood of Paris, at Chelles or Montfermeil. If my son meets him, he will do all the good he can to Thénardier."

Marius took this paper and preserved it, not out of duty to his father, but because of that vague respect for death which is always imperious in the heart of man.

Nothing remained of the colonel. M. Gillenormand had his sword and uniform sold to an old-clothes dealer. The neighbors devastated the garden and pillaged the rare flowers. The other plants turned to nettles and weeds, and died.

Marius remained only forty-eight hours at Vernon. After the interment he returned to Paris, and applied himself again to his law studies, with no more thought of his father than if the latter had never lived. In two days the colonel was buried, and in three forgotten.

Marius wore crape on his hat. That was all.

CHAPTER V

THE UTILITY OF GOING TO MASS, IN ORDER TO BECOME A REVOLUTIONIST

MARIUS had preserved the religious habits of his childhood. One Sunday, when he went to hear mass at Saint-Sulpice, at that same chapel of the Virgin whither his aunt had led him when a small lad, he placed himself behind a pillar, being more absent-minded and thoughtful than usual on that occasion, and knelt down, without paying any special heed, upon a chair of Utrecht velvet, on the back of which was inscribed this name: *Monsieur Mabeuf, warden*. Mass had hardly begun when an old man presented himself and said to Marius:—

“This is my place, sir.”

Marius stepped aside promptly, and the old man took possession of his chair.

The mass concluded, Marius still stood thoughtfully a few paces distant; the old man approached him again and said:—

“I beg your pardon, sir, for having disturbed you a while ago, and for again disturbing you at this moment; you must have thought me intrusive, and I will explain myself.”

“There is no need of that, sir,” said Marius.

“Yes!” went on the old man, “I do not wish you to have a bad opinion of me. You see, I am attached to this place. It

seems to me that the mass is better from here. Why? I will tell you. It is from this place, that I have watched a poor, brave father come regularly, every two or three months, for the last ten years, since he had no other opportunity and no other way of seeing his child, because he was prevented by family arrangements. He came at the hour when he knew that his son would be brought to mass. The little one never suspected that his father was there. Perhaps he did not even know that he had a father, poor innocent! The father kept behind a pillar, so that he might not be seen. He gazed at his child and he wept. He adored that little fellow, poor man! I could see that. This spot has become sanctified in my sight, and I have contracted a habit of coming hither to listen to the mass. I prefer it to the stall to which I have a right, in my capacity of warden. I knew that unhappy gentleman a little, too. He had a father-in-law, a wealthy aunt, relatives, I don't know exactly what all, who threatened to disinherit the child if he, the father, saw him. He sacrificed himself in order that his son might be rich and happy some day. He was separated from him because of political opinions. Certainly, I approve of political opinions, but there are people who do not know where to stop. Mon Dieu! a man is not a monster because he was at Waterloo; a father is not separated from his child for such a reason as that. He was one of Bonaparte's colonels. He is dead, I believe. He lived at Vernon, where I have a brother who is a curé, and his name was something like Pontmarie or Montperey. He had a fine sword-cut, on my honor."

"Pontmercy," suggested Marius, turning pale.

"Precisely, Pontmercy. Did you know him?"

"Sir," said Marius, "he was my father."

The old warden clasped his hands and exclaimed:—

"Ah! you are the child! Yes, that's true, he must be a man by this time. Well! poor child, you may say that you had a father who loved you dearly!"

Marius offered his arm to the old man and conducted him to his lodgings.

On the following day, he said to M. Gillenormand:—

“I have arranged a hunting-party with some friends. Will you permit me to be absent for three days?”

“Four!” replied his grandfather. “Go and amuse yourself.”

And he said to his daughter in a low tone, and with a wink, “Some love affair!”

CHAPTER VI

THE CONSEQUENCES OF HAVING MET A WARDEN

WHERE it was that Marius went will be disclosed a little further on.

Marius was absent for three days, then he returned to Paris, went straight to the library of the law-school and asked for the files of the *Moniteur*.

He read the *Moniteur*, he read all the histories of the Republic and the Empire, the *Memorial de Sainte-Hélène*, all the memoirs, all the newspapers, the bulletins, the proclamations; he devoured everything. The first time that he came across his father's name in the bulletins of the grand army, he had a fever for a week. He went to see the generals under whom Georges Pontmercy had served, among others, Comte H. Church-warden Mabeuf, whom he went to see again, told him about the life at Vernon, the colonel's retreat, his flowers, his solitude. Marius came to a full knowledge of that rare, sweet, and sublime man, that species of lion-lamb who had been his father.

In the meanwhile, occupied as he was with this study which absorbed all his moments as well as his thoughts, he hardly saw the Gillenormands at all. He made his appearance at meals; then they searched for him, and he was not to be found. Father Gillenormand smiled. “Bah! bah! He is just of the age for the girls!” Sometimes the old man added: “The deuce! I thought it was only an affair of gallantry. It seems that it is an affair of passion!”

It was a passion, in fact. Marius was on the high road to adoring his father.

At the same time, his ideas underwent an extraordinary change. The phases of this change were numerous and successive. As this is the history of many minds of our day, we think it will prove useful to follow these phases step by step and to indicate them all.

That history upon which he had just cast his eyes appalled him.

The first effect was to dazzle him.

Up to that time, the Republic, the Empire, had been to him only monstrous words. The Republic, a guillotine in the twilight; the Empire, a sword in the night. He had just taken a look at it, and where he had expected to find only a chaos of shadows, he had beheld, with a sort of unprecedented surprise, mingled with fear and joy, stars sparkling, Mirabeau, Vergniaud, Saint-Just, Robespierre, Camille, Desmoulins, Danton, and a sun arise, Napoleon. He did not know where he stood. He recoiled, blinded by the brilliant lights. Little by little, when his astonishment had passed off, he grew accustomed to this radiance, he contemplated these deeds without dizziness, he examined these personages without terror; the Revolution and the Empire presented themselves luminously, in perspective, before his mind's eye; he beheld each of these groups of events and of men summed up in two tremendous facts: the Republic in the sovereignty of civil right restored to the masses, the Empire in the sovereignty of the French idea imposed on Europe; he beheld the grand figure of the people emerge from the Revolution, and the grand figure of France spring forth from the Empire. He asserted in his conscience, that all this had been good. What his dazzled state neglected in this, his first far too synthetic estimation, we do not think it necessary to point out here. It is the state of a mind on the march that we are recording. Progress is not accomplished in one stage. That stated, once for all, in connection with what precedes as well as with what is to follow, we continue.

He then perceived that, up to that moment, he had comprehended his country no more than he had comprehended his father. He had not known either the one or the other, and a sort of voluntary night had obscured his eyes. Now he saw, and on the one hand he admired, while on the other he adored.

He was filled with regret and remorse, and he reflected in despair that all he had in his soul could now be said only to the tomb. Oh! if his father had still been in existence, if he had still had him, if God, in his compassion and his goodness, had permitted his father to be still among the living, how he would have run, how he would have precipitated himself, how he would have cried to his father: "Father! Here I am! It is I! I have the same heart as thou! I am thy son!" How he would have embraced that white head, bathed his hair in tears, gazed upon his scar, pressed his hands, adored his garment, kissed his feet! Oh! Why had his father died so early, before his time, before the justice, the love of his son had come to him? Marius had a continual sob in his heart, which said to him every moment: "Alas!" At the same time, he became more truly serious, more truly grave, more sure of his thought and his faith. At each instant, gleams of the true came to complete his reason. An inward growth seemed to be in progress within him. He was conscious of a sort of natural enlargement, which gave him two things that were new to him—his father and his country.

As everything opens when one has a key, so he explained to himself that which he had hated, he penetrated that which he had abhorred; henceforth he plainly perceived the providential, divine and human sense of the great things which he had been taught to detest, and of the great men whom he had been instructed to curse. When he reflected on his former opinions, which were but those of yesterday, and which, nevertheless, seemed to him already so very ancient, he grew indignant, yet he smiled.

From the rehabilitation of his father, he naturally passed to the rehabilitation of Napoleon.

But the latter, we will confess, was not effected without labor.

From his infancy, he had been imbued with the judgments of the party of 1814. on Bonaparte. Now, all the prejudices of the Restoration, all its interests, all its instincts tended to disfigure Napoleon. It execrated him even more than it did Robespierre. It had very cleverly turned to sufficiently good account the fatigue of the nation, and the hatred of mothers. Bonaparte had become an almost fabulous monster, and in order to paint him to the imagination of the people, which, as we lately pointed out, resembles the imagination of children, the party of 1814 made him appear under all sorts of terrifying masks in succession, from that which is terrible though it remains grandiose to that which is terrible and becomes grotesque, from Tiberius to the bugaboo. Thus, in speaking of Bonaparte, one was free to sob or to puff up with laughter, provided that hatred lay at the bottom. Marius had never entertained—about *that man*, as he was called—any other ideas in his mind. They had combined with the tenacity which existed in his nature. There was in him a headstrong little man who hated Napoleon.

On reading history, on studying him, especially in the documents and materials for history, the veil which concealed Napoleon from the eyes of Marius was gradually rent. He caught a glimpse of something immense, and he suspected that he had been deceived up to that moment, on the score of Bonaparte as about all the rest; each day he saw more distinctly; and he set about mounting, slowly, step by step, almost regretfully in the beginning, then with intoxication and as though attracted by an irresistible fascination, first the sombre steps, then the vaguely illuminated steps, at last the luminous and splendid steps of enthusiasm.

One night, he was alone in his little chamber near the roof. His candle was burning; he was reading, with his elbows resting on his table close to the open window. All sorts of reveries reached him from space, and mingled with his thoughts. What a spectacle is the night! One hears dull sounds, without

knowing whence they proceed; one beholds Jupiter, which is twelve hundred times larger than the earth, glowing like a firebrand, the azure is black, the stars shine; it is formidable.

He was perusing the bulletins of the grand army, those heroic strophes penned on the field of battle; there, at intervals, he beheld his father's name, always the name of the Emperor; the whole of that great Empire presented itself to him; he felt a flood swelling and rising within him; it seemed to him at moments that his father passed close to him like a breath, and whispered in his ear; he gradually got into a singular state; he thought that he heard drums, cannon, trumpets, the measured tread of battalions, the dull and distant gallop of the cavalry; from time to time, his eyes were raised heavenward, and gazed upon the colossal constellations as they gleamed in the measureless depths of space, then they fell upon his book once more, and there they beheld other colossal things moving confusedly. His heart contracted within him. He was in a transport, trembling, panting. All at once, without himself knowing what was in him, and what impulse he was obeying, he sprang to his feet, stretched both arms out of the window, gazed intently into the gloom, the silence, the infinite darkness, the eternal immensity, and exclaimed: "Long live the Emperor!"

From that moment forth, all was over; the Ogre of Corsica, —the usurper,—the tyrant,—the monster who was the lover of his own sisters,—the actor who took lessons of Talma,—the poisoner of Jaffa,—the tiger,—Buonaparte,—all this vanished, and gave place in his mind to a vague and brilliant radiance in which shone, at an inaccessible height, the pale marble phantom of Cæsar. The Emperor had been for his father only the well-beloved captain whom one admires, for whom one sacrifices one's self; he was something more to Marius. He was the predestined constructor of the French group, succeeding the Roman group in the domination of the universe. He was a prodigious architect, of a destruction, the continuer of Charlemagne, of Louis XI., of Henry IV., of Richelieu, of Louis XIV., and of the Committee of Public Safety, having

his spots, no doubt, his faults, his crimes even, being a man, that is to say; but august in his faults, brilliant in his spots, powerful in his crime.

He was the predestined man, who had forced all nations to say: "The great nation!" He was better than that, he was the very incarnation of France, conquering Europe by the sword which he grasped, and the world by the light which he shed. Marius saw in Bonaparte the dazzling spectre which will always rise upon the frontier, and which will guard the future. Despot but dictator; a despot resulting from a republic and summing up a revolution. Napoleon became for him the man-people as Jesus Christ is the man-God.

It will be perceived, that like all new converts to a religion, his conversion intoxicated him, he hurled himself headlong into adhesion and he went too far. His nature was so constructed; once on the downward slope, it was almost impossible for him to put on the drag. Fanaticism for the sword took possession of him, and complicated in his mind his enthusiasm for the idea. He did not perceive that, along with genius, and pell-mell, he was admitting force, that is to say, that he was installing in two compartments of his idolatry, on the one hand that which is divine, on the other that which is brutal. In many respects, he had set about deceiving himself otherwise. He admitted everything. There is a way of encountering error while on one's way to the truth. He had a violent sort of good faith which took everything in the lump. In the new path which he had entered on, in judging the mistakes of the old regime, as in measuring the glory of Napoleon, he neglected the attenuating circumstances.

At all events, a tremendous step had been taken. Where he had formerly beheld the fall of the monarchy, he now saw the advent of France. His orientation had changed. What had been his East became the West. He had turned squarely round.

All these revolutions were accomplished within him, without his family obtaining an inkling of the ease.

When, during this mysterious labor, he had entirely shed

his old Bourbon and ultra skin, when he had cast off the aristocrat, the Jacobite and the Royalist, when he had become thoroughly a revolutionist, profoundly democratic and republican, he went to an engraver on the Quai des Orfèvres and ordered a hundred cards bearing this name: *Le Baron Marius Pontmercy*.

This was only the strictly logical consequence of the change which had taken place in him, a change in which everything gravitated round his father.

Only, as he did not know any one and could not show his cards with any porter, he put them in his pocket.

By another natural consequence, in proportion as he drew nearer to his father, to the latter's memory, and to the things for which the colonel had fought five and twenty years before, he receded from his grandfather. We have long ago said, that M. Gillenormand's temper did not please him. There already existed between them all the dissonances of the grave young man and the frivolous old man. The gayety of G ronde shocks and exasperates the melancholy of Werther. So long as the same political opinions and the same ideas had been common to them both, Marius had met M. Gillenormand there as on a bridge. When the bridge fell, an abyss was formed. And then, over and above all, Marius experienced unutterable impulses to revolt, when he reflected that it was M. Gillenormand who had, from stupid motives, torn him ruthlessly from the colonel, thus depriving the father of the child, and the child of the father.

By dint of pity for his father, Marius had nearly arrived at aversion for his grandfather.

Nothing of this sort, however, was betrayed on the exterior, as we have already said. Only he grew colder and colder; laconic at meals, and rare in the house. When his aunt scolded him for it, he was very gentle and alleged his studies, his lectures, the examinations, etc., as a pretext. His grandfather never departed from his infallible diagnosis: "In love! I know all about it."

From time to time Marius absented himself.

"Where is it that he goes off like this?" said his aunt.

On one of these trips, which were always very brief, he went to Montfermeil, in order to obey the injunction which his father had left him, and he sought the old sergeant to Waterloo, the inn-keeper Thénardier. Thénardier had failed, the inn was closed, and no one knew what had become of him. Marius was away from the house for four days on this quest.

"He is getting decidedly wild," said his grandfather.

They thought they had noticed that he wore something on his breast, under his shirt, which was attached to his neck by a black ribbon.

CHAPTER VII

SOME PETTICOAT

WE have mentioned a lancer.

He was a great-grand-nephew of M. Gillenormand, on the paternal side, who led a garrison life, outside the family and far from the domestic hearth. Lieutenant Théodule Gillenormand fulfilled all the conditions required to make what is called a fine officer. He had "a lady's waist," a victorious manner of trailing his sword and of twirling his mustache in a hook. He visited Paris very rarely, and so rarely that Marius had never seen him. The eousins knew each other only by name. We think we have said that Théodule was the favorite of Aunt Gillenormand, who preferred him because she did not see him. Not seeing people permits one to attribute to them all possible perfections.

One morning, Mademoiselle Gillenormand the elder returned to her apartment as much disturbed as her placidity was capable of allowing. Marius had just asked his grandfather's permission to take a little trip, adding that he meant to set out that very evening. "Go!" had been his grandfather's reply, and M. Gillenormand had added in an aside, as he raised his eyebrows to the top of his forehead: "Here he is passing the night out again." Mademoiselle Gillenor-

mand had ascended to her chamber greatly puzzled, and on the staircase had dropped this exclamation: "This is too much!"—and this interrogation: "But where is it that he goes?" She espied some adventure of the heart, more or less illicit, a woman in the shadow, a rendezvous, a mystery, and she would not have been sorry to thrust her spectacles into the affair. Tasting a mystery resembles getting the first flavor of a scandal; sainted souls do not detest this. There is some curiosity about scandal in the secret compartments of bigotry.

So she was the prey of a vague appetite for learning a history.

In order to get rid of this curiosity which agitated her a little beyond her wont, she took refuge in her talents, and set about scalloping, with one layer of cotton after another, one of those embroideries of the Empire and the Restoration, in which there are numerous cart-wheels. The work was clumsy, the worker cross. She had been seated at this for several hours when the door opened. Mademoiselle Gillenormand raised her nose. Lieutenant Théodule stood before her, making the regulation salute. She uttered a cry of delight. One may be old, one may be a prude, one may be pious, one may be an aunt, but it is always agreeable to see a lancer enter one's chamber.

"You here, Théodule!" she exclaimed.

"On my way through town, aunt."

"Embrace me."

"Here goes!" said Théodule.

And he kissed her. Aunt Gillenormand went to her writing-desk and opened it.

"You will remain with us a week at least?"

"I leave this very evening, aunt."

"It is not possible!"

"Mathematically!"

"Remain, my little Théodule, I beseech you."

"My heart says 'yes,' but my orders say 'no.' The matter is simple. They are changing our garrison; we have been at Melun, we are being transferred to Gaillon. It is necessary

to pass through Paris in order to get from the old post to the new one. I said: 'I am going to see my aunt.'

"Here is something for your trouble."

And she put ten louis into his hand.

"For my pleasure, you mean to say, my dear aunt."

Théodule kissed her again, and she experienced the joy of having some of the skin scratched from her neck by the braidings on his uniform.

"Are you making the journey on horseback, with your regiment?" she asked him.

"No, aunt. I wanted to see you. I have special permission. My servant is taking my horse; I am travelling by diligence. And, by the way, I want to ask you something."

"What is it?"

"Is my cousin Marius Pontmercy travelling so, too?"

"How do you know that?" said his aunt, suddenly pricked to the quick with a lively curiosity.

"On my arrival, I went to the diligence to engage my seat in the coupé."

"Well?"

"A traveller had already come to engage a seat in the imperial. I saw his name on the card."

"What name?"

"Marius Pontmercy."

"The wicked fellow!" exclaimed his aunt. "Ah! your cousin is not a steady lad like yourself. To think that he is to pass the night in a diligence!"

"Just as I am going to do."

"But you—it is your duty; in his case, it is wildness."

"Bosh!" said Théodule.

Here an event occurred to Mademoiselle Gillenormand the elder,—an idea struck her. If she had been a man, she would have slapped her brow. She apostrophized Théodule:—

"Are you aware whether your cousin knows you?"

"No. I have seen him; but he has never deigned to notice me."

"So you are going to travel together?"

"He in the imperial, I in the coupé."

"Where does this diligence run?"

"To Andelys."

"Then that is where Marius is going?"

"Unless, like myself, he should stop on the way. I get down at Vernon, in order to take the branch coach for Gaillon. I know nothing of Marius' plan of travel."

"Marius! what an ugly name! what possessed them to name him Marius? While you, at least, are called Théodule."

"I would rather be called Alfred," said the officer.

"Listen, Théodule."

"I am listening, aunt."

"Pay attention."

"I am paying attention."

"You understand?"

"Yes."

"Well, Marius absents himself."

"Eh! eh!"

"He travels."

"Ah! ah!"

"He spends the night out."

"Oh! oh!"

"We should like to know what there is behind all this."

Théodule replied with the composure of a man of bronze:—

"Some petticoat or other."

And with that inward laugh which denotes certainty, he added:—

"A lass."

"That is evident," exclaimed his aunt, who thought she heard M. Gillenormand speaking, and who felt her conviction become irresistible at that word *fillette*, accentuated in almost the very same fashion by the grand-uncle and the grand-nephew. She resumed:—

"Do us a favor. Follow Marius a little. He does not know you, it will be easy. Since a lass there is, try to get a sight of her. You must write us the tale. It will amuse his grandfather."

Théodule had no excessive taste for this sort of spying; but he was much touched by the ten louis, and he thought he saw a chance for a possible sequel. He accepted the commission and said: "As you please, aunt."

And he added in an aside, to himself: "Here I am a duenna."

Mademoiselle Gillenormand embraced him.

"You are not the man to play such pranks, Théodule. You obey discipline, you are the slave of orders, you are a man of scruples and duty, and you would not quit your family to go and see a creature."

The lancer made the pleased grimace of Cartouche when praised for his probity.

Marius, on the evening following this dialogue, mounted the diligence without suspecting that he was watched. As for the watcher, the first thing he did was to fall asleep. His slumber was complete and conscientious. Argus snored all night long.

At daybreak, the conductor of the diligence shouted: "Vernon! relay of Vernon! Travellers for Vernon!" And Lieutenant Théodule woke.

"Good," he growled, still half asleep, "this is where I get out."

Then, as his memory cleared by degrees, the effect of waking, he recalled his aunt, the ten louis, and the account which he had undertaken to render of the deeds and proceedings of Marius. This set him to laughing.

"Perhaps he is no longer in the coach," he thought, as he rebuttoned the waistcoat of his undress uniform. "He may have stopped at Poissy; he may have stopped at Triel; if he did not get out at Meulan, he may have got out at Mantes, unless he got out at Rolleboise, or if he did not go on as far as Pacy, with the choice of turning to the left at Évreux, or to the right at Laroche-Guyon. Run after him, aunty. What the devil am I to write to that good old soul?"

At that moment a pair of black trousers descending from the imperial, made its appearance at the window of the coupé.

"Can that be Marius?" said the lieutenant.

It was Marius.

A little peasant girl, all entangled with the horses and the postilions at the end of the vehicle, was offering flowers to the travellers. "Give your ladies flowers!" she cried.

Marius approached her and purchased the finest flowers in her flat basket.

"Come now," said Théodule, leaping down from the eoupé, "this piques my curiosity. Who the deuce is he going to carry those flowers to? She must be a splendidly handsome woman for so fine a bouquet. I want to see her."

And no longer in pursuance of orders, but from personal curiosity, like dogs who hunt on their own account, he set out to follow Marius.

Marius paid no attention to Théodule. Elegant women descended from the diligence; he did not glance at them. He seemed to see nothing around him.

"He is pretty deeply in love!" thought Théodule.

Marius directed his steps towards the church.

"Capital," said Théodule to himself. "Rendezvous seasoned with a bit of mass are the best sort. Nothing is so exquisite as an ogle which passes over the good God's head."

On arriving at the church, Marius did not enter it, but skirted the apse. He disappeared behind one of the angles of the apse.

"The rendezvous is appointed outside," said Théodule. "Let's have a look at the lass."

And he advanced on the tips of his boots towards the corner which Marius had turned.

On arriving there, he halted in amazement.

Marius, with his forehead clasped in his hands, was kneeling upon the grass on a grave. He had strewn his bouquet there. At the extremity of the grave, on a little swelling which marked the head, there stood a cross of black wood with this name in white letters: COLONEL BARON PONTMERCY. Marius' sobs were audible.

The "lass" was a grave.

CHAPTER VIII

MARBLE AGAINST GRANITE

IT was hither that Marius had come on the first occasion of his absenting himself from Paris. It was hither that he had come every time that M. Gillenormand had said: "He is sleeping out."

Lieutenant Théodule was absolutely put out of countenance by this unexpected encounter with a sepulchre; he experienced a singular and disagreeable sensation which he was incapable of analyzing, and which was composed of respect for the tomb, mingled with respect for the colonel. He retreated, leaving Marius alone in the cemetery, and there was discipline in this retreat. Death appeared to him with large epaulets, and he almost made the military salute to him. Not knowing what to write to his aunt, he decided not to write at all; and it is probable that nothing would have resulted from the discovery made by Théodule as to the love affairs of Marius, if, by one of those mysterious arrangements which are so frequent in chance, the scene at Vernon had not had an almost immediate counter-shock at Paris.

Marius returned from Vernon on the third day, in the middle of the morning, descended at his grandfather's door, and, wearied by the two nights spent in the diligence, and feeling the need of repairing his loss of sleep by an hour at the swimming-school, he mounted rapidly to his chamber, took merely time enough to throw off his travelling-coat, and the black ribbon which he wore round his neck, and went off to the bath.

M. Gillenormand, who had risen betimes like all old men in good health, had heard his entrance, and had made haste to climb, as quickly as his old legs permitted, the stairs to the upper story where Marius lived, in order to embrace him, and to question him while so doing, and to find out where he had been.

But the youth had taken less time to descend than the old man had to ascend, and when Father Gillenormand entered the attic, Marius was no longer there.

The bed had not been disturbed, and on the bed lay, outspread, but not defiantly, the great-coat and the black ribbon.

"I like this better," said M. Gillenormand.

And a moment later, he made his entrance into the salon, where Mademoiselle Gillenormand was already seated, busily embroidering her cart-wheels.

The entrance was a triumphant one.

M. Gillenormand held in one hand the great-coat, and in the other the neck-ribbon, and exclaimed:—

"Victory! We are about to penetrate the mystery! We are going to learn the most minute details; we are going to lay our finger on the debaucheries of our sly friend! Here we have the romance itself. I have the portrait!"

In fact, a case of black shagreen, resembling a medallion portrait, was suspended from the ribbon.

The old man took this case and gazed at it for some time without opening it, with that air of enjoyment, rapture, and wrath, with which a poor hungry fellow beholds an admirable dinner which is not for him, pass under his very nose.

"For this evidently is a portrait. I know all about such things. That is worn tenderly on the heart. How stupid they are! Some abominable fright that will make us shudder, probably! Young men have such bad taste nowadays!"

"Let us see, father," said the old spinster.

The case opened by the pressure of a spring. They found in it nothing but a carefully folded paper.

"*From the same to the same,*" said M. Gillenormand, bursting with laughter. "I know what it is. A billet-doux."

"Ah! let us read it!" said the aunt.

And she put on her spectacles. They unfolded the paper and read as follows:—

"*For my son.*—The Emperor made me a Baron on the battlefield of Waterloo. Since the Restoration disputes my right to this title which I purchased with my blood, my son shall take

it and bear it. That he will be worthy of it is a matter of course."

The feelings of father and daughter cannot be described. They felt chilled as by the breath of a death's-head. They did not exchange a word.

Only, M. Gillenormand said in a low voice and as though speaking to himself:—

"It is the slasher's handwriting."

The aunt examined the paper, turned it about in all directions, then put it back in its case.

At the same moment a little oblong packet, enveloped in blue paper, fell from one of the pockets of the great-coat. Mademoiselle Gillenormand picked it up and unfolded the blue paper.

It contained Marius' hundred cards. She handed one of them to M. Gillenormand, who read: *Le Baron Marius Pontmercy*.

The old man rang the bell. Nicolette came. M. Gillenormand took the ribbon, the case, and the coat, flung them all on the floor in the middle of the room, and said:—

"Carry those duds away."

A full hour passed in the most profound silence. The old man and the old spinster had seated themselves with their backs to each other, and were thinking, each on his own account, the same things, in all probability.

At the expiration of this hour, Aunt Gillenormand said:—

"A pretty state of things!"

A few moments later, Marius made his appearance. He entered. Even before he had crossed the threshold, he saw his grandfather holding one of his own cards in his hand, and on catching sight of him, the latter exclaimed with his air of bourgeois and grinning superiority which was something crushing:—

"Well! well! well! well! well! so you are a baron now. I present you my compliments. What is the meaning of this?"

Marius reddened slightly and replied:—

"It means that I am the son of my father."

M. Gillenormand ceased to laugh, and said harshly:—

"I am your father."

"My father," retorted Marius, with downcast eyes and a severe air, "was a humble and heroic man, who served the Republic and France gloriously, who was great in the greatest history that men have ever made, who lived in the bivouac for a quarter of a century, beneath grape-shot and bullets, in snow and mud by day, beneath rain at night, who captured two flags, who received twenty wounds, who died forgotten and abandoned, and who never committed but one mistake, which was to love too fondly two ingrates, his country and myself."

This was more than M. Gillenormand could bear to hear. At the word *republic*, he rose, or, to speak more correctly, he sprang to his feet. Every word that Marius had just uttered produced on the visage of the old Royalist the effect of the puffs of air from a forge upon a blazing brand. From a dull hue he had turned red, from red, purple, and from purple, flame-colored.

"Marius!" he cried. "Abominable child! I do not know what your father was! I do not wish to know! I know nothing about that, and I do not know him! But what I do know is, that there never was anything but scoundrels among those men! They were all rascals, assassins, red-caps, thieves! I say all! I say all! I know not one! I say all! Do you hear me, Marius! See here, you are no more a baron than my slipper is! They were all bandits in the service of Robespierre! All who served B-u-o-naparté were brigands! They were all traitors who betrayed, betrayed, betrayed their legitimate king! All cowards who fled before the Prussians and the English at Waterloo! That is what I do know! Whether Monsieur your father comes in that category, I do not know! I am sorry for it, so much the worse, your humble servant!"

In his turn, it was Marius who was the firebrand and M. Gillenormand who was the bellows. Marius quivered in every limb, he did not know what would happen next, his brain was on fire. He was the priest who beholds all his sacred wafers

cast to the winds, the fakir who beholds a passer-by spit upon his idol. It could not be that such things had been uttered in his presence. What was he to do? His father had just been trampled under foot and stamped upon in his presence, but by whom? By his grandfather. How was he to avenge the one without outraging the other? It was impossible for him to insult his grandfather and it was equally impossible for him to leave his father unavenged. On the one hand was a sacred grave, on the other hoary locks.

He stood there for several moments, staggering as though intoxicated, with all this whirlwind dashing through his head; then he raised his eyes, gazed fixedly at his grandfather, and cried in a voice of thunder:—

“Down with the Bourbons, and that great hog of a Louis XVIII.!”

Louis XVIII. had been dead for four years; but it was all the same to him.

The old man, who had been crimson, turned whiter than his hair. He wheeled round towards a bust of M. le Duc de Berry, which stood on the chimney-piece, and made a profound bow, with a sort of peculiar majesty. Then he paced twice, slowly and in silence, from the fireplace to the window and from the window to the fireplace, traversing the whole length of the room, and making the polished floor creak as though he had been a stone statue walking.

On his second turn, he bent over his daughter, who was watching this encounter with the stupefied air of an antiquated lamb, and said to her with a smile that was almost calm: “A baron like this gentleman, and a bourgeois like myself cannot remain under the same roof.”

And drawing himself up, all at once, pallid, trembling, terrible, with his brow rendered more lofty by the terrible radiance of wrath, he extended his arm towards Marius and shouted to him:—

“Be off!”

Marius left the house.

On the following day, M. Gillenormand said to his daughter:

“You will send sixty pistoles every six months to that blood-drinker, and you will never mention his name to me.”

Having an immense reserve fund of wrath to get rid of, and not knowing what to do with it, he continued to address his daughter as *you* instead of *thou* for the next three months.

Marius, on his side, had gone forth in indignation. There was one circumstance which, it must be admitted, aggravated his exasperation. There are always petty fatalities of the sort which complicate domestic dramas. They augment the grievances in such cases, although, in reality, the wrongs are not increased by them. While carrying Marius’ “duds” precipitately to his chamber, at his grandfather’s command, Nicolette had, inadvertently, let fall, probably, on the attic staircase, which was dark, that medallion of black shagreen which contained the paper penned by the colonel. Neither paper nor case could afterwards be found. Marius was convinced that “Monsieur Gillenormand”—from that day forth he never alluded to him otherwise—had flung “his father’s testament” in the fire. He knew by heart the few lines which the colonel had written, and, consequently, nothing was lost. But the paper, the writing, that sacred relic,—all that was his very heart. What had been done with it?

Marius had taken his departure without saying whither he was going, and without knowing where, with thirty francs, his watch, and a few clothes in a hand-bag. He had entered a hackney-coach, had engaged it by the hour, and had directed his course at hap-hazard towards the Latin quarter.

What was to become of Marius?

BOOK FOURTH.—THE FRIENDS OF THE A B C

CHAPTER I

A GROUP WHICH BARELY MISSED BECOMING HISTORIC

AT that epoch, which was, to all appearances indifferent, a certain revolutionary quiver was vaguely current. Breaths which had started forth from the depths of '89 and '93 were in the air. Youth was on the point, may the reader pardon us the word, of moulting. People were undergoing a transformation, almost without being conscious of it, through the movement of the age. The needle which moves round the compass also moves in souls. Each person was taking that step in advance which he was bound to take. The Royalists were becoming liberals, liberals were turning democrats. It was a flood tide complicated with a thousand ebb movements; the peculiarity of ebbs is to create intermixtures; hence the combination of very singular ideas; people adored both Napoleon and liberty. We are making history here. These were the mirages of that period. Opinions traverse phases. Voltairian royalism, a quaint variety, had a no less singular sequel, Bonapartist liberalism.

Other groups of minds were more serious. In that direction, they sounded principles, they attached themselves to the right. They grew enthusiastic for the absolute, they caught glimpses of infinite realizations; the absolute, by its very rigidity, urges spirits towards the sky and causes them to float in illimitable space. There is nothing like dogma for bringing forth dreams. And there is nothing like dreams for engendering the future. Utopia to-day, flesh and blood to-morrow.

These advanced opinions had a double foundation. A begin-

ning of mystery menaced "the established order of things," which was suspicious and underhand. A sign which was revolutionary to the highest degree. The second thoughts of power meet the second thoughts of the populace in the mine. The incubation of insurrections gives the retort to the premeditation of *coups d'état*.

There did not, as yet, exist in France any of those vast underlying organizations, like the German *tugendbund* and Italian Carbonarism; but here and there there were dark underminings, which were in process of throwing off shoots. The *Cougourde* was being outlined at Aix; there existed at Paris, among other affiliations of that nature, the society of the Friends of the A B C.

What were these Friends of the A B C? A society which had for its object apparently the education of children, in reality the elevation of man.

They declared themselves the Friends of the A B C,—the *Abaissé*,—the debased,—that is to say, the people. They wished to elevate the people. It was a pun which we should do wrong to smile at. Puns are sometimes serious factors in politics; witness the *Castratus ad castra*, which made a general of the army of Narses; witness: *Barbari et Barberini*; witness: *Tu es Petrus et super hanc petram*, etc., etc.

The Friends of the A B C were not numerous, it was a secret society in the state of embryo, we might almost say a coterie, if coteries ended in heroes. They assembled in Paris in two localities, near the fish-market, in a wine-shop called *Corinthe*, of which more will be heard later on, and near the Pantheon in in a little café in the Rue Saint-Michel called the *Café Musain*, now torn down; the first of these meeting-places was close to the workingman, the second to the students.

The assemblies of the Friends of the A B C were usually held in a back room of the *Café Musain*.

This hall, which was tolerably remote from the café, with which it was connected by an extremely long corridor, had two windows and an exit with a private stairway on the little Rue des Grès. There they smoked and drank, and gambled and

laughed. There they conversed in very loud tones about everything, and in whispers of other things. An old map of France under the Republic was nailed to the wall,—a sign quite sufficient to excite the suspicion of a police agent.

The greater part of the Friends of the A B C were students, who were on cordial terms with the working classes. Here are the names of the principal ones. They belong, in a certain measure, to history: Enjolras, Combeferre, Jean Prouvaire, Feuilly, Courfeyrac, Bahorel, Lesgle or Laigle, Joly, Grantaire.

These young men formed a sort of family, through the bond of friendship. All, with the exception of Laigle, were from the South.

This was a remarkable group. It vanished in the invisible depths which lie behind us. At the point of this drama which we have now reached, it will not perhaps be superfluous to throw a ray of light upon these youthful heads, before the reader beholds them plunging into the shadow of a tragic adventure.

Enjolras, whose name we have mentioned first of all,—the reader shall see why later on,—was an only son and wealthy.

Enjolras was a charming young man, who was capable of being terrible. He was angelically handsome. He was a savage Antinous. One would have said, to see the pensive thoughtfulness of his glance, that he had already, in some previous state of existence, traversed the revolutionary apocalypse. He possessed the tradition of it as though he had been a witness. He was acquainted with all the minute details of the great affair. A pontifical and warlike nature, a singular thing in a youth. He was an officiating priest and a man of war; from the immediate point of view, a soldier of the democracy; above the contemporary movement, the priest of the ideal. His eyes were deep, his lids a little red, his lower lip was thick and easily became disdainful, his brow was lofty. A great deal of brow in a face is like a great deal of horizon in a view. Like certain young men at the beginning

of this century and the end of the last, who became illustrious at an early age, he was endowed with excessive youth, and was as rosy as a young girl, although subject to hours of pallor. Already a man, he still seemed a child. His two and twenty years appeared to be but seventeen; he was serious, it did not seem as though he were aware there was on earth a thing called woman. He had but one passion—the right; but one thought—to overthrow the obstacle. On Mount Aventine, he would have been Gracchus; in the Convention, he would have been Saint-Just. He hardly saw the roses, he ignored spring, he did not hear the carolling of the birds; the bare throat of Evadne would have moved him no more than it would have moved Aristogeiton; he, like Harmodius, thought flowers good for nothing except to conceal the sword. He was severe in his enjoyments. He chastely dropped his eyes before everything which was not the Republic. He was the marble lover of liberty. His speech was harshly inspired, and had the thrill of a hymn. He was subject to unexpected outbursts of soul. Woe to the love-affair which should have risked itself beside him! If any grisette of the Place Cambrai or the Rue Saint-Jean-de-Beauvais, seeing that face of a youth escaped from college, that page's mien, those long, golden lashes, those blue eyes, that hair billowing in the wind, those rosy cheeks, those fresh lips, those exquisite teeth, had conceived an appetite for that complete aurora, and had tried her beauty on Enjolras, an astounding and terrible glance would have promptly shown her the abyss, and would have taught her not to confound the mighty cherub of Ezekiel with the gallant Cherubino of Beaumarchais.

By the side of Enjolras, who represented the logic of the Revolution, Combeferre represented its philosophy. Between the logic of the Revolution and its philosophy there exists this difference—that its logic may end in war, whereas its philosophy can end only in peace. Combeferre complemented and rectified Enjolras. He was less lofty, but broader. He desired to pour into all minds the extensive principles of general ideas: he said: “Revolution, but civilization”; and

around the mountain peak he opened out a vast view of the blue sky. The Revolution was more adapted for breathing with Combeferre than with Enjolras. Enjolras expressed its divine right, and Combeferre its natural right. The first attached himself to Robespierre; the second confined himself to Condorcet. Combeferre lived the life of all the rest of the world more than did Enjolras. If it had been granted to these two young men to attain to history, the one would have been the just, the other the wise man. Enjolras was the more virile, Combeferre the more humane. *Homo* and *vir*, that was the exact effect of their different shades. Combeferre was as gentle as Enjolras was severe, through natural whiteness. He loved the word *citizen*, but he preferred the word *man*. He would gladly have said: *Hombre*, like the Spanish. He read everything, went to the theatres, attended the courses of public lecturers, learned the polarization of light from Arago, grew enthusiastic over a lesson in which Geoffroy Sainte-Hilaire explained the double function of the external carotid artery, and the internal, the one which makes the face, and the one which makes the brain; he kept up with what was going on, followed science step by step, compared Saint-Simon with Fourier, deciphered hieroglyphics, broke the pebble which he found and reasoned on geology, drew from memory a silk-worm moth, pointed out the faulty French in the Dictionary of the Academy, studied Puysegur and Deleuze, affirmed nothing, not even miracles; denied nothing, not even ghosts; turned over the files of the *Moniteur*, reflected. He declared that the future lies in the hand of the schoolmaster, and busied himself with educational questions. He desired that society should labor without relaxation at the elevation of the moral and intellectual level, at coining science, at putting ideas into circulation, at increasing the mind in youthful persons, and he feared lest the present poverty of method, the paltriness from a literary point of view confined to two or three centuries called classic, the tyrannical dogmatism of official pedants, scholastic prejudices and routines should end by converting our colleges into artificial oyster beds. He was

learned, a purist, exact, a graduate of the Polytechnic, a close student, and at the same time, thoughtful "even to chimæras," so his friends said. He believed in all dreams, railroads, the suppression of suffering in chirurgical operations, the fixing of images in the dark chamber, the electric telegraph, the steering of balloons. Moreover, he was not much alarmed by the citadels erected against the human mind in every direction, by superstition, despotism, and prejudice. He was one of those who think that science will eventually turn the position. Enjolras was a chief. Combeferre was a guide. One would have liked to fight under the one and to march behind the other. It is not that Combeferre was not capable of fighting, he did not refuse a hand-to-hand combat with the obstacle, and to attack it by main force and explosively; but it suited him better to bring the human race into accord with its destiny gradually, by means of education, the inculcation of axioms, the promulgation of positive laws; and, between two lights, his preference was rather for illumination than for conflagration. A conflagration can create an aurora, no doubt, but why not await the dawn? A volcano illuminates, but daybreak furnishes a still better illumination. Possibly, Combeferre preferred the whiteness of the beautiful to the blaze of the sublime. A light troubled by smoke, progress purchased at the expense of violence, only half satisfied this tender and serious spirit. The headlong precipitation of a people into the truth, a '93, terrified him; nevertheless, stagnation was still more repulsive to him, in it he detected putrefaction and death; on the whole, he preferred seum to miasma, and he preferred the torrent to the cesspool, and the falls of Niagara to the lake of Montfaucon. In short, he desired neither halt nor haste. While his tumultuous friends, captivated by the absolute, adored and invoked splendid revolutionary adventures, Combeferre was inclined to let progress, good progress, take its own course; he may have been cold, but he was pure; methodical, but irreproachable; phlegmatic, but imperturbable. Combeferre would have knelt and clasped his hands to enable the future to arrive in

all its candor, and that nothing might disturb the immense and virtuous evolution of the races. *The good must be innocent*, he repeated incessantly. And in fact, if the grandeur of the Revolution consists in keeping the dazzling ideal fixedly in view, and of soaring thither athwart the lightnings, with fire and blood in its talons, the beauty of progress lies in being spotless; and there exists between Washington, who represents the one, and Danton, who incarnates the other, that difference which separates the swan from the angel with the wings of an eagle.

Jean Prouvaire was a still softer shade than Combeferre. His name was Jehan, owing to that petty momentary freak which mingled with the powerful and profound movement whence sprang the very essential study of the Middle Ages. Jean Prouvaire was in love; he cultivated a pot of flowers, played on the flute, made verses, loved the people, pitied woman, wept over the child, confounded God and the future in the same confidence, and blamed the Revolution for having caused the fall of a royal head, that of André Chénier. His voice was ordinarily delicate, but suddenly grew manly. He was learned even to erudition, and almost an Orientalist. Above all, he was good; and, a very simple thing to those who know how nearly goodness borders on grandeur, in the matter of poetry, he preferred the immense. He knew Italian, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew; and these served him only for the perusal of four poets: Dante, Juvenal, Æschylus, and Isaiah. In French, he preferred Corneille to Racine, and Agrippa d'Aubigné to Corneille. He loved to saunter through fields of wild oats and corn-flowers, and busied himself with clouds nearly as much as with events. His mind had two attitudes, one on the side towards man, the other on that towards God; he studied or he contemplated. All day long, he buried himself in social questions, salary, capital, credit, marriage, religion, liberty of thought, education, penal servitude, poverty, association, property, production and sharing, the enigma of this lower world which covers the human ant-hill with darkness; and at night, he gazed upon the planets, those enormous beings. Like

Enjolras, he was wealthy and an only son. He spoke softly, bowed his head, lowered his eyes, smiled with embarrassment, dressed badly, had an awkward air, blushed at a mere nothing, and was very timid. Yet he was intrepid.

Feuilly was a workingman, a fan-maker, orphaned both of father and mother, who earned with difficulty three francs a day, and had but one thought, to deliver the world. He had one other preoccupation, to educate himself; he called this also, delivering himself. He had taught himself to read and write; everything that he knew, he had learned by himself. Feuilly had a generous heart. The range of his embrace was immense. This orphan had adopted the peoples. As his mother had failed him, he meditated on his country. He brooded with the profound divination of the man of the people, over what we now call the *idea of the nationality*, had learned history with the express object of raging with full knowledge of the ease. In this club of young Utopians, occupied chiefly with France, he represented the outside world. He had for his specialty Greece, Poland, Hungary, Roumania, Italy. He uttered these names incessantly, appropriately and inappropriately, with the tenacity of right. The violations of Turkey on Greece and Thessaly, of Russia on Warsaw, of Austria on Venice, enraged him. Above all things, the great violence of 1772 aroused him. There is no more sovereign eloquence than the true in indignation; he was eloquent with that eloquence. He was inexhaustible on that infamous date of 1772, on the subject of that noble and valiant race suppressed by treason, and that three-sided crime, on that monstrous ambush, the prototype and pattern of all those horrible suppressions of states, which, since that time, have struck many a noble nation, and have annulled their certificate of birth, so to speak. All contemporary social crimes have their origin in the partition of Poland. The partition of Poland is a theorem of which all present political outrages are the corollaries. There has not been a despot, nor a traitor for nearly a century back, who has not signed, approved, counter-signed, and copied, *ne variatur*, the partition of Poland.

When the record of modern treasons was examined, that was the first thing which made its appearance. The congress of Vienna consulted that crime before consummating its own. 1772 sounded the onset; 1815 was the death of the game. Such was Feuilly's habitual text. This poor workingman had constituted himself the tutor of Justice, and she recompensed him by rendering him great. The fact is, that there is eternity in right. Warsaw can no more be Tartar than Venice can be Teuton. Kings lose their pains and their honor in the attempt to make them so. Sooner or later, the submerged part floats to the surface and reappears. Greece becomes Greece again, Italy is once more Italy. The protest of right against the deed persists forever. The theft of a nation cannot be allowed by prescription. These lofty deeds of rascality have no future. A nation cannot have its mark extracted like a pocket handkerchief.

Courfeyrae had a father who was called M. de Courfeyrae. One of the false ideas of the bourgeoisie under the Restoration as regards aristocracy and the nobility was to believe in the *partiele*. The *partiele*, as every one knows, possesses no significance. But the bourgeois of the epoch of *la Minerve* estimated so highly that poor *de*, that they thought themselves bound to abdicate it. M. de Chauvelin had himself called M. Chauvelin; M. de Caumartin, M. Caumartin; M. de Constant de Robeeque, Benjamin Constant; M. de Lafayette, M. Lafayette. Courfeyrae had not wished to remain behind the rest, and called himself plain Courfeyrae.

We might almost, so far as Courfeyrae is concerned, stop here, and confine ourselves to saying with regard to what remains: "For Courfeyrae, see Tholomyès."

Courfeyrae had, in fact, that animation of youth which may be called the *beauté du diable* of the mind. Later on, this disappears like the playfulness of the kitten, and all this grace ends, with the bourgeois, on two legs, and with the tomat, on four paws.

This sort of wit is transmitted from generation to generation of the successive levies of youth who traverse the schools.

who pass it from hand to hand, *quasi cursores*, and is almost always exactly the same; so that, as we have just pointed out, any one who had listened to Courfeyrac in 1828 would have thought he heard Tholomyès in 1817. Only, Courfeyrac was an honorable fellow. Beneath the apparent similarities of the exterior mind, the difference between him and Tholomyès was very great. The latent man which existed in the two was totally different in the first from what it was in the second. There was in Tholomyès a district attorney, and in Courfeyrac a paladin.

Enjolras was the chief, Combeferre was the guide, Courfeyrac was the centre. The others gave more light, he shed more warmth; the truth is, that he possessed all the qualities of a centre, roundness and radiance.

Bahorel had figured in the bloody tumult of June, 1822, on the occasion of the burial of young Lallemand.

Bahorel was a good-natured mortal, who kept bad company, brave, a spendthrift, prodigal, and to the verge of generosity, talkative, and at times eloquent, bold to the verge of effrontery; the best fellow possible; he had daring waistcoats, and scarlet opinions; a wholesale blusterer, that is to say, loving nothing so much as a quarrel, unless it were an uprising; and nothing so much as an uprising, unless it were a revolution; always ready to smash a window-pane, then to tear up the pavement, then to demolish a government, just to see the effect of it; a student in his eleventh year. He had nosed about the law, but did not practise it. He had taken for his device: "Never a lawyer," and for his armorial bearings a nightstand in which was visible a square cap. Every time that he passed the law-school, which rarely happened, he buttoned up his frock-coat,—the paletot had not yet been invented,—and took hygienic precautions. Of the school porter he said: "What a fine old man!" and of the dean, M. Delvincourt: "What a monument!" In his lectures he espied subjects for ballads, and in his professors occasions for caricature. He wasted a tolerably large allowance, something like three thousand francs a year, in doing nothing.

He had peasant parents whom he had contrived to imbue with respect for their son.

He said of them: "They are peasants and not bourgeois; that is the reason they are intelligent."

Bahorel, a man of caprice, was scattered over numerous cafés; the others had habits, he had none. He sauntered. To stray is human. To saunter is Parisian. In reality, he had a penetrating mind and was more of a thinker than appeared to view.

He served as a connecting link between the Friends of the A B C and other still unorganized groups, which were destined to take form later on.

In this conclave of young heads, there was one bald member.

The Marquis d'Avary, whom Louis XVIII. made a duke for having assisted him to enter a hackney-coach on the day when he emigrated, was wont to relate, that in 1814, on his return to France, as the King was disembarking at Calais, a man handed him a petition.

"What is your request?" said the King.

"Sire, a post-office."

"What is your name?"

"L'Aigle."

The King frowned, glanced at the signature of the petition and beheld the name written thus: LESGLE. This non-Bonaparte orthography touched the King and he began to smile. "Sire," resumed the man with the petition, "I had for ancestor a keeper of the hounds surnamed Lesgueules. This surname furnished my name. I am called Lesgueules, by contraction Lesgle, and by corruption l'Aigle." This caused the King to smile broadly. Later on he gave the man the posting office of Meaux, either intentionally or accidentally.

The bald member of the group was the son of this Lesgle, or Légle, and he signed himself, Légle [de Meaux]. As an abbreviation, his companions called him Bossuet.

Bossuet was a gay but unlucky fellow. His specialty was not to succeed in anything. As an offset, he laughed at everything. At five and twenty he was bald. His father had ended

by owning a house and a field; but he, the son, had made haste to lose that house and field in a bad speculation. He had nothing left. He possessed knowledge and wit, but all he did miscarried. Everything failed him and everybody deceived him; what he was building tumbled down on top of him. If he were splitting wood, he cut off a finger. If he had a mistress, he speedily discovered that he had a friend also. Some misfortune happened to him every moment, hence his joviality. He said: "I live under falling tiles." He was not easily astonished, because, for him, an accident was what he had foreseen, he took his bad luck serenely, and smiled at the teasing of fate, like a person who is listening to pleasantries. He was poor, but his fund of good humor was inexhaustible. He soon reached his last sou, never his last burst of laughter. When adversity entered his doors, he saluted this old acquaintance cordially, he tapped all catastrophes on the stomach; he was familiar with fatality to the point of calling it by its nickname: "Good day, Guignon," he said to it.

These persecutions of fate had rendered him inventive. He was full of resources. He had no money, but he found means, when it seemed good to him, to indulge in "unbridled extravagance." One night, he went so far as to eat a "hundred francs" in a supper with a wench, which inspired him to make this memorable remark in the midst of the orgy: "Pull off my boots, you five-louis jade."

Bossuet was slowly directing his steps towards the profession of a lawyer; he was pursuing his law studies after the manner of Baborel. Bossuet had not much domicile, sometimes none at all. He lodged now with one, now with another, most often with Joly. Joly was studying medicine. He was two years younger than Bossuet.

Joly was the "malade imaginaire" junior. What he had won in medicine was to be more of an invalid than a doctor. At three and twenty he thought himself a valetudinarian, and passed his life in inspecting his tongue in the mirror. He affirmed that man becomes magnetic like a needle, and in his chamber he placed his bed with its head to the south, and

the foot to the north, so that, at night, the circulation of his blood might not be interfered with by the great electric current of the globe. During thunder storms, he felt his pulse. Otherwise, he was the gayest of them all. All these young, maniacal, puny, merry incoherences lived in harmony together, and the result was an eccentric and agreeable being whom his comrades, who were prodigal of winged consonants, called Jollilly. "You may fly away on the four *L's*," Jean Prouvaire said to him.¹

Joly had a trick of touching his nose with the tip of his cane, which is an indication of a sagacious mind.

All these young men who differed so greatly, and who, on the whole, can only be discussed seriously, held the same religion: Progress.

All were the direct sons of the French Revolution. The most giddy of them became solemn when they pronounced that date: '89. Their fathers in the flesh had been, either royalists, doctrinaires, it matters not what; this confusion anterior to themselves, who were young, did not concern them at all; the pure blood of principle ran in their veins. They attached themselves, without intermediate shades, to incorruptible right and absolute duty.

Affiliated and initiated, they sketched out the ideal underground.

Among all these glowing hearts and thoroughly convinced minds, there was one sceptic. How came he there? By juxtaposition. This sceptic's name was Grantaire, and he was in the habit of signing himself with this rebus: R. Grantaire was a man who took good care not to believe in anything. Moreover, he was one of the students who had learned the most during their course at Paris; he knew that the best coffee was to be had at the Café Lemblin, and the best billiards at the Café Voltaire, that good cakes and lasses were to be found at the Ermitage, on the Boulevard du Maine, spatchcocked chickens at Mother Sauget's, excellent matelotes at the Barrière de la Cunette, and a certain thin white wine at the Barrière du Com-

¹*L'Aile*, wing.

pat. He knew the best place for everything; in addition, boxing and foot-fencing and some dances; and he was a thorough single-stick player. He was a tremendous drinker to boot. He was inordinately homely: the prettiest boot-stitcher of that day, Irma Boissy, enraged with his homeliness, pronounced sentence on him as follows: "Grantaire is impossible"; but Grantaire's fatuity was not to be disconcerted. He stared tenderly and fixedly at all women, with the air of saying to them all: "If I only chose!" and of trying to make his comrades believe that he was in general demand.

All those words: rights of the people, rights of man, the social contract, the French Revolution, the Republic, democracy, humanity, civilization, religion, progress, came very near to signifying nothing whatever to Grantaire. He smiled at them. Scepticism, that caries of the intelligence, had not left him a single whole idea. He lived with irony. This was his axiom: "There is but one certainty, my full glass." He sneered at all devotion in all parties, the father as well as the brother, Robespierre junior as well as Loizerolles. "They are greatly in advance to be dead," he exclaimed. He said of the crucifix: "There is a gibbet which has been a success." A rover, a gambler, a libertine, often drunk, he displeased these young dreamers by humming incessantly: "J'aime les filles, et j'aime le bon vin." Air: *Vive Henri IV.*

However, this sceptic had one fanaticism. This fanaticism was neither a dogma, nor an idea, nor an art, nor a science; it was a man: Enjolras. Grantaire admired, loved, and venerated Enjolras. To whom did this anarchical scoffer unite himself in this phalanx of absolute minds? To the most absolute. In what manner had Enjolras subjugated him? By his ideas? No. By his character. A phenomenon which is often observable. A sceptic who adheres to a believer is as simple as the law of complementary colors. That which we lack attracts us. No one loves the light like the blind man. The dwarf adores the drum-major. The toad always has his eyes fixed on heaven. Why? In order to watch the bird in its flight. Grantaire, in whom writhed doubt, loved to watch

faith soar in Enjolras. He had need of Enjolras. That chaste, healthy, firm, upright, hard, candid nature charmed him, without his being clearly aware of it, and without the idea of explaining it to himself having occurred to him. He admired his opposite by instinct. His soft, yielding, dislocated, sickly, shapeless ideas attached themselves to Enjolras as to a spinal column. His moral backbone leaned on that firmness. Grantaire in the presence of Enjolras became some one once more. He was, himself, moreover, composed of two elements, which were, to all appearance, incompatible. He was ironical and cordial. His indifference loved. His mind could get along without belief, but his heart could not get along without friendship. A profound contradiction; for an affection is a conviction. His nature was thus constituted. There are men who seem to be born to be the reverse, the obverse, the wrong side. They are Pollux, Patrocles, Nisus, Eudamidas, Epestion, Pechmeja. They only exist on condition that they are backed up with another man; their name is a sequel, and is only written preceded by the conjunction *and*; and their existence is not their own; it is the other side of an existence which is not theirs. Grantaire was one of these men. He was the obverse of Enjolras.

One might almost say that affinities begin with the letters of the alphabet. In the series O and P are inseparable. You can, at will, pronounce O and P or Orestes and Pylades.

Grantaire, Enjolras' true satellite, inhabited this circle of young men; he lived there, he took no pleasure anywhere but there; he followed them everywhere. His joy was to see these forms go and come through the fumes of wine. They tolerated him on account of his good humor.

Enjolras, the believer, disdained this sceptic; and, a sober man himself, scorned this drunkard. He accorded him a little lofty pity. Grantaire was an unaccepted Pylades. Always harshly treated by Enjolras, roughly repulsed, rejected yet ever returning to the charge, he said of Enjolras: "What fine marble!"

CHAPTER II

BLONDEAU'S FUNERAL ORATION BY BOSSUET

ON a certain afternoon, which had, as will be seen hereafter, some coincidence with the events heretofore related, Laigle de Meaux was to be seen leaning in a sensual manner against the doorpost of the Café Musain. He had the air of a caryatid on a vacation; he carried nothing but his reverie, however. He was staring at the Place Saint-Miél. To lean one's back against a thing is equivalent to lying down while standing erect, which attitude is not hated by thinkers. Laigle de Meaux was pondering, without melancholy, over a little misadventure which had befallen him two days previously at the law-school, and which had modified his personal plans for the future, plans which were rather indistinct in any case.

Reverie does not prevent a cab from passing by, nor the dreamer from taking note of that cab. Laigle de Meaux, whose eyes were straying about in a sort of diffuse lounging, perceived, athwart his somnambulism, a two-wheeled vehicle proceeding through the place, at a foot pace and apparently in indecision. For whom was this cabriolet? Why was it driving at a walk? Laigle took a survey. In it, beside the coachman, sat a young man, and in front of the young man lay a rather bulky hand-bag. The bag displayed to passers-by the following name inscribed in large black letters on a card which was sewn to the stuff: MARIUS PONTMERCY.

This name caused Laigle to change his attitude. He drew himself up and hurled this apostrophe at the young man in the cabriolet:—

“Monsieur Marius Pontmercy!”

The cabriolet thus addressed came to a halt.

The young man, who also seemed deeply buried in thought, raised his eyes:—

“Hey?” said he.

"You are M. Marius Pontmercy?"

"Certainly."

"I was looking for you," resumed Laigle de Meaux.

"How so?" demanded Marius; for it was he: in fact, he had just quitted his grandfather's, and had before him a face which he now beheld for the first time. "I do not know you."

"Neither do I know you," responded Laigle.

Marius thought he had encountered a wag, the beginning of a mystification in the open street. He was not in a very good humor at the moment. He frowned. Laigle de Meaux went on imperturbably:—

"You were not at the school day before yesterday."

"That is possible."

"That is certain."

"You are a student?" demanded Marius.

"Yes, sir. Like yourself. Day before yesterday, I entered the school, by chance. You know, one does have such freaks sometimes. The professor was just calling the roll. You are not unaware that they are very ridiculous on such occasions. At the third call, unanswered, your name is erased from the list. Sixty francs in the gulf."

Marius began to listen.

"It was Blondeau who was making the call. You know Blondeau, he has a very pointed and very malicious nose, and he delights to scent out the absent. He slyly began with the letter P. I was not listening, not being compromised by that letter. The call was not going badly. No erasures; the universe was present. Blondeau was grieved. I said to myself: 'Blondeau, my love, you will not get the very smallest sort of an execution to-day.' All at once Blondeau calls, 'Marius Pontmercy!' No one answers. Blondeau, filled with hope, repeats more loudly: 'Marius Pontmercy!' And he takes his pen. Monsieur, I have bowels of compassion. I said to myself hastily: 'Here's a brave fellow who is going to get scratched out. Attention. Here is a veritable mortal who is not exact. He's not a good student. Here is none of your heavy-sides,

a student who studies, a greenhorn pedant, strong on letters, theology, science, and sapience, one of those dull wits cut by the square; a pin by profession. He is an honorable idler who lounges, who practises country jaunts, who cultivates the grissette, who pays court to the fair sex, who is at this very moment, perhaps, with my mistress. Let us save him. Death to Blondeau!" At that moment, Blondeau dipped his pen in, all black with erasures in the ink, cast his yellow eyes round the audience room, and repeated for the third time: 'Marius Pontmercy!' I replied: 'Present!' This is why you were not crossed off."

"Monsieur!—" said Marius.

"And why I was," added Laigle de Meaux.

"I do not understand you," said Marius.

Laigle resumed:—

"Nothing is more simple. I was close to the desk to reply, and close to the door for the purpose of flight. The professor gazed at me with a certain intensity. All of a sudden, Blondeau, who must be the malicious nose alluded to by Boileau, skipped to the letter L. L is my letter. I am from Meaux, and my name is Lesgle."

"L'Aigle!" interrupted Marius, "what a fine name!"

"Monsieur, Blondeau came to this fine name, and called: 'Laigle!' I reply: 'Present!' Then Blondeau gazes at me, with the gentleness of a tiger, and says to me: 'If you are Pontmercy, you are not Laigle.' A phrase which has a disoblising air for you, but which was lugubrious only for me. That said, he crossed me off."

Marius exclaimed:—

"I am mortified, sir—"

"First of all," interposed Laigle, "I demand permission to embalm Blondeau in a few phrases of deeply felt eulogium. I will assume that he is dead. There will be no great change required in his gauntness, in his pallor, in his coldness, and in his smell. And I say: *Erudimini qui judicatis terram*. Here lies Blondeau, Blondeau the Nose, Blondeau Nasica, the ox of discipline, *bos disciplina*, the bloodhound of the pass-

word, the angel of the roll-call, who was upright, square exact, rigid, honest, and hideous. God crossed him off as he crossed me off.' ”

Marius resumed :—

“I am very sorry—”

“Young man,” said Laigle de Meaux, “let this serve you as a lesson. In future, be exact.”

“I really beg you a thousand pardons.”

“Do not expose your neighbor to the danger of having his name erased again.”

“I am extremely sorry—”

Laigle burst out laughing.

“And I am delighted. I was on the brink of becoming a lawyer. This erasure saves me. I renounce the triumphs of the bar. I shall not defend the widow, and I shall not attack the orphan. No more toga, no more stage. Here is my erasure all ready for me. It is to you that I am indebted for it, Monsieur Pontmercy. I intend to pay a solemn call of thanks upon you. Where do you live?”

“In this cab,” said Marius.

“A sign of opulence,” retorted Laigle calmly. “I congratulate you. You have there a rent of nine thousand francs per annum.”

At that moment, Courfeyrac emerged from the café.

Marius smiled sadly.

“I have paid this rent for the last two hours, and I aspire to get rid of it; but there is a sort of history attached to it, and I don't know where to go.”

“Come to my place, sir,” said Courfeyrac.

“I have the priority,” observed Laigle, “but I have no home.”

“Hold your tongue, Bossuet,” said Courfeyrac.

“Bossuet,” said Marius, “but I thought that your name was Laigle.”

“De Meaux,” replied Laigle; “by metaphor, Bossuet.”

Courfeyrac entered the cab.

“Coachman,” said he, “hotel de la Porte-Saint-Jacques.”

And that very evening, Marius found himself installed in a chamber of the hotel de la Porte-Saint-Jacques side by side with Courfeyrac.

CHAPTER III

MARIUS' ASTONISHMENTS

IN a few days, Marius had become Courfeyrac's friend. Youth is the season for prompt welding and the rapid healing of scars. Marius breathed freely in Courfeyrac's society, a decidedly new thing for him. Courfeyrac put no questions to him. He did not even think of such a thing. At that age, faces disclose everything on the spot. Words are superfluous. There are young men of whom it can be said that their countenances chatter. One looks at them and one knows them.

One morning, however, Courfeyrac abruptly addressed this interrogation to him:—

“By the way, have you any political opinions?”

“The idea!” said Marius, almost affronted by the question.

“What are you?”

“A democrat-Bonapartist.”

“The gray hue of a reassured rat,” said Courfeyrac.

On the following day, Courfeyrac introduced Marius at the Café Musain. Then he whispered in his ear, with a smile: “I must give you your entry to the revolution.” And he led him to the hall of the Friends of the A B C. He presented him to the other comrades, saying this simple word which Marius did not understand: “A pupil.”

Marius had fallen into a wasps'-nest of wits. However, although he was silent and grave, he was, none the less, both winged and armed.

Marius, up to that time solitary and inclined to soliloquy, and to asides, both by habit and by taste, was a little fluttered by this covey of young men around him. All these various initiatives solicited his attention at once, and pulled him about. The tumultuous movements of these minds at liberty

and at work set his ideas in a whirl. Sometimes, in his trouble, they fled so far from him, that he had difficulty in recovering them. He heard them talk of philosophy, of literature, of art, of history, of religion, in unexpected fashion. He caught glimpses of strange aspects; and, as he did not place them in proper perspective, he was not altogether sure that it was not chaos that he grasped. On abandoning his grandfather's opinions for the opinions of his father, he had supposed himself fixed; he now suspected, with uneasiness, and without daring to avow it to himself, that he was not. The angle at which he saw everything began to be displaced anew. A certain oscillation set all the horizons of his brains in motion. An odd internal upsetting. He almost suffered from it.

It seemed as though there were no "consecrated things" for those young men. Marius heard singular propositions on every sort of subject, which embarrassed his still timid mind.

A theatre poster presented itself, adorned with the title of a tragedy from the ancient repertory called *classie*: "Down with tragedy dear to the bourgeois!" cried Bahorel. And Marius heard Combeferre reply:—

"You are wrong, Bahorel. The bourgeoisie loves tragedy, and the bourgeoisie must be left at peace on that score. Bewigged tragedy has a reason for its existence, and I am not one of those who, by order of Æschylus, contest its right to existence. There are rough outlines in nature; there are, in creation, ready-made parodies: a beak which is not a beak, wings which are not wings, gills which are not gills, paws which are not paws, a cry of pain which arouses a desire to laugh, there is the duck. Now, since poultry exists by the side of the bird, I do not see why *classie* tragedy should not exist in the face of antique tragedy."

Or chance decreed that Marius should traverse Rue Jean-Jacques Rousseau between Enjolras and Courfeyrac.

Courfeyrac took his arm:—

"Pay attention. This is the Rue Plâtrière, now called Rue

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, on account of a singular household which lived in it sixty years ago. This consisted of Jean-Jacques and Thérèse. From time to time, little beings were born there. Thérèse gave birth to them, Jean-Jacques represented them as foundlings."

And Enjolras addressed Courfeyrac roughly:—

"Silence in the presence of Jean-Jacques! I admire that man. He denied his own children, that may be; but he adopted the people."

Not one of these young men articulated the word: The Emperor. Jean Prouvaire alone sometimes said Napoleon; all the others said "Bonaparte." Enjolras pronounced it "Buonaparte."

Marius was vaguely surprised. *Initium sapientiæ.*

CHAPTER IV

THE BACK ROOM OF THE CAFÉ MUSAIN

ONE of the conversations among the young men, at which Marius was present and in which he sometimes joined, was a veritable shock to his mind.

This took place in the back room of the Café Musain. Nearly all the Friends of the A B C had convened that evening. The argand lamp was solemnly lighted. They talked of one thing and another, without passion and with noise. With the exception of Enjolras and Marius, who held their peace, all were haranguing rather at hap-hazard. Conversations between comrades sometimes are subject to these peaceable tumults. It was a game and an uproar as much as a conversation. They tossed words to each other and caught them up in turn. They were chattering in all quarters.

No woman was admitted to this back room, except Louison, the dish-washer of the café, who passed through it from time to time, to go to her washing in the "lavatory."

Grantaire, thoroughly drunk, was deafening the corner of

which he had taken possession, reasoning and contradicting at the top of his lungs, and shouting:—

“I am thirsty. Mortals, I am dreaming: that the tun of Heidelberg has an attack of apoplexy, and that I am one of the dozen leeches which will be applied to it. I want a drink. I desire to forget life. Life is a hideous invention of I know not whom. It lasts no time at all, and is worth nothing. One breaks one’s neck in living. Life is a theatre set in which there are but few practicable entrances. Happiness is an antique reliquary painted on one side only. Eeelesiastes says: ‘All is vanity.’ I agree with that good man, who never existed, perhaps. Zero not wishing to go stark naked, clothed himself in vanity. O vanity! The patching up of everything with big words! a kitchen is a laboratory, a dancer is a professor, an aerobat is a gymnast, a boxer is a pugilist, an apothecary is a chemist, a wigmaker is an artist, a hodman is an architect, a jockey is a sportsman, a wood-louse is a pterigybranche. Vanity has a right and a wrong side; the right side is stupid, it is the negro with his glass beads; the wrong side is foolish, it is the philosopher with his rags. I weep over the one and I laugh over the other. What are called honors and dignities, and even dignity and honor, are generally of pinchbeck. Kings make playthings of human pride. Caligula made a horse a consul; Charles II. made a knight of a sirloin. Wrap yourself up now, then, between Consul Ineitus and Baronet Roastbeef. As for the intrinsic value of people, it is no longer respectable in the least. Listen to the panegyric which neighbor makes of neighbor. White on white is ferocious; if the lily could speak, what a setting down it would give the dove! A bigoted woman prating of a devout woman is more venomous than the asp and the cobra. It is a shame that I am ignorant, otherwise I would quote to you a mass of things; but I know nothing. For instance, I have always been witty; when I was a pupil of Gros, instead of daubing wretched little pictures, I passed my time in pilfering apples; *rapin*¹ is the masculine of *rapine*. So much for myself; as for the

¹The slang term for a painter’s assistant.

rest of you, you are worth no more than I am. I scoff at your perfections, excellencies, and qualities. Every good quality tends towards a defect; economy borders on avarice, the generous man is next door to the prodigal, the brave man rubs elbows with the braggart; he who says very pious says a trifle bigoted; there are just as many vices in virtue as there are holes in Diogenes' cloak. Whom do you admire, the slain or the slayer, Cæsar or Brutus? Generally men are in favor of the slayer. Long live Brutus, he has slain! There lies the virtue. Virtue, granted, but madness also. There are queer spots on those great men. The Brutus who killed Cæsar was in love with the statue of a little boy. This statue was from the hand of the Greek sculptor Strongylion, who also carved that figure of an Amazon known as the Beautiful Leg, Eucnemus, which Nero carried with him in his travels. This Strongylion left but two statues which placed Nero and Brutus in accord. Brutus was in love with the one, Nero with the other. All history is nothing but wearisome repetition. One century is the plagiarist of the other. The battle of Marengo copies the battle of Pydna; the Tolbiac of Clovis and the Austerlitz of Napoleon are as like each other as two drops of water. I don't attach much importance to victory. Nothing is so stupid as to conquer; true glory lies in convincing. But try to prove something! If you are content with success, what mediocrity, and with conquering, what wretchedness! Alas, vanity and cowardice everywhere. Everything obeys success, even grammar. *Si volet usus*, says Horace. Therefore I disdain the human race. Shall we descend to the party at all? Do you wish me to begin admiring the peoples? What people, if you please? Shall it be Greece? The Athenians, those Parisians of days gone by, slew Phocion, as we might say Coligny, and fawned upon tyrants to such an extent that Anacephorus said of Pisistratus: "His urine attracts the bees." The most prominent man in Greece for fifty years was that grammarian Philetas, who was so small and so thin that he was obliged to load his shoes with lead in order not to be blown away by the wind. There stood on the

great square in Corinth a statue carved by Silanion and catalogued by Pliny; this statue represented Episthates. What did Episthates do? He invented a trip. That sums up Greece and glory. Let us pass on to others. Shall I admire England? Shall I admire France? France? Why? Because of Paris? I have just told you my opinion of Athens. England? Why? Because of London? I hate Carthage. And then, London, the metropolis of luxury, is the headquarters of wretchedness. There are a hundred deaths a year of hunger in the parish of Charing-Cross alone. Such is Albion. I add, as the climax, that I have seen an Englishwoman dancing in a wreath of roses and blue spectacles. A fig then for England! If I do not admire John Bull, shall I admire Brother Jonathan? I have but little taste for that slaveholding brother. Take away *Time is money*, what remains of England? Take away *Cotton is king*, what remains of America? Germany is the lymph, Italy is the bile. Shall we go into ecstasies over Russia? Voltaire admired it. He also admired China. I admit that Russia has its beauties, among others, a stout despotism; but I pity the despots. Their health is delicate. A decapitated Alexis, a poignarded Peter, a strangled Paul, another Paul crushed flat with kicks, divers Ivans strangled, with their throats cut, numerous Nicholases and Basils poisoned, all this indicates that the palace of the Emperors of Russia is in a condition of flagrant insalubrity. All civilized peoples offer this detail to the admiration of the thinker; war; now, war, civilized war, exhausts and sums up all the forms of ruffianism, from the brigandage of the Trabueros in the gorges of Mont Jaxa to the marauding of the Comanche Indians in the Doubtful Pass. 'Bah!' you will say to me, 'but Europe is certainly better than Asia?' I admit that Asia is a farce; but I do not precisely see what you find to laugh at in the Grand Lama, you peoples of the west, who have mingled with your fashions and your elegances all the complicated filth of majesty, from the dirty chemise of Queen Isabella to the chamber-chair of the Dauphin. Gentlemen of the human race, I tell you, not a bit of it! It is at Brussels that

the most beer is consumed, at Stockholm the most brandy, at Madrid the most chocolate, at Amsterdam the most gin, at London the most wine, at Constantinople the most coffee, at Paris the most absinthe; there are all the useful notions. Paris carries the day, in short. In Paris, even the rag-pickers are sybarites; Diogenes would have loved to be a rag-picker of the Place Maubert better than to be a philosopher at the Piræus. Learn this in addition; the wineshops of the rag-pickers are called *bibines*; the most celebrated are the *Sauce-pan* and *The Slaughter-House*. Hence, tea-gardens, go-guettes, caboulots, bouibuis, mastroquets, bastringues, manezingues, bibines of the rag-pickers, caravanseries of the caliphs, I certify to you, I am a voluptuary, I eat at Richard's at forty sous a head, I must have Persian carpets to roll naked Cleopatra in! Where is Cleopatra? Ah! So it is you, Louison. Good day."

Thus did Grantaire, more than intoxicated, launch into speech, catching at the dish-washer in her passage, from his corner in the back room of the Café Musain.

Bossuet, extending his hand towards him, tried to impose silence on him, and Grantaire began again worse than ever:—

"Aigle de Meaux, down with your paws. You produce on me no effect with your gesture of Hippocrates refusing Artaxerxes' bric-à-brac. I excuse you from the task of soothing me. Moreover, I am sad. What do you wish me to say to you? Man is evil, man is deformed; the butterfly is a success, man is a failure. God made a mistake with that animal. A crowd offers a choice of ugliness. The first comer is a wretch. *Femme*—woman—rhymes with *infâme*,—infamous. Yes, I have the spleen, complicated with melancholy, with homesickness, plus hypochondria, and I am vexed and I rage, and I yawn, and I am bored, and I am tired to death, and I am stupid! Let God go to the devil!"

"Silence then, capital R!" resumed Bossuet, who was discussing a point of law behind the scenes, and who was plunged more than waist high in a phrase of judicial slang, of which this is the conclusion:—

“—And as for me, although I am hardly a legist, and at the most, an amateur attorney, I maintain this: that, in accordance with the terms of the customs of Normandy, at Saint-Michel, and for each year, an equivalent must be paid to the profit of the lord of the manor, saving the rights of others, and by all and several, the proprietors as well as those seized with inheritance, and that, for all emphyteuses, leases, freeholds, contracts of domain, mortgages—”

“Echo, plaintive nymph,” hummed Grantaire.

Near Grantaire, an almost silent table, a sheet of paper, an inkstand and a pen between two glasses of brandy, announced that a vaudeville was being sketched out.

This great affair was being discussed in a low voice, and the two heads at work touched each other: “Let us begin by finding names. When one has the names, one finds the subject.”

“That is true. Dictate. I will write.”

“Monsieur Dorimon.”

“An independent gentleman?”

“Of course.”

“His daughter, Célestine.”

“—tine. What next?”

“Colonel Sainval.”

“Sainval is stale. I should say Valsin.”

Beside the vaudeville aspirants, another group, which was also taking advantage of the uproar to talk low, was discussing a duel. An old fellow of thirty was counselling a young one of eighteen, and explaining to him what sort of an adversary he had to deal with.

“The deuce! Look out for yourself. He is a fine swordsman. His play is neat. He has the attack, no wasted feints, wrist, dash, lightning, a just parade, mathematical parries, *bigre!* and he is left-handed.”

In the angle opposite Grantaire, Joly and Bahorel were playing dominoes, and talking of love.

“You are in luck, that you are.” Joly was saying. “You have a mistress who is always laughing.”

“That is a fault of hers,” returned Bahorel. “One’s mis-

tress does wrong to laugh. That encourages one to deceive her. To see her gay removes your remorse; if you see her sad, your conscience pricks you."

"Ingrate! a woman who laughs is such a good thing! And you never quarrel!"

"That is because of the treaty which we have made. On forming our little Holy Alliance we assigned ourselves each our frontier, which we never cross. What is situated on the side of winter belongs to Vaud, on the side of the wind to Gex. Hence the peace."

"Peace is happiness digesting."

"And you, Jollily, where do you stand in your entanglement with Manselle—you know whom I mean?"

"She sulks at me with cruel patience."

"Yet you are a lover to soften the heart with gauntness."

"Alas!"

"In your place, I would let her alone."

"That is easy enough to say."

"And to do. Is not her name Musichetta?"

"Yes. Ah! my poor Bahorel, she is a superb girl, very literary, with tiny feet, little hands, she dresses well, and is white and dimpled, with the eyes of a fortune-teller. I am wild over her."

"My dear fellow, then in order to please her, you must be elegant, and produce effects with your knees. Buy a good pair of trousers of double-milled cloth at Staub's. That will assist."

"At what price?" shouted Grantaire.

The third corner was delivered up to a poetical discussion. Pagan mythology was giving battle to Christian mythology. The question was about Olympus, whose part was taken by Jean Prouvaire, out of pure romanticism.

Jean Prouvaire was timid only in repose. Once excited, he burst forth, a sort of mirth accentuated his enthusiasm, and he was at once both laughing and lyric.

"Let us not insult the gods," said he. "The gods may not have taken their departure. Jupiter does not impress me as

dead. The gods are dreams, you say. Well, even in nature, such as it is to-day, after the flight of these dreams, we still find all the grand old pagan myths. Such and such a mountain with the profile of a citadel, like the Vignemale, for example, is still to me the headdress of Cybele; it has not been proved to me that Pan does not come at night to breathe into the hollow trunks of the willows, stopping up the holes in turn with his fingers, and I have always believed that Io had something to do with the cascade of Pissevache."

In the last corner, they were talking politics. The Charter which had been granted was getting roughly handled. Comberferre was upholding it weakly. Courfeyrac was energetically making a breach in it. On the table lay an unfortunate copy of the famous Touquet Charter. Courfeyrac had seized it, and was brandishing it, mingling with his arguments the rattling of this sheet of paper.

"In the first place, I won't have any kings; if it were only from an economical point of view, I don't want any; a king is a parasite. One does not have kings gratis. Listen to this: the dearness of kings. At the death of François I. the national debt of France amounted to an income of thirty thousand livres; at the death of Louis XIV. it was two milliards, six hundred millions, at twenty-eight livres the mark, which was equivalent in 1760, according to Desmarests, to four milliards, five hundred millions, which would to-day be equivalent to twelve milliards. In the second place, and no offence to Comberferre, a charter granted is but a poor expedient of civilization. To save the transition, to soften the passage, to deaden the shock, to cause the nation to pass insensibly from the monarchy to democracy by the practice of constitutional fictions,—what detestable reasons all those are! No! no! let us never enlighten the people with false daylight. Principles dwindle and pale in your constitutional cellar. No illegitimacy, no compromise, no grant from the king to the people. In all such grants there is an Article 14. By the side of the hand which gives there is the claw which snatches back. I refuse your charter point-blank. A charter is a mask; the lie

lurks beneath it. A people which accepts a charter abdicates. The law is only the law when entire. No! no charter!"

It was winter; a couple of fagots were crackling in the fireplace. This was tempting, and Courfeyrac could not resist. He crumpled the poor Touquet Charter in his fist, and flung it in the fire. The paper flashed up. Combeferre watched the masterpiece of Louis XVIII. burn philosophically, and contented himself with saying:—

"The charter metamorphosed into flame."

And sarcasms, sallies, jests, that French thing which is called *entrain*, and that English thing which is called humor, good and bad taste, good and bad reasons, all the wild pyrotechnics of dialogue, mounting together and crossing from all points of the room, produced a sort of merry bombardment over their heads.

CHAPTER V

ENLARGEMENT OF HORIZON

THE shocks of youthful minds among themselves have this admirable property, that one can never foresee the spark, nor divine the lightning flash. What will dart out presently? No one knows. The burst of laughter starts from a tender feeling.

At the moment of jest, the serious makes its entry. Impulses depend on the first chance word. The spirit of each is sovereign, jest suffices to open the field to the unexpected. These are conversations with abrupt turns, in which the perspective changes suddenly. Chance is the stage-manager of such conversations.

A severe thought, starting oddly from a clash of words, suddenly traversed the conflict of quips in which Grantaire, Bahorel, Prouvaire, Bossuet, Combeferre, and Courfeyrac were confusedly fencing.

How does a phrase crop up in a dialogue? Whence comes it that it suddenly impresses itself on the attention of those

who hear it? We have just said, that no one knows anything about it. In the midst of the uproar, Bossuet all at once terminated some apostrophe to Combeferre, with this date:—

“June 18th, 1815, Waterloo.”

At this name of Waterloo, Marius, who was leaning his elbows on a table, beside a glass of water, removed his wrist from beneath his chin, and began to gaze fixedly at the audience.

“Pardieu!” exclaimed Courfeyrac (“Parbleu” was falling into disuse at this period), “that number 18 is strange and strikes me. It is Bonaparte’s fatal number. Place Louis in front and Brumaire behind, you have the whole destiny of the man. with this significant peculiarity, that the end treads close on the heels of the commencement.”

Enjolras, who had remained mute up to that point, broke the silence and addressed this remark to Combeferre:—

“You mean to say, the crime and the expiation.”

This word *crime* overpassed the measure of what Marius, who was already greatly agitated by the abrupt evocation of Waterloo, could accept.

He rose, walked slowly to the map of France spread out on the wall, and at whose base an island was visible in a separate compartment, laid his finger on this compartment and said:—

“Corsica, a little island which has rendered France very great.”

This was like a breath of icy air. All ceased talking. They felt that something was on the point of occurring.

Bahorel, replying to Bossuet, was just assuming an attitude of the torso to which he was addicted. He gave it up to listen.

Enjolras, whose blue eye was not fixed on any one, and who seemed to be gazing at space, replied, without glancing at Marius:—

“France needs no Corsica to be great. France is great because she is France. *Quia nomina leo.*”

Marius felt no desire to retreat; he turned towards Enjolras, and his voice burst forth with a vibration which came from a quiver of his very being:—

“God forbid that I should diminish France! But amalgamating Napoleon with her is not diminishing her. Come! let us argue the question. I am a new comer among you, but I will confess that you amaze me. Where do we stand? Who are we? Who are you? Who am I? Let us come to an explanation about the Emperor. I hear you say *Buonaparte*, accenting the *u* like the Royalists. I warn you that my grandfather does better still; he says *Buonaparté*. I thought you were young men. Where, then, is your enthusiasm? And what are you doing with it? Whom do you admire, if you do not admire the Emperor? And what more do you want? If you will have none of that great man, what great men would you like? He had everything. He was complete. He had in his brain the sum of human faculties. He made codes like Justinian, he dictated like Cæsar, his conversation was mingled with the lightning-flash of Pascal, with the thunderclap of Tacitus, he made history and he wrote it, his bulletins are Iliads, he combined the cipher of Newton with the metaphor of Mahomet, he left behind him in the East words as great as the pyramids, at Tilsit he taught Emperors majesty, at the Academy of Sciences he replied to Laplace, in the Council of State he held his own against Merlin, he gave a soul to the geometry of the first, and to the chicanery of the last, he was a legist with the attorneys and sidereal with the astronomers; like Cromwell blowing out one of two candles, he went to the Temple to bargain for a curtain tassel; he saw everything; he knew everything; which did not prevent him from laughing good-naturedly beside the cradle of his little child; and all at once, frightened Europe lent an ear, armies put themselves in motion, parks of artillery rumbled, pontoons stretched over the rivers, clouds of cavalry galloped in the storm, cries, trumpets, a trembling of thrones in every direction, the frontiers of kingdoms oscillated on the map, the sound of a superhuman sword was heard, as it was drawn from its sheath; they beheld him, him, rise erect on the horizon with a blazing brand in his hand, and a glow in his eyes, unfolding amid the thunder, his two wings, the grand

army and the old guard, and he was the archangel of war!"

All held their peace, and Enjolras bowed his head. Silence always produces somewhat the effect of acquiescence, of the enemy being driven to the wall. Marius continued with increased enthusiasm, and almost without pausing for breath:—

"Let us be just, my friends! What a splendid destiny for a nation to be the Empire of such an Emperor, when that nation is France and when it adds its own genius to the genius of that man! To appear and to reign, to march and to triumph, to have for halting-places all capitals, to take his grenadiers and to make kings of them, to decree the falls of dynasties, and to transfigure Europe at the pace of a charge; to make you feel that when you threaten you lay your hand on the hilt of the sword of God; to follow in a single man, Hannibal, Cæsar, Charlemagne; to be the people of some one who mingles with your dawns the startling announcement of a battle won, to have the cannon of the Invalides to rouse you in the morning, to hurl into abysses of light prodigious words which flame forever, Marengo, Arcola, Austerlitz, Jena, Wagram! To cause constellations of victories to flash forth at each instant from the zenith of the centuries, to make the French Empire a pendant to the Roman Empire, to be the great nation and to give birth to the grand army, to make its legions fly forth over all the earth, as a mountain sends out its eagles on all sides to conquer, to dominate, to strike with lightning, to be in Europe a sort of nation gilded through glory, to sound athwart the centuries a trumpet-blast of Titans, to conquer the world twice, by conquest and by dazzling, that is sublime; and what greater thing is there?"

"To be free," said Combeferre.

Marius lowered his head in his turn; that cold and simple word had traversed his epic effusion like a blade of steel, and he felt it vanishing within him. When he raised his eyes, Combeferre was no longer there. Probably satisfied with his reply to the apotheosis, he had just taken his departure, and

all, with the exception of Enjolras, had followed him. The room had been emptied. Enjolras, left alone with Marius, was gazing gravely at him. Marius, however, having rallied his ideas to some extent, did not consider himself beaten; there lingered in him a trace of inward fermentation which was on the point, no doubt, of translating itself into syllogisms arrayed against Enjolras, when all of a sudden, they heard some one singing on the stairs as he went. It was Combeferre, and this is what he was singing:—

“Si César m'avait donné
 La gloire et la guerre,
 Et qu'il me fallait quitter
 L'amour de ma mère,
 Je dirais au grand César:
 Reprends ton sceptre et ton char,
 J'aime mieux ma mère, ô gué!
 J'aime mieux ma mère!”

The wild and tender accents with which Combeferre sang communicated to this couplet a sort of strange grandeur. Marius, thoughtfully, and with his eyes diked on the ceiling, repeated almost mechanically: “My mother?—”

At that moment, he felt Enjolras' hand on his shoulder.

“Citizen,” said Enjolras to him, “my mother is the Republic.”

CHAPTER VI

RES ANGSTA

THAT evening left Marius profoundly shaken, and with a melancholy shadow in his soul. He felt what the earth may possibly feel, at the moment when it is torn open with the iron, in order that grain may be deposited within it; it feels only the wound; the quiver of the germ and the joy of the fruit only arrive later.

¹If César had given me glory and war, and I were obliged to quit my mother's love, I would say to great César, “Take back thy sceptre and thy chariot; I prefer the love of my mother.”

Marius was gloomy. He had but just acquired a faith; must he then reject it already? He affirmed to himself that he would not. He declared to himself that he would not doubt, and he began to doubt in spite of himself. To stand between two religions, from one of which you have not as yet emerged, and another into which you have not yet entered, is intolerable; and twilight is pleasing only to bat-like souls. Marius was clear-eyed, and he required the true light. The half-lights of doubt pained him. Whatever may have been his desire to remain where he was, he could not halt there, he was irresistibly constrained to continue, to advance, to examine, to think, to march further. Whither would this lead him? He feared, after having taken so many steps which had brought him nearer to his father, to now take a step which should estrange him from that father. His discomfort was augmented by all the reflections which occurred to him. An escarpment rose around him. He was in accord neither with his grandfather nor with his friends; daring in the eyes of the one, he was behind the times in the eyes of the others; and he recognized the fact that he was doubly isolated, on the side of age and on the side of youth. He ceased to go to the *Café Musain*.

In the troubled state of his conscience, he no longer thought of certain serious sides of existence. The realities of life do not allow themselves to be forgotten. They soon elbowed him abruptly.

One morning, the proprietor of the hotel entered Marius' room and said to him:—

“Monsieur Courfeyrae answered for you.”

“Yes.”

“But I must have my money.”

“Request Courfeyrae to come and talk with me,” said Marius.

Courfeyrae having made his appearance, the host left them. Marius then told him what it had not before occurred to him to relate, that he was the same as alone in the world, and had no relatives.

"What is to become of you?" said Courfeyrac.

"I do not know in the least," replied Marius.

"What are you going to do?"

"I do not know."

"Have you any money?"

"Fifteen francs."

"Do you want me to lend you some?"

"Never."

"Have you clothes?"

"Here is what I have."

"Have you trinkets?"

"A watch."

"Silver?"

"Gold; here it is."

"I know a clothes-dealer who will take your frock-coat and a pair of trousers."

"That is good."

"You will then have only a pair of trousers, a waistcoat, a hat and a coat."

"And my boots."

"What! you will not go barefoot? What opulence!"

"That will be enough."

"I know a watchmaker who will buy your watch."

"That is good."

"No; it is not good. What will you do after that?"

"Whatever is necessary. Anything honest, that is to say."

"Do you know English?"

"No."

"Do you know German?"

"No."

"So much the worse."

"Why?"

"Because one of my friends, a publisher, is getting up a sort of an encyclopædia, for which you might have translated English or German articles. It is badly paid work, but one can live by it."

"I will learn English and German."

“And in the meanwhile?”

“In the meanwhile I will live on my clothes and my watch.”

The clothes-dealer was sent for. He paid twenty francs for the cast-off garments. They went to the watchmaker's. He bought the watch for forty-five francs.

“That is not bad,” said Marius to Courfeyrac, on their return to the hotel, “with my fifteen francs, that makes eighty.”

“And the hotel bill?” observed Courfeyrac.

“Hello, I had forgotten that,” said Marius.

The landlord presented his bill, which had to be paid on the spot. It amounted to seventy francs.

“I have ten francs left,” said Marius.

“The deuce,” exclaimed Courfeyrac, “you will eat up five francs while you are learning English, and five while learning German. That will be swallowing a tongue very fast, or a hundred sous very slowly.”

In the meantime Aunt Gillenormand, a rather good-hearted person at bottom in difficulties, had finally hunted up Marius' abode.

One morning, on his return from the law-school, Marius found a letter from his aunt, and the *sixty pistoles*, that is to say, six hundred francs in gold, in a sealed box.

Marius sent back the thirty louis to his aunt, with a respectful letter, in which he stated that he had sufficient means of subsistence and that he should be able thenceforth to supply all his needs. At that moment, he had three francs left.

His aunt did not inform his grandfather of this refusal, for fear of exasperating him. Besides, had he not said: “Let me never hear the name of that blood-drinker again!”

Marius left the hotel de la Porte Saint-Jacques, as he did not wish to run in debt there.

BOOK FIFTH.—THE EXCELLENCE OF MISFORTUNE

CHAPTER I

MARIUS INDIGENT

LIFE became hard for Marius. It was nothing to eat his clothes and his watch. He ate of that terrible, inexpressible thing that is called *de la vache enragé*; that is to say, he endured great hardships and privations. A terrible thing it is, containing days without bread, nights without sleep, evenings without a candle, a hearth without a fire, weeks without work, a future without hope, a coat out at the elbows, an old hat which evokes the laughter of young girls, a door which one finds locked on one at night because one's rent is not paid, the insolence of the porter and the cook-shop man, the sneers of neighbors, humiliations, dignity trampled on, work of whatever nature accepted, disgusts, bitterness, despondency. Marius learned how all this is eaten, and how such are often the only things which one has to devour. At that moment of his existence when a man needs his pride, because he needs love, he felt that he was jeered at because he was badly dressed, and ridiculous because he was poor. At the age when youth swells the heart with imperial pride, he dropped his eyes more than once on his dilapidated boots, and he knew the unjust shame and the poignant blushes of wretchedness. Admirable and terrible trial from which the feeble emerge base, from which the strong emerge sublime. A crucible into which destiny casts a man, whenever it desires a scoundrel or a demi-god.

For many great deeds are performed in petty combats. There are instances of bravery ignored and obstinate, which

defend themselves step by step in that fatal onslaught of necessities and turpitudes. Noble and mysterious triumphs which no eye beholds, which are requited with no renown, which are saluted with no trumpet blast. Life, misfortune, isolation, abandonment, poverty, are the fields of battle which have their heroes; obscure heroes, who are, sometimes, grander than the heroes who win renown.

Firm and rare natures are thus created; misery, almost always a step-mother, is sometimes a mother; destitution gives birth to might of soul and spirit; distress is the nurse of pride; unhappiness is a good milk for the magnanimous.

There came a moment in Marius' life, when he swept his own landing, when he bought his sou's worth of Brie cheese at the fruiterer's, when he waited until twilight had fallen to slip into the baker's and purchase a loaf, which he carried off furtively to his attic as though he had stolen it. Sometimes there could be seen gliding into the butcher's shop on the corner, in the midst of the bantering cooks who elbowed him, an awkward young man, carrying his books under his arm, who had a timid yet angry air, who, on entering, removed his hat from a brow whereon stood drops of perspiration, made a profound bow to the butcher's astonished wife, asked for a mutton cutlet, paid six or seven sous for it, wrapped it up in a paper, put it under his arm, between two books, and went away. It was Marius. On this cutlet, which he cooked for himself, he lived for three days.

On the first day he ate the meat, on the second he ate the fat, on the third he gnawed the bone. Aunt Gillenormand made repeated attempts, and sent him the sixty pistoles several times. Marius returned them on every occasion, saying that he needed nothing.

He was still in mourning for his father when the revolution which we have just described was effected within him. From that time forth, he had not put off his black garments. But his garments were quitting him. The day came when he had no longer a coat. The trousers would go next. What was to be done? Courfeyrac, to whom he had, on his side, done some

good turns, gave him an old coat. For thirty sous, Marius got it turned by some porter or other, and it was a new coat. But this coat was green. Then Marius ceased to go out until after nightfall. This made his coat black. As he wished always to appear in mourning, he clothed himself with the night.

In spite of all this, he got admitted to practice as a lawyer. He was supposed to live in Courfeyrac's room, which was decent, and where a certain number of law-books backed up and completed by several dilapidated volumes of romance, passed as the library required by the regulations. He had his letters addressed to Courfeyrac's quarters.

When Marius became a lawyer, he informed his grandfather of the fact in a letter which was cold but full of submission and respect. M. Gillenormand trembled as he took the letter, read it, tore it in four pieces, and threw it into the waste-basket. Two or three days later, Mademoiselle Gillenormand heard her father, who was alone in his room, talking aloud to himself. He always did this whenever he was greatly agitated. She listened, and the old man was saying: "If you were not a fool, you would know that one cannot be a baron and a lawyer at the same time."

CHAPTER II

MARIUS POOR

It is the same with wretchedness as with everything else. It ends by becoming bearable. It finally assumes a form, and adjusts itself. One vegetates, that is to say, one develops in a certain meagre fashion, which is, however, sufficient for life. This is the mode in which the existence of Marius Pontmercy was arranged:

He had passed the worst straits; the narrow pass was opening out a little in front of him. By dint of toil, perseverance, courage, and will, he had managed to draw from his work about seven hundred francs a year. He had learned German

and English; thanks to Courfeyrac, who had put him in communication with his friend the publisher, Marius filled the modest post of utility man in the literature of the publishing house. He drew up prospectuses, translated newspapers, annotated editions, compiled biographies, etc.; net product, year in and year out, seven hundred francs. He lived on it. How? Not so badly. We will explain.

Marius occupied in the Gorbeau house, for an annual sum of thirty francs, a den minus a fireplace, called a cabinet, which contained only the most indispensable articles of furniture. This furniture belonged to him. He gave three francs a month to the old *principal tenant* to come and sweep his hole, and to bring him a little hot water every morning, a fresh egg, and a penny roll. He breakfasted on this egg and roll. His breakfast varied in cost from two to four sous, according as eggs were dear or cheap. At six o'clock in the evening he descended the Rue Saint-Jacques to dine at Rousseau's, opposite Basset's, the stamp-dealer's, on the corner of the Rue des Mathurins. He ate no soup. He took a six-sou plate of meat, a half-portion of vegetables for three sous, and a three-sou dessert. For three sous he got as much bread as he wished. As for wine, he drank water. When he paid at the desk where Madam Rousseau, at that period still plump and rosy, majestically presided, he gave a sou to the waiter, and Madam Rousseau gave him a smile. Then he went away. For sixteen sous he had a smile and a dinner.

This Restaurant Rousseau, where so few bottles and so many water carafes were emptied, was a calming potion rather than a restaurant. It no longer exists. The proprietor had a fine nickname: he was called *Rousseau the Aquatic*.

Thus, breakfast four sous, dinner sixteen sous; his food cost him twenty sous a day; which made three hundred and sixty-five francs a year. Add the thirty francs for rent, and the thirty-six francs to the old woman, plus a few trifling expenses; for four hundred and fifty francs, Marius was fed, lodged, and waited on. His clothing cost him a hundred francs, his linen fifty francs, his washing fifty francs; the

whole did not exceed six hundred and fifty francs. He was rich. He sometimes lent ten francs to a friend. Courfeyrac had once been able to borrow sixty francs of him. As far as fire was concerned, as Marius had no fireplace, he had "simplified matters."

Marius always had two complete suits of clothes, the one old, "for every day"; the other, brand new for special occasions. Both were black. He had but three shirts, one on his person, the second in the commode, and the third in the washerwoman's hands. He renewed them as they wore out. They were always ragged, which caused him to button his coat to the chin.

It had required years for Marius to attain to this flourishing condition. Hard years; difficult, some of them, to traverse, others to elimb. Marius had not failed for a single day. He had endured everything in the way of destitution; he had done everything except contract debts. He did himself the justice to say that he had never owed any one a sou. A debt was, to him, the beginning of slavery. He even said to himself, that a creditor is worse than a master; for the master possesses only your person, a creditor possesses your dignity and can administer to it a box on the ear. Rather than borrow, he went without food. He had passed many a day fasting. Feeling that all extremes meet, and that, if one is not on one's guard, lowered fortunes may lead to baseness of soul, he kept a jealous watch on his pride. Such and such a formality or action, which, in any other situation would have appeared merely a deference to him, now seemed insipidity, and he nerved himself against it. His face wore a sort of severe flush. He was timid even to rudeness.

During all these trials he had felt himself encouraged and even uplifted, at times, by a secret force that he possessed within himself. The soul aids the body, and at certain moments, raises it. It is the only bird which bears up its own cage.

Besides his father's name, another name was graven in Marius' heart, the name of Thénardier. Marius, with his grave and enthusiastic nature, surrounded with a sort of aureole the

man to whom, in his thoughts, he owed his father's life,—that intrepid sergeant who had saved the colonel amid the bullets and the cannon-balls of Waterloo. He never separated the memory of this man from the memory of his father, and he associated them in his veneration. It was a sort of worship in two steps, with the grand altar for the colonel and the lesser one for Thénardier. What redoubled the tenderness of his gratitude towards Thénardier, was the idea of the distress into which he knew that Thénardier had fallen, and which had engulfed the latter. Marius had learned at Montfermeil of the ruin and bankruptcy of the unfortunate inn-keeper. Since that time, he had made unheard-of efforts to find traces of him and to reach him in that dark abyss of misery in which Thénardier had disappeared. Marius had beaten the whole country; he had gone to Chelles, to Bondy, to Gournay, to Nogent, to Lagny. He had persisted for three years, expending in these explorations the little money which he had laid by. No one had been able to give him any news of Thénardier: he was supposed to have gone abroad. His creditors had also sought him, with less love than Marius, but with as much assiduity, and had not been able to lay their hands on him. Marius blamed himself, and was almost angry with himself for his lack of success in his researches. It was the only debt left him by the colonel, and Marius made it a matter of honor to pay it. "What," he thought, "when my father lay dying on the field of battle, did Thénardier contrive to find him amid the smoke and the grape-shot, and bear him off on his shoulders, and yet he owed him nothing, and I, who owe so much to Thénardier, cannot join him in this shadow where he is lying in the pangs of death, and in my turn bring him back from death to life! Oh! I will find him!" To find Thénardier, in fact, Marius would have given one of his arms, to rescue him from his misery, he would have sacrificed all his blood. To see Thénardier, to render Thénardier some service, to say to him: "You do not know me; well, I do know you! Here I am. Dispose of me!" This was Marius' sweetest and most magnificent dream.

CHAPTER III

MARIUS GROWN UP

At this epoch, Marius was twenty years of age. It was three years since he had left his grandfather. Both parties had remained on the same terms, without attempting to approach each other, and without seeking to see each other. Besides, what was the use of seeing each other? Marius was the brass vase, while Father Gillenormand was the iron pot.

We admit that Marius was mistaken as to his grandfather's heart. He had imagined that M. Gillenormand had never loved him, and that that crusty, harsh, and smiling old fellow who cursed, shouted, and stormed and brandished his cane, cherished for him, at the most, only that affection, which is at once slight and severe, of the dotards of comedy. Marius was in error. There are fathers who do not love their children; there exists no grandfather who does not adore his grandson. At bottom, as we have said, M. Gillenormand idolized Marius. He idolized him after his own fashion, with an accompaniment of snappishness and boxes on the ear; but, this child once gone, he felt a black void in his heart; he would allow no one to mention the child to him, and all the while secretly regretted that he was so well obeyed. At first, he hoped that this Buonapartist, this Jacobin, this terrorist, this Septembrist, would return. But the weeks passed by, years passed; to M. Gillenormand's great despair, the "blood-drinker" did not make his appearance. "I could not do otherwise than turn him out," said the grandfather to himself, and he asked himself: "If the thing were to do over again, would I do it?" His pride instantly answered "yes," but his aged head, which he shook in silence, replied sadly "no." He had his hours of depression. He missed Marius. Old men need affection as they need the sun. It is warmth. Strong as his nature was, the absence of Marius had wrought some change in him. Nothing in the world could have induced him to take

a step towards "that rogue"; but he suffered. He never inquired about him, but he thought of him incessantly. He lived in the Marais in a more and more retired manner; he was still merry and violent as of old, but his merriment had a convulsive harshness, and his violences always terminated in a sort of gentle and gloomy dejection. He sometimes said: "Oh! if he only would return, what a good box on the ear I would give him!"

As for his aunt, she thought too little to love much; Marius was no longer for her much more than a vague black form; and she eventually came to occupy herself with him much less than with the cat or the paroquet which she probably had. What augmented Father Gillenormand's secret suffering was, that he locked it all up within his breast, and did not allow its existence to be divined. His sorrow was like those recently invented furnaces which consume their own smoke. It sometimes happened that officious busybodies spoke to him of Marius, and asked him: "What is your grandson doing?" "What has become of him?" The old bourgeois replied with a sigh, that he was a sad case, and giving a fillip to his cuff, if he wished to appear gay: "Monsieur le Baron de Pontmercy is practising pettifogging in some corner or other."

While the old man regretted, Marius applauded himself. As is the case with all good-hearted people, misfortune had eradicated his bitterness. He only thought of M. Gillenormand in an amiable light, but he had set his mind on not receiving anything more from the man who *had been unkind to his father*. This was the mitigated translation of his first indignation. Moreover, he was happy at having suffered, and at suffering still. It was for his father's sake. The hardness of his life satisfied and pleased him. He said to himself with a sort of joy that—*it was certainly the least he could do*; that it was an expiation;—that, had it not been for that, he would have been punished in some other way and later on for his impious indifference towards his father, and such a father! that it would not have been just that his father should have all the suffering, and he none of it; and that, in any case, what were

his toils and his destitution compared with the colonel's heroic life? that, in short, the only way for him to approach his father and resemble him, was to be brave in the face of indigence, as the other had been valiant before the enemy; and that that was, no doubt, what the colonel had meant to imply by the words: "He will be worthy of it." Words which Marius continued to wear, not on his breast, since the colonel's writing had disappeared, but in his heart.

And then, on the day when his grandfather had turned him out of doors, he had been only a child, now he was a man. He felt it. Misery, we repeat, had been good for him. Poverty in youth, when it succeeds, has this magnificent property about it, that it turns the whole will towards effort, and the whole soul towards aspiration. Poverty instantly lays material life bare and renders it hideous; hence inexpressible bounds towards the ideal life. The wealthy young man has a hundred coarse and brilliant distractions, horse races, hunting, dogs, tobacco, gaming, good repasts, and all the rest of it; occupations for the baser side of the soul, at the expense of the loftier and more delicate sides. The poor young man wins his bread with difficulty; he eats; when he has eaten, he has nothing more but meditation. He goes to the spectacles which God furnishes gratis; he gazes at the sky, space, the stars, flowers, children, the humanity among which he is suffering, the creation amid which he beams. He gazes so much on humanity that he perceives its soul, he gazes upon creation to such an extent that he beholds God. He dreams, he feels himself great; he dreams on, and feels himself tender. From the egotism of the man who suffers he passes to the compassion of the man who meditates. An admirable sentiment breaks forth in him, forgetfulness of self and pity for all. As he thinks of the innumerable enjoyments which nature offers, gives, and lavishes to souls which stand open, and refuses to souls that are closed, he comes to pity, he the millionaire of the mind, the millionaire of money. All hatred departs from his heart, in proportion as light penetrates his spirit. And is he unhappy? No. The misery of a young man is never

miserable. The first young lad who comes to hand, however poor he may be, with his strength, his health, his rapid walk, his brilliant eyes, his warmly circulating blood, his black hair, his red lips, his white teeth, his pure breath, will always arouse the envy of an aged emperor. And then, every morning, he sets himself afresh to the task of earning his bread; and while his hands earn his bread, his dorsal column gains pride, his brain gathers ideas. His task finished, he returns to ineffable ecstasies, to contemplation, to joys; he beholds his feet set in afflictions, in obstacles, on the pavement, in the nettles, sometimes in the mire; his head in the light. He is firm, serene, gentle, peaceful, attentive, serious, content with little, kindly; and he thanks God for having bestowed on him those two forms of riches which many a rich man lacks: work, which makes him free; and thought, which makes him dignified.

This is what had happened with Marius. To tell the truth, he inclined a little too much to the side of contemplation. From the day when he had succeeded in earning his living with some approach to certainty, he had stopped, thinking it good to be poor, and retrenching time from his work to give to thought; that is to say, he sometimes passed entire days in meditation, absorbed, engulfed, like a visionary, in the mute voluptuousness of ecstasy and inward radiance. He had thus propounded the problem of his life: to toil as little as possible at material labor, in order to toil as much as possible at the labor which is impalpable; in other words, to bestow a few hours on real life, and to cast the rest to the infinite. As he believed that he lacked nothing, he did not perceive that contemplation, thus understood, ends by becoming one of the forms of idleness; that he was contenting himself with conquering the first necessities of life, and that he was resting from his labors too soon.

It was evident that, for this energetic and enthusiastic nature, this could only be a transitory state, and that, at the first shock against the inevitable complications of destiny, Marius would awaken.

In the meantime, although he was a lawyer, and whatever Father Gillenormand thought about the matter, he was not practising, he was not even pettifogging. Meditation had turned him aside from pleading. To haunt attorneys, to follow the court, to hunt up cases—what a bore! Why should he do it? He saw no reason for changing the manner of gaining his livelihood! The obscure and ill-paid publishing establishment had come to mean for him a sure source of work which did not involve too much labor, as we have explained, and which sufficed for his wants.

One of the publishers for whom he worked, M. Magimel, I think, offered to take him into his own house, to lodge him well, to furnish him with regular occupation, and to give him fifteen hundred francs a year. To be well lodged! Fifteen hundred francs! No doubt. But renounce his liberty! Be on fixed wages! A sort of hired man of letters! According to Marius' opinion, if he accepted, his position would become both better and worse at the same time, he acquired comfort, and lost his dignity; it was a fine and complete unhappiness converted into a repulsive and ridiculous state of torture: something like the case of a blind man who should recover the sight of one eye. He refused.

Marius dwelt in solitude. Owing to his taste for remaining outside of everything, and through having been too much alarmed, he had not entered decidedly into the group presided over by Enjolras. They had remained good friends; they were ready to assist each other on occasion in every possible way; but nothing more. Marius had two friends: one young, Courfeyrac; and one old, M. Mabeuf. He inclined more to the old man. In the first place, he owed to him the revolution which had taken place within him; to him he was indebted for having known and loved his father. "He operated on me for a cataract," he said.

The churchwarden had certainly played a decisive part.

It was not, however, that M. Mabeuf had been anything but the calm and impassive agent of Providence in this connection. He had enlightened Marius by chance and without

being aware of the fact, as does a candle which some one brings; he had been the candle and not the some one.

As for Marius' inward political revolution, M. Mabeuf was totally incapable of comprehending it, of willing or of directing it.

As we shall see M. Mabeuf again, later on, a few words will not be superfluous.

CHAPTER IV

M. MABEUF

ON the day when M. Mabeuf said to Marius: "Certainly I approve of political opinions," he expressed the real state of his mind. All political opinions were matters of indifference to him, and he approved them all, without distinction, provided they left him in peace, as the Greeks called the Furies "the beautiful, the good, the charming," the Eumenides. M. Mabeuf's political opinion consisted in a passionate love for plants, and, above all, for books. Like all the rest of the world, he possessed the termination in *ist*, without which no one could exist at that time, but he was neither a Royalist, a Bonapartist, a Chartist, an Orleanist, nor an Anarchist; he was a *bouquinist*, a collector of old books. He did not understand how men could busy themselves with hating each other because of silly stuff like the charter, democracy, legitimacy, monarchy, the republic, etc., when there were in the world all sorts of mosses, grasses, and shrubs which they might be looking at, and heaps of folios, and even of 32mos, which they might turn over. He took good care not to become useless; having books did not prevent his reading, being a botanist did not prevent his being a gardener. When he made Pontmercy's acquaintance, this sympathy had existed between the colonel and himself—that what the colonel did for flowers, he did for fruits. M. Mabeuf had succeeded in producing seedling pears as savory as the pears of St. Germain; it is from one

of his combinations, apparently, that the October Mirabelle, now celebrated and no less perfumed than the summer Mirabelle, owes its origin. He went to mass rather from gentleness than from piety, and because, as he loved the faces of men, but hated their noise, he found them assembled and silent only in church. Feeling that he must be something in the State, he had chosen the career of warden. However, he had never succeeded in loving any woman as much as a tulip bulb, nor any man as much as an Elzevir. He had long passed sixty, when, one day, some one asked him: "Have you never been married?" "I have forgotten," said he. When it sometimes happened to him—and to whom does it not happen?—to say: "Oh! if I were only rich!" it was not when ogling a pretty girl, as was the case with Father Gillenormand, but when contemplating an old book. He lived alone with an old housekeeper. He was somewhat gouty, and when he was asleep, his aged fingers, stiffened with rheumatism, lay crooked up in the folds of his sheets. He had composed and published a *Flora of the Environs of Caunteretz*, with colored plates, a work which enjoyed a tolerable measure of esteem and which sold well. People rang his bell, in the Rue Mésières, two or three times a day, to ask for it. He drew as much as two thousand francs a year from it; this constituted nearly the whole of his fortune. Although poor, he had had the talent to form for himself, by dint of patience, privations, and time, a precious collection of rare copies of every sort. He never went out without a book under his arm, and he often returned with two. The sole decoration of the four rooms on the ground floor, which composed his lodgings, consisted of framed herbariums, and engravings of the old masters. The sight of a sword or a gun chilled his blood. He had never approached a cannon in his life, even at the Invalides. He had a passable stomach, a brother who was a curé, perfectly white hair, no teeth, either in his mouth or his mind, a trembling in every limb, a Picard accent, an infantile laugh, the air of an old sheep, and he was easily frightened. Add to this, that he had no other friendship, no other acquaintance

among the living, than an old bookseller of the Porte-Saint-Jacques, named Royal. His dream was to naturalize indigo in France.

His servant was also a sort of innocent. The poor good old woman was a spinster. Sultan, her cat, which might have mewed Allegri's miserere in the Sixtine Chapel, had filled her heart and sufficed for the quantity of passion which existed in her. None of her dreams had ever proceeded as far as man. She had never been able to get further than her cat. Like him, she had a mustache. Her glory consisted in her caps, which were always white. She passed her time, on Sundays, after mass, in counting over the linen in her chest, and in spreading out on her bed the dresses in the piece which she bought and never had made up. She knew how to read. M. Mabeuf had nicknamed her Mother Plutarque.

M. Mabeuf had taken a fancy to Marius, because Marius, being young and gentle, warmed his age without startling his timidity. Youth combined with gentleness produces on old people the effect of the sun without wind. When Marius was saturated with military glory, with gunpowder, with marches and countermarches, and with all those prodigious battles in which his father had given and received such tremendous blows of the sword, he went to see M. Mabeuf, and M. Mabeuf talked to him of his hero from the point of view of flowers.

His brother the curé died about 1830, and almost immediately, as when the night is drawing on, the whole horizon grew dark for M. Mabeuf. A notary's failure deprived him of the sum of ten thousand francs, which was all that he possessed in his brother's right and his own. The Revolution of July brought a crisis to publishing. In a period of embarrassment, the first thing which does not sell is a *Flora*. *The Flora of the Environs of Cauteretz* stopped short. Weeks passed by without a single purchaser. Sometimes M. Mabeuf started at the sound of the bell. "Monsieur," said Mother Plutarque sadly, "it is the water-carrier." In short, one day, M. Mabeuf quitted the Rue Mézières, abdicated the functions of warden,

gave up Saint-Sulpice, sold not a part of his books, but of his prints.—that to which he was the least attached,—and installed himself in a little house on the Rue Montparnasse, where, however, he remained but one quarter for two reasons: in the first place, the ground floor and the garden cost three hundred francs, and he dared not spend more than two hundred francs on his rent; in the second, being near Fatou's shooting-gallery, he could hear the pistol-shots; which was intolerable to him.

He carried off his *Flora*, his copper-plates, his herbariums, his portfolios, and his books, and established himself near the Salpêtrière, in a sort of thatched cottage of the village of Austerlitz, where, for fifty crowns a year, he got three rooms and a garden enclosed by a hedge, and containing a well. He took advantage of this removal to sell off nearly all his furniture. On the day of his entrance into his new quarters, he was very gay, and drove the nails on which his engravings and herbariums were to hang, with his own hands, dug in his garden the rest of the day, and at night, perceiving that Mother Plutarque had a melancholy air, and was very thoughtful, he tapped her on the shoulder and said to her with a smile: "We have the indigo!"

Only two visitors, the bookseller of the Porte-Saint-Jacques and Marius, were admitted to view the thatched cottage at Austerlitz, a brawling name which was, to tell the truth, extremely disagreeable to him.

However, as we have just pointed out, brains which are absorbed in some bit of wisdom, or folly, or, as it often happens, in both at once, are but slowly accessible to the things of actual life. Their own destiny is a far-off thing to them. There results from such concentration a passivity, which, if it were the outcome of reasoning, would resemble philosophy. One declines, descends, trickles away, even crumbles away, and yet is hardly conscious of it one's self. It always ends, it is true, in an awakening, but the awakening is tardy. In the meantime, it seems as though we held ourselves neutral in the game which is going on between our happiness and our unhappiness.

We are the stake, and we look on at the game with indifference.

It is thus that, athwart the cloud which formed about him, when all his hopes were extinguished one after the other, M. Mabeuf remained rather puerilely, but profoundly serene. His habits of mind had the regular swing of a pendulum. Once mounted on an illusion, he went for a very long time, even after the illusion had disappeared. A clock does not stop short at the precise moment when the key is lost.

M. Mabeuf had his innocent pleasures. These pleasures were inexpensive and unexpected; the merest élan furnished them. One day, Mother Plutarque was reading a romance in one corner of the room. She was reading aloud, finding that she understood better thus. To read aloud is to assure one's self of what one is reading. There are people who read very loud, and who have the appearance of giving themselves their word of honor as to what they are perusing.

It was with this sort of energy that Mother Plutarque was reading the romance which she had in hand. M. Mabeuf heard her without listening to her.

In the course of her reading, Mother Plutarque came to this phrase. It was a question of an officer of dragoons and a beauty:—

“—The beauty pouted, and the dragoon—”

Here she interrupted herself to wipe her glasses.

“Bouddha and the Dragou,” struck in M. Mabeuf in a low voice. “Yes, it is true that there was a dragon, which, from the depths of its cave, spouted flame through his maw and set the heavens on fire. Many stars had already been consumed by this monster, which, besides, had the claws of a tiger. Bouddha went into its den and succeeded in converting the dragou. That is a good book that you are reading, Mother Plutarque. There is no more beautiful legend in existence.”

And M. Mabeuf fell into a delicious reverie.

CHAPTER V

POVERTY A GOOD NEIGHBOR FOR MISERY

MARIUS liked this candid old man who saw himself gradually falling into the clutches of indigence, and who came to feel astonishment, little by little, without, however, being made melancholy by it. Marius met Courfeyrac and sought out M. Mabeuf. Very rarely, however; twice a month at most.

Marius' pleasure consisted in taking long walks alone on the outer boulevards, or in the Champs-de-Mars, or in the least frequented alleys of the Luxembourg. He often spent half a day in gazing at a market garden, the beds of lettuce, the chickens on the dung-heap, the horse turning the water-wheel. The passers-by stared at him in surprise, and some of them thought his attire suspicious and his mien sinister. He was only a poor young man dreaming in an objectless way.

It was during one of his strolls that he had hit upon the Gorbeau house, and, tempted by its isolation and its cheapness, had taken up his abode there. He was known there only under the name of M. Marius.

Some of his father's old generals or old comrades had invited him to go and see them, when they learned about him. Marius had not refused their invitations. They afforded opportunities of talking about his father. Thus he went from time to time, to Comte Pajol, to General Bellavesne, to General Fririon, to the Invalides. There was music and dancing there. On such evenings, Marius put on his new coat. But he never went to these evening parties or balls except on days when it was freezing cold, because he could not afford a carriage, and he did not wish to arrive with boots otherwise than like mirrors.

He said sometimes, but without bitterness: "Men are so made that in a drawing-room you may be soiled everywhere

except on your shoes. In order to insure a good reception there, only one irreproachable thing is asked of you; your conscience? No, your boots."

All passions except those of the heart are dissipated by revery. Marius' political fevers vanished thus. The Revolution of 1830 assisted in the process, by satisfying and calming him. He remained the same, setting aside his fits of wrath. He still held the same opinions. Only, they had been tempered. To speak accurately, he had no longer any opinions, he had sympathies. To what party did he belong? To the party of humanity. Out of humanity he chose France; out of the Nation he chose the people; out of the people he chose the woman. It was to that point above all, that his pity was directed. Now he preferred an idea to a deed, a poet to a hero, and he admired a book like Job more than an event like Marengo. And then, when, after a day spent in meditation, he returned in the evening through the boulevards, and caught a glimpse through the branches of the trees of the fathomless space beyond, the nameless gleams, the abyss, the shadow, the mystery, all that which is only human seemed very pretty indeed to him.

He thought that he had, and he really had, in fact, arrived at the truth of life and of human philosophy, and he had ended by gazing at nothing but heaven, the only thing which Truth can perceive from the bottom of her well.

This did not prevent him from multiplying his plans, his combinations, his scaffoldings, his projects for the future. In this state of revery, an eye which could have cast a glance into Marius' interior would have been dazzled with the purity of that soul. In fact, had it been given to our eyes of the flesh to gaze into the consciences of others, we should be able to judge a man much more surely according to what he dreams, than according to what he thinks. There is will in thought, there is none in dreams. Revery, which is utterly spontaneous, takes and keeps, even in the gigantic and the ideal, the form of our spirit. Nothing proceeds more directly and more sincerely from the very depth of our soul, than our unpremedi-

tated and boundless aspirations towards the splendors of destiny. In these aspirations, much more than in deliberate, rational co-ordinated ideas, is the real character of a man to be found. Our chimeras are the things which the most resemble us. Each one of us dreams of the unknown and the impossible in accordance with his nature.

Towards the middle of this year 1831, the old woman who waited on Marius told him that his neighbors, the wretched Jondrette family, had been turned out of doors. Marius, who passed nearly the whole of his days out of the house, hardly knew that he had any neighbors.

"Why are they turned out?" he asked.

"Because they do not pay their rent; they owe for two quarters."

"How much is it?"

"Twenty francs," said the old woman.

Marius had thirty francs saved up in a drawer.

"Here," he said to the old woman, "take these twenty-five francs. Pay for the poor people and give them five francs, and do not tell them that it was I."

CHAPTER VI

THE SUBSTITUTE

It chanced that the regiment to which Lieutenant Théodule belonged came to perform garrison duty in Paris. This inspired Aunt Gillenormand with a second idea. She had, on the first occasion, hit upon the plan of having Marius spied upon by Théodule; now she plotted to have Théodule take Marius' place.

At all events and in case the grandfather should feel the vague need of a young face in the house,—these rays of dawn are sometimes sweet to ruin,—it was expedient to find another Marius. "Take it as a simple erratum," she thought, "such as one sees in books. For Marius, read Théodule."

A grandnephew is almost the same as a grandson; in default of a lawyer one takes a lancer.

One morning, when M. Gillenormand was about to read something in the *Quotidienne*, his daughter entered and said to him in her sweetest voice; for the question concerned her favorite:—

“Father, Théodule is coming to present his respects to you this morning.”

“Who’s Théodule?”

“Your grandnephew.”

“Ah!” said the grandfather.

Then he went back to his reading, thought no more of his grandnephew, who was merely some Théodule or other, and soon flew into a rage, which almost always happened when he read. The “sheet” which he held, although Royalist, of course, announced for the following day, without any softening phrases, one of these little events which were of daily occurrence at that date in Paris: “That the students of the schools of law and medicine were to assemble on the Place du Panthéon, at midday,—to deliberate.” The discussion concerned one of the questions of the moment, the artillery of the National Guard, and a conflict between the Minister of War and “the citizen’s militia,” on the subject of the cannon parked in the courtyard of the Louvre. The students were to “deliberate” over this. It did not take much more than this to swell M. Gillenormand’s rage.

He thought of Marius, who was a student, and who would probably go with the rest, to “deliberate, at midday, on the Place du Panthéon.”

As he was indulging in this painful dream, Lieutenant Théodule entered clad in plain clothes as a bourgeois, which was clever of him, and was discreetly introduced by Mademoiselle Gillenormand. The lancer had reasoned as follows: “The old druid has not sunk all his money in a life pension. It is well to disguise one’s self as a civilian from time to time.”

Mademoiselle Gillenormand said aloud to her father:—

“Théodule, your grandnephew.”

And in a low voice to the lieutenant:—

“Approve of everything.”

And she withdrew.

The lieutenant, who was but little accustomed to such venerable encounters, stammered with some timidity: “Good day, uncle.”—and made a salute composed of the involuntary and mechanical outline of the military salute finished off as a bourgeois salute.

“Ah! so it’s you; that is well, sit down,” said the old gentleman.

That said, he totally forgot the lancer.

Théodule seated himself, and M. Gillenormand rose.

M. Gillenormand began to pace back and forth, his hands in his pockets, talking aloud, and twitching, with his irritated old fingers, at the two watches which he wore in his two fobs.

“That pack of brats! they convene on the Place du Panthéon! by my life! urchins who were with their nurses but yesterday! If one were to squeeze their noses, milk would burst out. And they deliberate to-morrow, at midday. What are we coming to? What are we coming to? It is clear that we are making for the abyss. That is what the *descamisados* have brought us to! To deliberate on the citizen artillery! To go and jabber in the open air over the jibes of the National Guard! And with whom are they to meet there? Just see whither Jacobinism leads. I will bet anything you like, a million against a counter, that there will be no one there but returned convicts and released galley-slaves. The Republicans and the galley-slaves,—they form but one nose and one handkerchief. Carnot used to say: ‘Where would you have me go, traitor?’ Fouché replied: ‘Wherever you please, imbecile!’ That’s what the Republicans are like.”

“That is true,” said Théodule.

M. Gillenormand half turned his head, saw Théodule, and went on:—

“When one reflects that that scoundrel was so vile as to turn carbonaro! Why did you leave my house? To go and become a Republican! Pssst! In the first place, the people want none

of your republic, they have common sense, they know well that there always have been kings, and that there always will be; they know well that the people are only the people, after all, they make sport of it, of your republic—do you understand, idiot? Is it not a horrible caprice? To fall in love with Père Duchesne, to make sheep's-eyes at the guillotine, to sing romances, and play on the guitar under the balcony of '93—it's enough to make one spit on all these young fellows, such fools are they! They are all alike. Not one escapes. It suffices for them to breathe the air which blows through the street to lose their senses. The nineteenth century is poison. The first scamp that happens along lets his beard grow like a goat's, thinks himself a real scoundrel, and abandons his old relatives. He's a Republican, he's a romantic. What does that mean, romantic? Do me the favor to tell me what it is. All possible follies. A year ago, they ran to *Hernani*. Now, I just ask you, *Hernani!* antitheses! abominations which are not even written in French! And then, they have cannons in the courtyard of the Louvre. Such are the rascalities of this age!"

"You are right, uncle," said Théodule.

M. Gillenormand resumed:—

"Cannons in the courtyard of the Museum! For what purpose? Do you want to fire grape-shot at the Apollo Belvedere? What have those cartridges to do with the Venus de Medici? Oh! the young men of the present day are all blackguards! What a pretty creature is their Benjamin Constant! And those who are not rascals are simpletons! They do all they can to make themselves ugly, they are badly dressed, they are afraid of women, in the presence of petticoats they have a mendicant air which sets the girls into fits of laughter; on my word of honor, one would say the poor creatures were ashamed of love. They are deformed, and they complete themselves by being stupid; they repeat the puns of Tiercelin and Potier, they have sack coats, stablemen's waistcoats, shirts of coarse linen, trousers of coarse cloth, boots of coarse leather, and their rigmarole resembles their plumage. One might make use of their jargon to put new soles on their old shoes. And all

this awkward batch of brats has political opinions, if you please. Political opinions should be strictly forbidden. They fabricate systems, they recast society, they demolish the monarchy, they fling all laws to the earth, they put the attic in the cellar's place and my porter in the place of the King, they turn Europe topsy-turvy, they reconstruct the world, and all their love affairs consist in staring sily at the ankles of the laundresses as these women climb into their carts. Ah! Marius! Ah! you blackguard! to go and vociferate on the public place! to discuss, to debate, to take measures! They call that measures, just God! Disorder humbles itself and becomes silly. I have seen chaos, I now see a mess. Students deliberating on the National Guard,—such a thing could not be seen among the Ogibewas nor the Cadodaches! Savages who go naked, with their noddles dressed like a shuttlecock, with a club in their paws, are less of brutes than those bachelors of arts! The four-penny monkeys! And they set up for judges! Those creatures deliberate and ratiocinate! The end of the world is come! This is plainly the end of this miserable terraqueous globe! A final hiccough was required, and France has emitted it. Deliberate, my rascals! Such things will happen so long as they go and read the newspapers under the arcades of the Odéon. That costs them a sou, and their good sense, and their intelligence, and their heart and their soul, and their wits. They emerge thence, and decamp from their families. All newspapers are pests; all, even the *Drapeau Blanc*! At bottom, Martainville was a Jacobin. Ah! just Heaven! you may boast of having driven your grandfather to despair, that you may!"

"That is evident," said Théodule.

And profiting by the fact that M. Gillenormand was taking breath, the lancer added in a magisterial manner:—

"There should be no other newspaper than the *Moniteur*, and no other book than the *Annuaire Militaire*."

M. Gillenormand continued:—

"It is like their Sieyès! A regicide ending in a senator; for that is the way they always end. They give themselves a scar

with the address of *thou* as citizens, in order to get themselves called, eventually, *Monsieur le Comte*. Monsieur le Comte as big as my arm, assassins of September. The philosopher Sieyès! I will do myself the justice to say, that I have never had any better opinion of the philosophies of all those philosophers, than of the spectacles of the grimacer of Tivoli! One day I saw the Senators cross the Quai Malplaquet in mantles of violet velvet sown with bees, with hats à la Henri IV. They were hideous. One would have pronounced them monkeys from the tiger's court. Citizens, I declare to you, that your progress is madness, that your humanity is a dream, that your revolution is a crime, that your republic is a monster, that your young and virgin France comes from the brothel, and I maintain it against all, whoever you may be, whether journalists, economists, legists, or even were you better judges of liberty, of equality, and fraternity than the knife of the guillotine! And that I announce to you, my fine fellows!"

"Parbleu!" cried the lieutenant, "that is wonderfully true."

M. Gillenormand paused in a gesture which he had begun, wheeled round, stared Lancer Théodule intently in the eyes, and said to him:—

"You are a fool."

BOOK SIXTH.—THE CONJUNCTION OF TWO STARS

CHAPTER I

THE SOBRIQUET: MODE OF FORMATION OF FAMILY NAMES

MARIUS was, at this epoch, a handsome young man, of medium stature, with thick and intensely black hair, a lofty and intelligent brow, well-opened and passionate nostrils, an air of calmness and sincerity, and with something indescribably proud, thoughtful, and innocent over his whole countenance. His profile, all of whose lines were rounded, without thereby losing their firmness, had a certain Germanic sweetness, which has made its way into the French physiognomy by way of Alsace and Lorraine, and that complete absence of angles which rendered the Sicambres so easily recognizable among the Romans, and which distinguishes the leonine from the aquiline race. He was at that period of life when the mind of men who think is composed, in nearly equal parts, of depth and ingenuousness. A grave situation being given, he had all that is required to be stupid: one more turn of the key, and he might be sublime. His manners were reserved, cold, polished, not very genial. As his mouth was charming, his lips the reddest, and his teeth the whitest in the world, his smile corrected the severity of his face, as a whole. At certain moments, that pure brow and that voluptuous smile presented a singular contrast. His eyes were small, but his glance was large.

At the period of his most abject misery, he had observed that young girls turned round when he passed by, and he fled or hid, with death in his soul. He thought that they were

staring at him because of his old clothes, and that they were laughing at them; the fact is, that they stared at him because of his grace, and that they dreamed of him.

This mute misunderstanding between him and the pretty passers-by had made him shy. He chose none of them for the excellent reason that he fled from all of them. He lived thus indefinitely,—stupidly, as Courfeyrac said.

Courfeyrac also said to him: “Do not aspire to be venerable” [they called each other *thou*; it is the tendency of youthful friendships to slip into this mode of address]. “Let me give you a piece of advice, my dear fellow. Don’t read so many books, and look a little more at the lasses. The jades have some good points about them, O Marius! By dint of fleeing and blushing, you will become brutalized.”

On other occasions, Courfeyrac encountered him and said:—“Good morning, Monsieur l’Abbé!”

When Courfeyrac had addressed to him some remark of this nature, Marius avoided women, both young and old, more than ever for a week to come, and he avoided Courfeyrac to boot.

Nevertheless, there existed in all the immensity of creation, two women whom Marius did not flee, and to whom he paid no attention whatever. In truth, he would have been very much amazed if he had been informed that they were women. One was the bearded old woman who swept out his chamber, and caused Courfeyrac to say: “Seeing that his servant woman wears his beard, Marius does not wear his own beard.” The other was a sort of little girl whom he saw very often, and whom he never looked at.

For more than a year, Marius had noticed in one of the walks of the Luxembourg, the one which skirts the parapet of the Pépinière, a man and a very young girl, who were almost always seated side by side on the same bench, at the most solitary end of the alley, on the Rue de l’Ouest side. Every time that that chance which meddles with the strolls of persons whose gaze is turned inwards, led Marius to that walk,—and it was nearly every day,—he found this couple there. The man appeared to be about sixty years of age; he

seemed sad and serious; his whole person presented the robust and weary aspect peculiar to military men who have retired from the service. If he had worn a decoration, Marius would have said: "He is an ex-officer." He had a kindly but unapproachable air, and he never let his glance linger on the eyes of any one. He wore blue trousers, a blue frock coat and a broad-brimmed hat, which always appeared to be new, a black cravat, a quaker shirt, that is to say, it was dazzlingly white, but of coarse linen. A grisette who passed near him one day, said: "Here's a very tidy widower." His hair was very white.

The first time that the young girl who accompanied him came and seated herself on the bench which they seemed to have adopted, she was a sort of child thirteen or fourteen years of age, so thin as to be almost homely, awkward, insignificant, and with a possible promise of handsome eyes. Only, they were always raised with a sort of displeasing assurance. Her dress was both aged and childish, like the dress of the scholars in a convent; it consisted of a badly cut gown of black merino. They had the air of being father and daughter.

Marius scanned this old man, who was not yet aged, and this little girl, who was not yet a person, for a few days, and thereafter paid no attention to them. They, on their side, did not appear even to see him. They conversed together with a peaceful and indifferent air. The girl chattered incessantly and merrily. The old man talked but little, and, at times, he fixed on her eyes overflowing with an ineffable paternity.

Marius had acquired the mechanical habit of strolling in that walk. He invariably found them there.

This is the way things went:—

Marius liked to arrive by the end of the alley which was furthest from their bench; he walked the whole length of the alley, passed in front of them, then returned to the extremity whence he had come, and began again. This he did five or six times in the course of his promenade, and the promenade was taken five or six times a week, without its having occurred to him or to these people to exchange a greeting. That personage, and that young girl, although they appeared,—and

perhaps because they appeared,—to shun all glances, had, naturally, caused some attention on the part of the five or six students who strolled along the Pépinière from time to time; the studious after their lectures, the others after their game of billiards. Courfeyrae, who was among the last, had observed them several times, but, finding the girl homely, he had speedily and carefully kept out of the way. He had fled, discharging at them a sobriquet, like a Parthian dart. Impressed solely with the child's gown and the old man's hair, he had dubbed the daughter Mademoiselle Lanoire, and the father, Monsieur Leblanc. so that, as no one knew them under any other title, this nickname became a law in the default of any other name. The students said: "Ah! Monsieur Leblanc is on his bench." And Marius, like the rest, had found it convenient to call this unknown gentleman Monsieur Leblanc.

We shall follow their example, and we shall say M. Leblanc, in order to facilitate this tale.

So Marius saw them nearly every day, at the same hour, during the first year. He found the man to his taste, but the girl insipid.

CHAPTER II

LUX FACTA EST

DURING the second year, precisely at the point in this history which the reader has now reached, it chanced that this habit of the Luxembourg was interrupted, without Marius himself being quite aware why, and nearly six months elapsed, during which he did not set foot in the alley. One day, at last, he returned thither once more; it was a serene summer morning, and Marius was in joyous mood, as one is when the weather is fine. It seemed to him that he had in his heart all the songs of the birds that he was listening to, and all the bits of blue sky of which he caught glimpses through the leaves of the trees.

He went straight to "his alley," and when he reached the

end of it he perceived, still on the same bench, that well-known couple. Only, when he approached, it certainly was the same man; but it seemed to him that it was no longer the same girl. The person whom he now beheld was a tall and beautiful creature, possessed of all the most charming lines of a woman at the precise moment when they are still combined with all the most ingenuous graces of the child; a pure and fugitive moment, which can be expressed only by these two words,—“fifteen years.” She had wonderful brown hair, shaded with threads of gold, a brow that seemed made of marble, cheeks that seemed made of rose-leaf, a pale flush, an agitated whiteness, an exquisite mouth, whence smiles darted like sunbeams, and words like music, a head such as Raphael would have given to Mary, set upon a neck that Jean Goujon would have attributed to a Venus. And, in order that nothing might be lacking to this bewitching face, her nose was not handsome—it was pretty; neither straight nor curved. neither Italian nor Greek; it was the Parisian nose, that is to say, spiritual, delicate, irregular, pure,—which drives painters to despair, and charms poets.

When Marius passed near her, he could not see her eyes, which were constantly lowered. He saw only her long chestnut lashes, permeated with shadow and modesty.

This did not prevent the beautiful child from smiling as she listened to what the white-haired old man was saying to her, and nothing could be more fascinating than that fresh smile, combined with those drooping eyes.

For a moment, Marius thought that she was another daughter of the same man. a sister of the former, no doubt. But when the invariable habit of his stroll brought him, for the second time, near the bench, and he had examined her attentively, he recognized her as the same. In six months the little girl had become a young maiden; that was all. Nothing is more frequent than this phenomenon. There is a moment when girls blossom out in the twinkling of an eye, and become roses all at once. One left them children but yesterday; to-day, one finds them disquieting to the feelings.

This child had not only grown, she had become idealized. As three days in April suffice to cover certain trees with flowers, six months had sufficed to clothe her with beauty. Her April had arrived.

One sometimes sees people, who, poor and mean, seem to wake up, pass suddenly from indigence to luxury, indulge in expenditures of all sorts, and become dazzling, prodigal, magnificent, all of a sudden. That is the result of having pocketed an income; a note fell due yesterday. The young girl had received her quarterly income.

And then, she was no longer the school-girl with her felt hat, her merino gown, her scholar's shoes, and red hands; taste had come to her with beauty; she was a well-dressed person, clad with a sort of rich and simple elegance, and without affectation. She wore a dress of black damask, a cape of the same material, and a bonnet of white crape. Her white gloves displayed the delicacy of the hand which toyed with the carved, Chinese ivory handle of a parasol, and her silken shoe outlined the smallness of her foot. When one passed near her, her whole toilette exhaled a youthful and penetrating perfume.

As for the man, he was the same as usual.

The second time that Marius approached her, the young girl raised her eyelids; her eyes were of a deep, celestial blue, but in that veiled azure, there was, as yet, nothing but the glance of a child. She looked at Marius indifferently, as she would have stared at the brat running beneath the sycamores, or the marble vase which cast a shadow on the bench, and Marius, on his side, continued his promenade, and thought about something else.

He passed near the bench where the young girl sat, five or six times, but without even turning his eyes in her direction.

On the following days, he returned, as was his wont, to the Luxembourg: as usual, he found there "the father and daughter;" but he paid no further attention to them. He thought no more about the girl now that she was beautiful than he had when she was homely. He passed very near the bench where she sat, because such was his habit.

CHAPTER III

EFFECT OF THE SPRING

ONE day, the air was warm, the Luxembourg was inundated with light and shade, the sky was as pure as though the angels had washed it that morning, the sparrows were giving vent to little twitters in the depths of the chestnut-trees. Marius had thrown open his whole soul to nature, he was not thinking of anything, he simply lived and breathed, he passed near the bench, the young girl raised her eyes to him, the two glances met.

What was there in the young girl's glance on this occasion? Marius could not have told. There was nothing and there was everything. It was a strange flash.

She dropped her eyes, and he pursued his way.

What he had just seen was no longer the ingenuous and simple eye of a child; it was a mysterious gulf which had half opened, then abruptly closed again.

There comes a day when the young girl glances in this manner. Woe to him who chances to be there!

That first gaze of a soul which does not, as yet, know itself, is like the dawn in the sky. It is the awakening of something radiant and strange. Nothing can give any idea of the dangerous charm of that unexpected gleam, which flashes suddenly and vaguely forth from adorable shadows, and which is composed of all the innocence of the present, and of all the passion of the future. It is a sort of undecided tenderness which reveals itself by chance, and which waits. It is a snare which the innocent maiden sets unknown to herself, and in which she captures hearts without either wishing or knowing it. It is a virgin looking like a woman.

It is rare that a profound revery does not spring from that glance, where it falls. All purities and all candors meet in that celestial and fatal gleam which, more than all the best-planned tender glances of coquettes, possesses the magic power

of causing the sudden blossoming, in the depths of the soul, of that sombre flower, impregnated with perfume and with poison, which is called love.

That evening, on his return to his garret, Marius cast his eyes over his garments, and perceived, for the first time, that he had been so slovenly, indecorous, and inconceivably stupid as to go for his walk in the Luxembourg with his "every-day clothes," that is to say, with a hat battered near the band, coarse carter's boots, black trousers which showed white at the knees, and a black coat which was pale at the elbows.

CHAPTER IV

BEGINNING OF A GREAT MALADY

ON the following day, at the accustomed hour, Marius drew from his wardrobe his new coat, his new trousers, his new hat, and his new boots; he clothed himself in this complete panoply, put on his gloves, a tremendous luxury, and set off for the Luxembourg.

On the way thither, he encountered Courfeyrac, and pretended not to see him. Courfeyrac, on his return home, said to his friends:—

"I have just met Marius' new hat and new coat, with Marius inside them. He was going to pass an examination, no doubt. He looked utterly stupid."

On arriving at the Luxembourg, Marius made the tour of the fountain basin, and stared at the swans; then he remained for a long time in contemplation before a statue whose head was perfectly black with mould, and one of whose hips was missing. Near the basin there was a bourgeois forty years of age, with a prominent stomach, who was holding by the hand a little urchin of five, and saying to him: "Shun excess, my son, keep at an equal distance from despotism and from anarchy." Marius listened to this bourgeois. Then he made the circuit of the basin once more. At last he directed his course

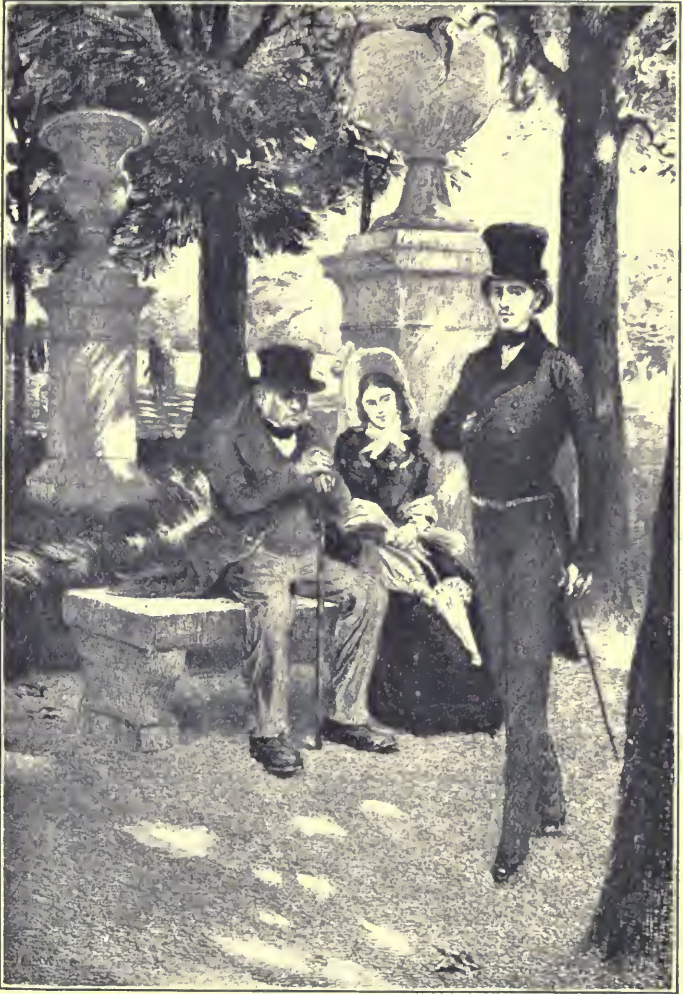
towards "his alley," slowly, and as if with regret. One would have said that he was both forced to go there and withheld from doing so. He did not perceive it himself, and thought that he was doing as he always did.

On turning into the walk, he saw M. Leblanc and the young girl at the other end, "on their bench." He buttoned his coat up to the very top, pulled it down on his body so that there might be no wrinkles, examined, with a certain complaisance, the lustrous gleams of his trousers, and marched on the bench. This march savored of an attack, and certainly of a desire for conquest. So I say that he marched on the bench, as I should say: "Hannibal marched on Rome."

However, all his movements were purely mechanical, and he had interrupted none of the habitual preoccupations of his mind and labors. At that moment, he was thinking that the *Manuel du Baccalauréat* was a stupid book, and that it must have been drawn up by rare idiots, to allow of three tragedies of Racine and only one comedy of Molière being analyzed therein as masterpieces of the human mind. There was a piercing whistling going on in his ears. As he approached the bench, he held fast to the folds in his coat, and fixed his eyes on the young girl. It seemed to him that she filled the entire extremity of the alley with a vague blue light.

In proportion as he drew near, his pace slackened more and more. On arriving at some little distance from the bench, and long before he had reached the end of the walk, he halted, and could not explain to himself why he retraced his steps. He did not even say to himself that he would not go as far as the end. It was only with difficulty that the young girl could have perceived him in the distance and noted his fine appearance in his new clothes. Nevertheless, he held himself very erect, in case any one should be looking at him from behind.

He attained the opposite end, then came back, and this time he approached a little nearer to the bench. He even got to within three intervals of trees, but there he felt an indescribable impossibility of proceeding further, and he hesitated. He thought he saw the young girl's face bending towards him.



HE HEARD AN INEFFABLE VOICE WHICH MUST HAVE BEEN
"HER VOICE."

But he exerted a manly and violent effort, subdued his hesitation, and walked straight ahead. A few seconds later, he rushed in front of the bench, erect and firm, reddening to the very ears, without daring to cast a glance either to the right or to the left, with his hand thrust into his coat like a statesman. At the moment when he passed,—under the cannon of the place,—he felt his heart beat wildly. As on the preceding day, she wore her damask gown and her crape bonnet. He heard an ineffable voice, which must have been “her voice.” She was talking tranquilly. She was very pretty. He felt it, although he made no attempt to see her. “She could not, however,” he thought, “help feeling esteem and consideration for me, if she only knew that I am the veritable author of the dissertation on Marcos Obrégon de la Ronde, which M. François de Neufchâteau put, as though it were his own, at the head of his edition of *Gil Blas*.” He went beyond the bench as far as the extremity of the walk, which was very near, then turned on his heel and passed once more in front of the lovely girl. This time, he was very pale. Moreover, all his emotions were disagreeable. As he went further from the bench and the young girl, and while his back was turned to her, he fancied that she was gazing after him, and that made him stumble.

He did not attempt to approach the bench again; he halted near the middle of the walk, and there, a thing which he never did, he sat down, and reflecting in the most profoundly indistinct depths of his spirit, that after all, it was hard that persons whose white bonnet and black gown he admired should be absolutely insensible to his splendid trousers and his new coat.

At the expiration of a quarter of an hour, he rose, as though he were on the point of again beginning his march towards that bench which was surrounded by an aureole. But he remained standing there, motionless. For the first time in fifteen months, he said to himself that that gentleman who sat there every day with his daughter, had, on his side, noticed him, and probably considered his assiduity singular.

For the first time, also, he was conscious of some irreverence

in designating that stranger, even in his secret thoughts, by the sobriquet of M. le Blanc.

He stood thus for several minutes, with drooping head, tracing figures in the sand, with the cane which he held in his hand.

Then he turned abruptly in the direction opposite to the bench, to M. Leblanc and his daughter, and went home.

That day he forgot to dine. At eight o'clock in the evening he perceived this fact, and as it was too late to go down to the Rue Saint-Jacques, he said: "Never mind!" and ate a bit of bread.

He did not go to bed until he had brushed his coat and folded it up with great care.

CHAPTER V

DIVERS CLAPS OF THUNDER FALL ON MA'AM BOUGON

ON the following day, Ma'am Bougon, as Courfeyrac styled the old portress-principal-tenant, housekeeper of the Gorbeau hovel, Ma'am Bougon, whose name was, in reality, Madame Burgon, as we have found out, but this iconoclast, Courfeyrac, respected nothing,—Ma'am Bougon observed, with stupefaction, that M. Marius was going out again in his new coat.

He went to the Luxembourg again, but he did not proceed further than his bench midway of the alley. He seated himself there, as on the preceding day, surveying from a distance, and clearly making out, the white bonnet, the black dress, and above all, that blue light. He did not stir from it, and only went home when the gates of the Luxembourg closed. He did not see M. Leblanc and his daughter retire. He concluded that they had quitted the garden by the gate on the Rue de l'Ouest. Later on, several weeks afterwards, when he came to think it over, he could never recall where he had dined that evening.

On the following day, which was the third, Ma'am Bougon

was thunderstruck. Marius went out in his new coat. "Three days in succession!" she exclaimed.

She tried to follow him, but Marius walked briskly, and with immense strides; it was a hippopotamus undertaking the pursuit of a chamois. She lost sight of him in two minutes, and returned breathless, three-quarters choked with asthma, and furious. "If there is any sense," she growled, "in putting on one's best clothes every day, and making people run like this!"

Marius betook himself to the Luxembourg.

The young girl was there with M. Leblanc. Marius approached as near as he could, pretending to be busy reading a book, but he halted afar off, then returned and seated himself on his bench, where he spent four hours in watching the house-sparrows who were skipping about the walk, and who produced on him the impression that they were making sport of him.

A fortnight passed thus. Marius went to the Luxembourg no longer for the sake of strolling there, but to seat himself always in the same spot, and that without knowing why. Once arrived there, he did not stir. He put on his new coat every morning, for the purpose of not showing himself, and he began all over again on the morrow.

She was decidedly a marvellous beauty. The only remark approaching a criticism, that could be made, was, that the contradiction between her gaze, which was melancholy, and her smile, which was merry, gave a rather wild effect to her face, which sometimes caused this sweet countenance to become strange without ceasing to be charming.

CHAPTER VI

TAKEN PRISONER

ON one of the last days of the second week, Marius was seated on his bench, as usual, holding in his hand an open book, of which he had not turned a page for the last two hours. All at once he started. An event was taking place at the other

extremity of the walk. Leblanc and his daughter had just left their seat, and the daughter had taken her father's arm, and both were advancing slowly, towards the middle of the alley where Marius was. Marius closed his book, then opened it again, then forced himself to read; he trembled; the aureole was coming straight towards him. "Ah! good Heavens!" thought he, "I shall not have time to strike an attitude." Still the white-haired man and the girl advanced. It seemed to him that this lasted for a century, and that it was but a second. "What are they coming in this direction for?" he asked himself. "What! She will pass here? Her feet will tread this sand, this walk, two paces from me?" He was utterly upset, he would have liked to be very handsome, he would have liked to own the cross. He heard the soft and measured sound of their approaching footsteps. He imagined that M. Leblanc was darting angry glances at him. "Is that gentleman going to address me?" he thought to himself. He dropped his head; when he raised it again, they were very near him. The young girl passed, and as she passed, she glanced at him. She gazed steadily at him, with a pensive sweetness which thrilled Marius from head to foot. It seemed to him that she was reproaching him for having allowed so long a time to elapse without coming as far as her, and that she was saying to him: "I am coming myself." Marius was dazzled by those eyes fraught with rays and abysses.

He felt his brain on fire. She had come to him, what joy! And then, how she had looked at him! She appeared to him more beautiful than he had ever seen her yet. Beautiful with a beauty which was wholly feminine and angelic, with a complete beauty which would have made Petrarch sing and Dante kneel. It seemed to him that he was floating free in the azure heavens. At the same time, he was horribly vexed because there was dust on his boots.

He thought he felt sure that she had looked at his boots too.

He followed her with his eyes until she disappeared. Then he started up and walked about the Luxembourg garden like a

madman. It is possible that, at times, he laughed to himself and talked aloud. He was so dreamy when he came near the children's nurses, that each one of them thought him in love with her.

He quitted the Luxembourg, hoping to find her again in the street.

He encountered Courfeyrac under the arcades of the Odéon, and said to him: "Come and dine with me." They went off to Rousseau's and spent six francs. Marius ate like an ogre. He gave the waiter six sous. At dessert, he said to Courfeyrac. "Have you read the paper? What a fine discourse Audry de Puyraveau delivered!"

He was desperately in love.

After dinner, he said to Courfeyrac: "I will treat you to the play." They went to the Porte-Sainte-Martin to see Frédérick in *l'Auberge des Adrets*. Marius was enormously amused.

At the same time, he had a redoubled attack of shyness. On emerging from the theatre, he refused to look at the garter of a modiste who was stepping across a gutter, and Courfeyrac, who said: "I should like to put that woman in my collection," almost horrified him.

Courfeyrac invited him to breakfast at the Café Voltaire on the following morning. Marius went thither, and ate even more than on the preceding evening. He was very thoughtful and very merry. One would have said that he was taking advantage of every occasion to laugh uproariously. He tenderly embraced some man or other from the provinces, who was presented to him. A circle of students formed round the table, and they spoke of the nonsense paid for by the State which was uttered from the rostrum in the Sorbonne, then the conversation fell upon the faults and omissions in Guicherat's dictionaries and grammars. Marius interrupted the discussion to exclaim: "But it is very agreeable, all the same to have the cross!"

"That's queer!" whispered Courfeyrac to Jean Prouvaire.

"No," responded Prouvaire, "that's serious."

It was serious; in fact, Marius had reached that first violent and charming hour with which grand passions begin.

A glance had wrought all this.

When the mine is charged, when the conflagration is ready, nothing is more simple. A glance is a spark.

It was all over with him. Marius loved a woman. His fate was entering the unknown.

The glance of women resembles certain combinations of wheels, which are tranquil in appearance yet formidable. You pass close to them every day, peaceably and with impunity, and without a suspicion of anything. A moment arrives when you forget that the thing is there. You go and come, dream, speak, laugh. All at once you feel yourself clutched; all is over. The wheels hold you fast, the glance has ensnared you. It has taught you, no matter where or how, by some portion of your thought which was fluttering loose, by some distraction which had attacked you. You are lost. The whole of you passes into it. A chain of mysterious forces takes possession of you. You struggle in vain; no more human succor is possible. You go on falling from gearing to gearing, from agony to agony, from torture to torture, you, your mind, your fortune, your future, your soul; and, according to whether you are in the power of a wicked creature, or of a noble heart, you will not escape from this terrifying machine otherwise than disfigured with shame, or transfigured by passion.

CHAPTER VII

ADVENTURES OF THE LETTER U DELIVERED OVER TO CONJECTURES

ISOLATION, detachment, from everything, pride, independence, the taste of nature, the absence of daily and material activity, the life within himself, the secret conflicts of chastity, a benevolent ecstasy towards all creation, had prepared Marius for this possession which is called passion. His worship of his

father had gradually become a religion, and, like all religions, it had retreated to the depths of his soul. Something was required in the foreground. Love came.

A full month elapsed, during which Marius went every day to the Luxembourg. When the hour arrived, nothing could hold him back.—“He is on duty,” said Courfeyrac. Marius lived in a state of delight. It is certain that the young girl did look at him.

He had finally grown bold, and approached the bench. Still, he did not pass in front of it any more, in obedience to the instinct of timidity and to the instinct of prudence common to lovers. He considered it better not to attract “the attention of the father.” He combined his stations behind the trees and the pedestals of the statues with a profound diplomacy, so that he might be seen as much as possible by the young girl and as little as possible by the old gentleman. Sometimes, he remained motionless by the half-hour together in the shade of a Leonidas or a Spartacus, holding in his hand a book, above which his eyes, gently raised, sought the beautiful girl, and she, on her side, turned her charming profile towards him with a vague smile. While conversing in the most natural and tranquil manner in the world with the white-haired man, she bent upon Marius all the reveries of a virginal and passionate eye. Ancient and time-honored manœuvre which Eve understood from the very first day of the world, and which every woman understands from the very first day of her life! her mouth replied to one, and her glance replied to another.

It must be supposed, that M. Leblanc finally noticed something, for often, when Marius arrived, he rose and began to walk about. He had abandoned their accustomed place and had adopted the bench by the Gladiator, near the other end of the walk, as though with the object of seeing whether Marius would pursue them thither. Marius did not understand, and committed this error. “The father” began to grow inexact, and no longer brought “his daughter” every day. Sometimes, he came alone. Then Marius did not stay. Another blunder.

Marius paid no heed to these symptoms. From the phase of timidity, he had passed, by a natural and fatal progress, to the phase of blindness. His love increased. He dreamed of it every night. And then, an unexpected bliss had happened to him, oil on the fire, a redoubling of the shadows over his eyes. One evening, at dusk, he had found, on the bench which "M. Leblanc and his daughter" had just quitted, a handkerchief, a very simple handkerchief, without embroidery, but white, and fine, and which seemed to him to exhale ineffable perfume. He seized it with rapture. This handkerchief was marked with the letters U. F. Marius knew nothing about this beautiful child,—neither her family name, her Christian name nor her abode; these two letters were the first thing of her that he had gained possession of, adorable initials, upon which he immediately began to construct his scaffolding. U was evidently the Christian name. "Ursule!" he thought, "what a delicious name!" He kissed the handkerchief, drank it in, placed it on his heart, on his flesh, during the day, and at night, laid it beneath his lips that he might fall asleep on it.

"I feel that her whole soul lies within it!" he exclaimed.

This handkerchief belonged to the old gentleman, who had simply let it fall from his pocket.

In the days which followed the finding of this treasure, he only displayed himself at the Luxembourg in the act of kissing the handkerchief and laying it on his heart. The beautiful child understood nothing of all this, and signified it to him by imperceptible signs.

"O modesty!" said Marius.

CHAPTER VIII

THE VETERANS THEMSELVES CAN BE HAPPY

SINCE we have pronounced the word modesty, and since we conceal nothing, we ought to say that once, nevertheless, in spite of his ecstasies, "his Ursule" caused him very serious grief. It was on one of the days when she persuaded M.

Leblanc to leave the bench and stroll along the walk. A brisk May breeze was blowing, which swayed the crests of the plaitain-trees. The father and daughter, arm in arm, had just passed Marius' bench. Marius had risen to his feet behind them, and was following them with his eyes, as was fitting in the desperate situation of his soul.

All at once, a gust of wind, more merry than the rest, and probably charged with performing the affairs of Springtime, swept down from the nursery, flung itself on the alley, enveloped the young girl in a delicious shiver, worthy of Virgil's nymphs, and the fawns of Theocritus, and lifted her dress, the robe more sacred than that of Isis, almost to the height of her garter. A leg of exquisite shape appeared. Marius saw it. He was exasperated and furious.

The young girl had hastily thrust down her dress, with a divinely troubled motion, but he was none the less angry for all that. He was alone in the alley, it is true. But there might have been some one there. And what if there had been some one there! Can any one comprehend such a thing? What she had just done is horrible!—Alas, the poor child had done nothing; there had been but one culprit, the wind; but Marius, in whom quivered the Bartholo who exists in Cherubin, was determined to be vexed, and was jealous of his own shadow. It is thus, in fact, that the harsh and capricious jealousy of the flesh awakens in the human heart, and takes possession of it, even without any right. Moreover, setting aside even that jealousy, the sight of that charming leg had contained nothing agreeable for him; the white stocking of the first woman he chanced to meet would have afforded him more pleasure.

When "his Ursule," after having reached the end of the walk, retraced her steps with M. Leblanc, and passed in front of the bench on which Marius had seated himself once more, Marius darted a sullen and ferocious glance at her. The young girl gave way to that slight straightening up with a backward movement, accompanied by a raising of the eyelids, which signifies: "Well, what is the matter?"

This was "their first quarrel."

Marius had hardly made this scene at her with his eyes, when some one crossed the walk. It was a veteran, very much bent, extremely wrinkled, and pale, in a uniform of the Louis XV. pattern, bearing on his breast the little oval plaque of red cloth, with the crossed swords, the soldier's cross of Saint-Louis, and adorned, in addition, with a coat-sleeve, which had no arm within it, with a silver chin and a wooden leg. Marius thought he perceived that this man had an extremely well satisfied air. It even struck him that the aged cynic, as he hobbled along past him, addressed to him a very fraternal and very merry wink, as though some chance had created an understanding between them, and as though they had shared some piece of good luck together. What did that relie of Mars mean by being so contented? What had passed between that wooden leg and the other? Marius reached a paroxysm of jealousy.—"Perhaps he was there!" he said to himself; "perhaps he saw!"—And he felt a desire to exterminate the veteran.

With the aid of time, all points grow dull. Marius' wrath against "Ursule," just and legitimate as it was, passed off. He finally pardoned her; but this cost him a great effort; he sulked for three days.

Nevertheless, in spite of all this, and because of all this, his passion augmented and grew to madness.

CHAPTER IX

ECLIPSE

THE reader has just seen how Marius discovered, or thought that he discovered, that *She* was named Ursule.

Appetite grows with loving. To know that her name was Ursule was a great deal; it was very little. In three or four weeks, Marius had devoured this bliss. He wanted another. He wanted to know where she lived.

He had committed his first blunder, by falling into the ambush of the bench by the Gladiator. He had committed a second, by not remaining at the Luxembourg when M. Leblanc came thither alone. He now committed a third, and an immense one. He followed "Ursule."

She lived in the Rue de l'Ouest, in the most unfrequented spot, in a new, three-story house, of modest appearance.

From that moment forth, Marius added to his happiness of seeing her at the Luxembourg the happiness of following her home.

His hunger was increasing. He knew her first name, at least, a charming name, a genuine woman's name; he knew where she lived; he wanted to know who she was.

One evening, after he had followed them to their dwelling, and had seen them disappear through the carriage gate, he entered in their train and said boldly to the porter:—

"Is that the gentleman who lives on the first floor, who has just come in?"

"No," replied the porter. "He is the gentleman on the third floor."

Another step gained. This success emboldened Marius.

"On the front?" he asked.

"Parbleu!" said the porter, "the house is only built on the street."

"And what is that gentleman's business?" began Marius again.

"He is a gentleman of property, sir. A very kind man who does good to the unfortunate, though not rich himself."

"What is his name?" resumed Marius.

The porter raised his head and said:—

"Are you a police spy, sir?"

Marius went off quite abashed, but delighted. He was getting on.

"Good," thought he, "I know that her name is Ursule, that she is the daughter of a gentleman who lives on his income, and that she lives there, on the third floor, in the Rue de l'Ouest."

On the following day, M. Leblanc and his daughter made only a very brief stay in the Luxembourg; they went away while it was still broad daylight. Marius followed them to the Rue de l'Ouest, as he had taken up the habit of doing. On arriving at the carriage entrance M. Leblanc made his daughter pass in first, then paused, before crossing the threshold, and stared intently at Marius.

On the next day they did not come to the Luxembourg. Marius waited for them all day in vain.

At nightfall, he went to the Rue de l'Ouest, and saw a light in the windows of the third story.

He walked about beneath the windows until the light was extinguished.

The next day, no one at the Luxembourg. Marius waited all day, then went and did sentinel duty under their windows. This carried him on to ten o'clock in the evening.

His dinner took care of itself. Fever nourishes the sick man, and love the lover.

He spent a week in this manner. M. Leblanc no longer appeared at the Luxembourg.

Marius indulged in melancholy conjectures; he dared not watch the porte cochère during the day; he contented himself with going at night to gaze upon the red light of the windows. At times he saw shadows flit across them, and his heart began to beat.

On the eighth day, when he arrived under the windows, there was no light in them.

"Hello!" he said, "the lamp is not lighted yet. But it is dark. Can they have gone out?" He waited until ten o'clock. Until midnight. Until one in the morning. Not a light appeared in the windows of the third story, and no one entered the house.

He went away in a very gloomy frame of mind.

On the morrow,—for he only existed from morrow to morrow, there was, so to speak, no to-day for him,—on the morrow, he found no one at the Luxembourg; he had expected this. At dusk, he went to the house.

No light in the windows; the shades were drawn; the third floor was totally dark.

Marius rapped at the porte cochère, entered, and said to the porter:—

“The gentleman on the third floor?”

“Has moved away,” replied the porter.

Marius reeled and said feebly:—

“How long ago?”

“Yesterday.”

“Where is he living now?”

“I don’t know anything about it.”

“So he has not left his new address?”

“No.”

And the porter, raising his eyes, recognized Marius.

“Come! So it’s you!” said he; “but you are decidedly a spy then?”

BOOK SEVENTH.—PATRON MINETTE

CHAPTER I

MINES AND MINERS

HUMAN societies all have what is called in theatrical parlance, a *third lower floor*. The social soil is everywhere undermined, sometimes for good, sometimes for evil. These works are superposed one upon the other. There are superior mines and inferior mines. There is a top and a bottom in this obscure sub-soil, which sometimes gives way beneath civilization, and which our indifference and heedlessness trample under foot. The Encyclopedia, in the last century, was a mine that was almost open to the sky. The shades, those sombre hatchers of primitive Christianity, only awaited an opportunity to bring about an explosion under the Cæsars and to inundate the human race with light. For in the sacred shadows there lies latent light. Volcanoes are full of a shadow that is capable of flashing forth. Every form begins by being night. The catacombs, in which the first mass was said, were not alone the cellar of Rome, they were the vaults of the world.

Beneath the social construction, that complicated marvel of a structure, there are excavations of all sorts. There is the religious mine, the philosophical mine, the economic mine, the revolutionary mine. Such and such a pick-axe with the idea, such a pick with ciphers. Such another with wrath. People hail and answer each other from one catacomb to another. Utopias travel about underground, in the pipes. There they branch out in every direction. They sometimes meet, and fraternize there. Jean-Jacques lends his pick to Diogenes, who

lends him his lantern. Sometimes they enter into combat there. Calvin seizes Socinius by the hair. But nothing arrests nor interrupts the tension of all these energies toward the goal, and the vast, simultaneous activity, which goes and comes, mounts, descends, and mounts again in these obscurities, and which immense unknown swarming slowly transforms the top and the bottom and the inside and the outside. Society hardly even suspects this digging which leaves its surface intact and changes its bowels. There are as many different subterranean stages as there are varying works, as there are extractions. What emerges from these deep excavations? The future.

The deeper one goes, the more mysterious are the toilers. The work is good, up to a degree which the social philosophies are able to recognize; beyond that degree it is doubtful and mixed; lower down, it becomes terrible. At a certain depth, the excavations are no longer penetrable by the spirit of civilization, the limit breathable by man has been passed; a beginning of monsters is possible.

The descending scale is a strange one; and each one of the rungs of this ladder corresponds to a stage where philosophy can find foothold, and where one encounters one of these workmen, sometimes divine, sometimes misshapen. Below John Huss, there is Luther; below Luther, there is Descartes; below Descartes, there is Voltaire; below Voltaire, there is Condorcet; below Condorcet, there is Robespierre; below Robespierre, there is Marat; below Marat there is Babeuf. And so it goes on. Lower down, confusedly, at the limit which separates the indistinct from the invisible, one perceives other gloomy men, who perhaps do not exist as yet. The men of yesterday are spectres; those of to-morrow are forms. The eye of the spirit distinguishes them but obscurely. The embryonic work of the future is one of the visions of philosophy.

A world in limbo, in the state of fœtus, what an unheard-of spectre!

Saint-Simon, Owen, Fourier, are there also, in lateral galleries.

Surely, although a divine and invisible chain unknown to themselves, binds together all these subterranean pioneers who, almost always, think themselves isolated, and who are not so, their works vary greatly, and the light of some contrasts with the blaze of others. The first are paradisiacal, the last are tragic. Nevertheless, whatever may be the contrast, all these toilers, from the highest to the most nocturnal, from the wisest to the most foolish, possess one likeness, and this is it: disinterestedness. Marat forgets himself like Jesus. They throw themselves on one side, they omit themselves, they think not of themselves. They have a glance, and that glance seeks the absolute. The first has the whole heavens in his eyes; the last, enigmatical though he may be, has still, beneath his eyelids, the pale beam of the infinite. Venerate the man, whoever he may be, who has this sign—the starry eye.

The shadowy eye is the other sign.

With it, evil commences. Reflect and tremble in the presence of any one who has no glance at all. The social order has its black miners.

There is a point where depth is tantamount to burial, and where light becomes extinct.

Below all these mines which we have just mentioned, below all these galleries, below this whole immense, subterranean, venous system of progress and utopia, much further on in the earth, much lower than Marat, lower than Babeuf, lower, much lower, and without any connection with the upper levels, there lies the last mine. A formidable spot. This is what we have designated as the *le troisième dessous*. It is the grave of shadows. It is the cellar of the blind. *Inferi*.

This communicates with the abyss.

CHAPTER II

THE LOWEST DEPTHS

THERE disinterestedness vanishes. The demon is vaguely outlined; each one is for himself. The *I* in the eyes howls, seeks, fumbles, and gnaws. The social Ugolino is in this gulf.

The wild spectres who roam in this grave, almost beasts, almost phantoms, are not occupied with universal progress; they are ignorant both of the idea and of the word; they take no thought for anything but the satisfaction of their individual desires. They are almost unconscious, and there exists within them a sort of terrible obliteration. They have two mothers, both step-mothers, ignorance and misery. They have a guide, necessity; and for all forms of satisfaction, appetite. They are brutally voracious, that is to say, ferocious, not after the fashion of the tyrant, but after the fashion of the tiger. From suffering these spectres pass to crime; fatal affiliation, dizzy creation, logic of darkness. That which crawls in the social third lower level is no longer complaint stifled by the absolute; it is the protest of matter. Man there becomes a dragon. To be hungry, to be thirsty—that is the point of departure; to be Satan—that is the point reached. From that vault Laeenaire emerges.

We have just seen, in Book Fourth, one of the compartments of the upper mine, of the great political, revolutionary, and philosophical excavation. There, as we have just said, all is pure, noble, dignified, honest. There, assuredly, one might be misled; but error is worthy of veneration there, so thoroughly does it imply heroism. The work there effected, taken as a whole, has a name: Progress.

The moment has now come when we must take a look at other depths, hideous depths. There exists beneath society, we insist upon this point, and there will exist, until that day when ignorance shall be dissipated, the great cavern of evil.

This cavern is below all, and is the foe of all. It is hatred,

without exception. This cavern knows no philosophers; its dagger has never cut a pen. Its blackness has no connection with the sublime blackness of the inkstand. Never have the fingers of night which contract beneath this stifling ceiling, turned the leaves of a book nor unfolded a newspaper. Babeuf is a speculator to Cartouche; Marat is an aristocrat to Schinderhannes. This cavern has for its object the destruction of everything.

Of everything. Including the upper superior mines, which it execrates. It not only undermines, in its hideous swarming, the actual social order; it undermines philosophy, it undermines human thought, it undermines civilization, it undermines revolution, it undermines progress. Its name is simply theft, prostitution, murder, assassination. It is darkness, and it desires chaos. Its vault is formed of ignorance.

All the others, those above it, have but one object—to suppress it. It is to this point that philosophy and progress tend, with all their organs simultaneously, by their amelioration of the real, as well as by their contemplation of the absolute. Destroy the cavern Ignorance and you destroy the lair Crime.

Let us condense, in a few words, a part of what we have just written. The only social peril is darkness.

Humanity is identity. All men are made of the same clay. There is no difference, here below, at least, in predestination. The same shadow in front, the same flesh in the present, the same ashes afterwards. But ignorance, mingled with the human paste, blackens it. This incurable blackness takes possession of the interior of a man and is there converted into evil.

CHAPTER III

BABET, GUEULEMER, CLAQUESOUS, AND MONTPARNASSE

A QUARTETTE of ruffians, Claquesous, Gueulemer, Babet, and Montparnasse governed the third lower floor of Paris, from 1830 to 1835.

Gueulemer was a Hereules of no defined position. For his lair he had the sewer of the Arche-Marion. He was six feet high, his pectoral museles were of marble, his bieeps of brass, his breath was that of a cavern, his torso that of a colossus, his head that of a bird. One thought one beheld the Farnese Hereules clad in duck trousers and a cotton velvet waistcoat. Gueulemer, built after this sculptural fashion, might have subdued monsters; he had found it more expeditious to be one. A low brow, large temples, less than forty years of age, but with crow's-feet, harsh, short hair, cheeks like a brush, a beard like that of a wild boar; the reader can see the man before him. His muscles called for work, his stupidity would have none of it. He was a great, idle force. He was an assassin through coolness. He was thought to be a creole. He had, probably, somewhat to do with Marshal Brune, having been a porter at Avignon in 1815. After this stage, he had turned ruffian.

The diaphaneity of Babet contrasted with the grossness of Gueulemer. Babet was thin and learned. He was transparent but impenetrable. Daylight was visible through his bones, but nothing through his eyes. He declared that he was a chemist. He had been a jack of all trades. He had played in vaudeville at Saint-Mihiel. He was a man of purpose, a fine talker, who underlined his smiles and accentuated his gestures. His occupation consisted in selling, in the open air, plaster busts and portraits of "the head of the State." In addition to this, he extracted teeth. He had exhibited phenomena at fairs, and he had owned a booth with a trumpet and this poster: "Babet, Dental Artist, Member of the Academies, makes physical experiments on metals and metalloids, extracts teeth, undertakes stumps abandoned by his brother practitioners. Price: one tooth, one franc, fifty centimes; two teeth, two francs; three teeth, two francs, fifty. Take advantage of this opportunity." This *Take advantage of this opportunity* meant: Have as many teeth extracted as possible. He had been married and had had children. He did not know what had become of his wife and children. He had lost them as one loses his handker-

chief. Babet read the papers, a striking exception in the world to which he belonged. One day, at the period when he had his family with him in his booth on wheels, he had read in the *Messenger*, that a woman had just given birth to a child, who was doing well, and had a calf's muzzle, and he exclaimed: "There's a fortune! my wife has not the wit to present me with a child like that!"

Later on he had abandoned everything, in order to "undertake Paris." This was his expression.

Who was Claquesous? He was night. He waited until the sky was daubed with black, before he showed himself. At nightfall he emerged from the hole whither he returned before daylight. Where was this hole? No one knew. He only addressed his accomplices in the most absolute darkness, and with his back turned to them. Was his name Claquesous? Certainly not. If a candle was brought, he put on a mask. He was a ventriloquist. Babet said: "Claquesous is a nocturne for two voices." Claquesous was vague, terrible, and a roamer. No one was sure whether he had a name, Claquesous being a sobriquet; none was sure that he had a voice, as his stomach spoke more frequently than his voice; no one was sure that he had a face, as he was never seen without his mask. He disappeared as though he had vanished into thin air; when he appeared, it was as though he sprang from the earth.

A lugubrious being was Montparnasse. Montparnasse was a child; less than twenty years of age, with a handsome face, lips like cherries, charming black hair, the brilliant light of springtime in his eyes; he had all vices and aspired to all crimes.

The digestion of evil aroused in him an appetite for worse. It was the street boy turned pickpocket, and a pickpocket turned garroter. He was genteel, effeminate, graceful, robust, sluggish, ferocious. The rim of his hat was curled up on the left side, in order to make room for a tuft of hair, after the style of 1829. He lived by robbery with violence. His coat was of the best cut, but threadbare. Montparnasse was a fashion-plate in misery and given to the commission of mur-

ders. The cause of all this youth's crimes was the desire to be well-dressed. The first grisette who had said to him: "You are handsome!" had cast the stain of darkness into his heart, and had made a Cain of this Abel. Finding that he was handsome, he desired to be elegant: now, the height of elegance is idleness; idleness in a poor man means crime. Few prowlers were so dreaded as Montparnasse. At eighteen, he had already numerous corpses in his past. More than one passer-by lay with outstretched arms in the presence of this wretch, with his face in a pool of blood. Curled, pomaded, with laced waist, the hips of a woman, the bust of a Prussian officer, the murmur of admiration from the boulevard wenches surrounding him, his cravat knowingly tied, a bludgeon in his pocket, a flower in his buttonhole; such was this dandy of the sepulchre.

CHAPTER IV

COMPOSITION OF THE TROUPE

THESE four ruffians formed a sort of Proteus, winding like a serpent among the police, and striving to escape Vidoeq's indiscreet glances "under divers forms, tree, flame, fountain," lending each other their names and their traps, hiding in their own shadows, boxes with secret compartments and refuges for each other, stripping off their personalities, as one removes his false nose at a masked ball, sometimes simplifying matters to the point of consisting of but one individual, sometimes multiplying themselves to such a point that Coeo-Latour himself took them for a whole throng.

These four men were not four men; they were a sort of mysterious robber with four heads, operating on a grand scale on Paris; they were that monstrous polyp of evil, which inhabits the crypt of society.

Thanks to their ramifications, and to the network underlying their relations, Babet, Gueulemer, Claquesous, and Montparnasse were charged with the general enterprise of the

ambushes of the department of the Seine. The inventors of ideas of that nature, men with nocturnal imaginations, applied to them to have their ideas executed. They furnished the canvas to the four rascals, and the latter undertook the preparation of the scenery. They labored at the stage setting. They were always in a condition to lend a force proportioned and suitable to all crimes which demanded a lift of the shoulder, and which were sufficiently lucrative. When a crime was in quest of arms, they under-let their accomplices. They kept a troupe of actors of the shadows at the disposition of all underground tragedies.

They were in the habit of assembling at nightfall, the hour when they woke up, on the plains which adjoin the Salpêtrière. There they held their conferences. They had twelve black hours before them; they regulated their employment accordingly.

Patron-Minette.—such was the name which was bestowed in the subterranean circulation on the association of these four men. In the fantastic, ancient, popular parlance, which is vanishing day by day, *Patron-Minette* signifies the morning, the same as *entre chien et loup*—between dog and wolf—signifies the evening. This appellation, *Patron-Minette*, was probably derived from the hour at which their work ended, the dawn being the vanishing moment for phantoms and for the separation of ruffians. These four men were known under this title. When the President of the Assizes visited Lacenaire in his prison, and questioned him concerning a misdeed which Lacenaire denied, “Who did it?” demanded the President. Lacenaire made this response, enigmatical so far as the magistrate was concerned, but clear to the police: “Perhaps it was *Patron-Minette*.”

A piece can sometimes be divined on the enunciation of the personages; in the same manner a band can almost be judged from the list of ruffians composing it. Here are the appellations to which the principal members of *Patron-Minette* answered,—for the names have survived in special memoirs.

Panchaud, alias Printanier, alias Bigrenaille.

Brujon. [There was a Brujon dynasty; we cannot refrain from interpolating this word.]

Boulatruelle, the road-mender already introduced.

Laveuve.

Finistère.

Homère-Hogu, a negro.

Mardisoir. (Tuesday evening.)

Dépêche. (Make haste.)

Faunteroy, alias Bouquetière (the Flower Girl).

Glorieux, a discharged convict.

Barrecarrosse (Stop-carriage), called Monsieur Dupont.

L'Esplanade-du-Sud.

Poussagrive.

Carmagnolet.

Kruideniers, called Bizarro.

Mangedentelle. (Lace-eater.)

Les-pieds-en-l'Air. (Feet in the air.)

Demi-Liard, called Deux-Milliards.

Etc., etc.

We pass over some, and not the worst of them. These names have faces attached. They do not express merely beings, but species. Each one of these names corresponds to a variety of those misshapen fungi from the under side of civilization.

Those beings, who were not very lavish with their countenances, were not among the men whom one sees passing along the streets. Fatigued by the wild nights which they passed, they went off by day to sleep, sometimes in the lime-kilns, sometimes in the abandoned quarries of Montmatre or Montrouge, sometimes in the sewers. They ran to earth.

What became of these men? They still exist. They have always existed. Horace speaks of them: *Ambubaiarum collegia, pharmacopola, mendici, mimæ*; and so long as society remains what it is, they will remain what they are. Beneath the obscure roof of their cavern, they are continually born again from the social ooze. They return, spectres, but always identical; only, they no longer bear the same names and they

are no longer in the same skins. The individuals extirpated, the tribe subsists.

They always have the same faculties. From the vagrant to the tramp, the race is maintained in its purity. They divine purses in pockets, they scent out watches in fobs. Gold and silver possess an odor for them. There exist ingenuous bourgeois, of whom it might be said, that they have a "stealable" air. These men patiently pursue these bourgeois. They experience the quivers of a spider at the passage of a stranger or of a man from the country.

These men are terrible, when one encounters them, or catches a glimpse of them, towards midnight, on a deserted boulevard. They do not seem to be men, but forms composed of living mists; one would say that they habitually constitute one mass with the shadows, that they are in no wise distinct from them, that they possess no other soul than the darkness, and that it is only momentarily and for the purpose of living for a few minutes a monstrous life, that they have separated from the night.

What is necessary to cause these spectres to vanish? Light. Light in floods. Not a single bat can resist the dawn. Light up society from below.

BOOK EIGHTH.—THE WICKED POOR MAN

CHAPTER I

MARIUS, WHILE SEEKING A GIRL IN A BONNET, ENCOUNTERS A
MAN IN A CAP

SUMMER passed, then the autumn; winter came. Neither M. Leblanc nor the young girl had again set foot in the Luxembourg garden. Thenceforth, Marius had but one thought,—to gaze once more on that sweet and adorable face. He sought constantly, he sought everywhere; he found nothing. He was no longer Marius, the enthusiastic dreamer, the firm, resolute, ardent man, the bold defier of fate, the brain which erected future on future, the young spirit encumbered with plans, with projects, with pride, with ideas and wishes; he was a lost dog. He fell into a black melancholy. All was over. Work disgusted him, walking tired him. Vast nature, formerly so filled with forms, lights, voices, counsels, perspectives, horizons, teachings, now lay empty before him. It seemed to him that everything had disappeared.

He thought incessantly, for he could not do otherwise; but he no longer took pleasure in his thoughts. To everything that they proposed to him in a whisper, he replied in his darkness: "What is the use?"

He heaped a hundred reproaches on himself. "Why did I follow her? I was so happy at the mere sight of her! She looked at me; was not that immense? She had the air of loving me. Was not that everything? I wished to have, what? There was nothing after that. I have been absurd. It is my own fault." etc., etc. Courfeyrac, to whom he confided nothing,—it was his nature,—but who made some little guess

at everything,—that was his nature,—had begun by congratulating him on being in love, though he was amazed at it; then, seeing Marius fall into this melancholy state, he ended by saying to him: “I see that you have been simply an animal. Here, come to the Chaumière.”

Once, having confidence in a fine September sun, Marius had allowed himself to be taken to the ball at Seeaux by Courfeyrac, Bossuet, and Grantaire, hoping, what a dream! that he might, perhaps, find her there. Of course he did not see the one he sought.—“But this is the place, all the same, where all lost women are found,” grumbled Grantaire in an aside. Marius left his friends at the ball and returned home on foot, alone, through the night, weary, feverish, with sad and troubled eyes, stunned by the noise and dust of the merry wagons filled with singing creatures on their way home from the feast, which passed close to him, as he, in his discouragement, breathed in the acrid scent of the walnut-trees, along the road, in order to refresh his head.

He took to living more and more alone, utterly overwhelmed, wholly given up to his inward anguish, going and coming in his pain like the wolf in the trap, seeking the absent one everywhere, stupefied by love.

On another occasion, he had an encounter which produced on him a singular effect. He met, in the narrow streets in the vicinity of the Boulevard des Invalides, a man dressed like a workingman and wearing a cap with a long visor, which allowed a glimpse of locks of very white hair. Marius was struck with the beauty of this white hair, and scrutinized the man, who was walking slowly and as though absorbed in painful meditation. Strange to say, he thought that he recognized M. Leblanc. The hair was the same, also the profile, so far as the cap permitted a view of it, the mien identical, only more depressed. But why these workingman’s clothes? What was the meaning of this? What signified that disguise? Marius was greatly astonished. When he recovered himself, his first impulse was to follow the man; who knows whether he did not hold at last the clue which he was seeking? In any case,

he must see the man near at hand, and clear up the mystery. But the idea occurred to him too late, the man was no longer there. He had turned into some little side street, and Marius could not find him. This encounter occupied his mind for three days and then was effaced. "After all," he said to himself, "it was probably only a resemblance."

CHAPTER II

TREASURE TROVE

MARIUS had not left the Gorbeau house. He paid no attention to any one there.

At that epoch, to tell the truth, there were no other inhabitants in the house, except himself and those Jondrettes whose rent he had once paid, without, moreover, ever having spoken to either father, mother, or daughters. The other lodgers had moved away or had died, or had been turned out in default of payment.

One day during that winter, the sun had shown itself a little in the afternoon, but it was the 2d of February, that ancient Candlemas day whose treacherous sun, the precursor of a six weeks' cold spell, inspired Mathieu Laensberg with these two lines, which have with justice remained classic:—

Qu'il luise ou qu'il luiserne,
L'ours rentre dans en sa caverne.¹

Marius had just emerged from his: night was falling. It was the hour for his dinner: for he had been obliged to take to dining again, alas! oh, infirmities of ideal passions!

He had just crossed his threshold, where Ma'am Bougon was sweeping at the moment, as she uttered this memorable monologue:—

"What is there that is cheap now? Everything is dear.

¹Whether the sun shines brightly or dim, the bear returns to his cave.

There is nothing in the world that is cheap except trouble; you can get that for nothing, the trouble of the world!"

Marius slowly ascended the boulevard towards the barrier, in order to reach the Rue Saint-Jacques. He was walking along with drooping head.

All at once, he felt some one elbow him in the dusk; he wheeled round, and saw two young girls clad in rags, the one tall and slim, the other a little shorter, who were passing rapidly, all out of breath, in terror, and with the appearance of fleeing; they had been coming to meet him, had not seen him, and had jostled him as they passed. Through the twilight, Marius could distinguish their livid faces, their wild heads, their dishevelled hair, their hideous bonnets, their ragged petticoats, and their bare feet. They were talking as they ran. The taller said in a very low voice:—

"The bobbies have come. They came near nabbing me at the half-circle." The other answered: "I saw them. I bolted, bolted, bolted!"

Through this repulsive slang, Marius understood that gendarmes or the police had come near apprehending these two children, and that the latter had escaped.

They plunged among the trees of the boulevard behind him, and there created, for a few minutes, in the gloom, a sort of vague white spot, then disappeared.

Marius had halted for a moment.

He was about to pursue his way, when his eye lighted on a little grayish package lying on the ground at his feet. He stooped and picked it up. It was a sort of envelope which appeared to contain papers.

"Good," he said to himself, "those unhappy girls dropped it."

He retraced his steps, he called, he did not find them; he reflected that they must already be far away, put the package in his pocket, and went off to dine.

On the way, he saw in an alley of the Rue Mouffetard, a child's coffin, covered with a black cloth, resting on three

chairs, and illuminated by a candle. The two girls of the twilight recurred to his mind.

“Poor mothers!” he thought. “There is one thing sadder than to see one’s children die; it is to see them leading an evil life.”

Then those shadows which had varied his melancholy vanished from his thoughts, and he fell back once more into his habitual preoccupations. He fell to thinking once more of his six months of love and happiness in the open air and the broad daylight, beneath the beautiful trees of Luxembourg.

“How gloomy my life has become!” he said to himself. “Young girls are always appearing to me, only formerly they were angels and now they are ghouls.”

CHAPTER III

QUADRIFRONS

THAT evening, as he was undressing preparatory to going to bed, his hand came in contact, in the pocket of his coat, with the packet which he had picked up on the boulevard. He had forgotten it. He thought that it would be well to open it, and that this package might possibly contain the address of the young girls, if it really belonged to them, and, in any case, the information necessary to a restitution to the person who had lost it.

He opened the envelope.

It was not sealed, and contained four letters, also unsealed. They bore addresses.

All four exhaled a horrible odor of tobacco.

The first was addressed: “*To Madame, Madame la Marquise de Grucheray, the place opposite the Chamber of Deputies, No.—*”

Marius said to himself, that he should probably find in it the information which he sought, and that, moreover, the

letter being open, it was probable that it could be read without impropriety.

It was conceived as follows:—

MADAME LA MARQUISE: The virtue of clemency and piety is that which most closely unites society. Turn your christian spirit and cast a look of compassion on this unfortunate Spanish victim of loyalty and attachment to the sacred cause of legitimacy, who has given with his blood, consecrated his fortune, evverything, to defend that cause, and to-day finds himself in the greatest miserry. He doubts not that your honorable person will grant succor to preserve an existence extremely painful for a military man of education and honor full of wounds, counts in advance on the humanity which animates you and on the interest which Madame la Marquise bears to a nation so unfortunate. Their prayer will not be in vain, and their gratitude will preserve theirs charming souvenir.

My respectful sentiments, with which I have the honor to be
Madame,

DON ALVARÈS, Spanish Captain of Cavalry, a royalist who has take refuge in France, who finds himself on travells for his country, and the resources are lacking him to continue his travells.

No address was joined to the signature. Marius hoped to find the address in the second letter, whose superscription read: *À Madame, Madame la Comtesse de Montvernet, Rue Cassette, No. 9.* This is what Marius read in it:—

MADAME LA COMTESSE: It is an unhappy mother of a family of six children the last of which is only eight months old. I sick since my last confinement, abandoned by my husband five months ago, haveing no resources in the world the most frightful indigance.

In the hope of Madame la Comtesse, she has the honor to be,
Madame, with profound respect,

MISTRESS BALLZARD.

Marius turned to the third letter, which was a petition like the preceding; he read:—

MONSIEUR PABOURGEOT, Elector, wholesale stocking merchant,
Rue Saint-Denis on the corner of the Rue aux Fers.

I permit myself to address you this letter to beg you to grant me the pretious favor of your simpaties and to interest yourself

in a man of letters who has just sent a drama to the Théâtre-Français. The subject is historical, and the action takes place in Auvergne in the time of the Empire; the style, I think, is natural, laconic, and may have some merit. There are comets to be sung in four places. The comic, the serious, the unexpected, are mingled in a variety of characters, and a tinge of romanticism lightly spread through all the intrigue which proceeds mysteriously, and ends, after striking altarations, in the midst of many beautiful strokes of brilliant scenes.

My principal object is to satisfy the desire which progressively animates the man of our century, that is to say, the fashion, that capricious and bizarre weathervane which changes at almost every new wind.

In spite of these qualities I have reason to fear that jealousy, the egotism of privileged authors, may obtain my exclusion from the theatre, for I am not ignorant of the mortifications with which new-comers are treated.

Monsiuer Pabourgeot, your just reputation as an enlightened protector of men of letters emboldens me to send you my daughter who will explain our indignant situation to you, lacking bread and fire in this wynter season. When I say to you that I beg you to accept the dedication of my drama which I desire to make to you and of all those that I shall make, is to prove to you how great is my ambition to have the honor of sheltering myself under your protection, and of adorning my writings with your name. If you deign to honor me with the most modest offering, I shall immediately occupy myself in making a piese of verse to pay you my tribute of gratitude. Which I shall endeavor to render this piese as perfect as possible, will be sent to you before it is inserted at the beginning of the drama and delivered on the stage.

To Monsieur

and Madame PABOURGEOT,

My most respectful complements,

GENFLOT, man of letters.

P. S. Even if it is only forty sous.

Excuse me for sending my daughter and not presenting myself, but sad motives connected with the toilet do not permit me, alas! to go out.

Finally, Marius opened the fourth letter. The address ran: *To the benevolent Gentleman of the church of Saint-Jacques-du-haut-Pas.* It contained the following lines:—

BENEVOLENT MAN: If you deign to accompany my daughter, you will behold a misserable calamity, and I will show you my certificates.

At the aspect of these writings your generous soul will be moved with a sentiment of obvious benevolence, for true philosophers always feel lively emotions.

Admit, compassionate man, that it is necessary to suffer the most cruel need, and that it is very painful, for the sake of obtaining a little relief, to get oneself attested by the authorities as though one were not free to suffer and to die of inanition while waiting to have our misery relieved. Destinies are very fatal for several and too prodigal or too protecting for others.

I await your presence or your offering, if you deign to make one, and I beseech you to accept the respectful sentiments with which I have the honor to be,

truly magnanimous man,
your very humble
and very obedient servant,

P. FABANTOU, dramatic artist.

After perusing these four letters, Marius did not find himself much further advanced than before.

In the first place, not one of the signers gave his address.

Then, they seemed to come from four different individuals, Don Alvères, Mistress Balizard, the poet Genflot, and dramatic artist Fabantou; but the singular thing about these letters was, that all four were written by the same hand.

What conclusion was to be drawn from this, except that they all come from the same person?

Moreover, and this rendered the conjecture all the more probable, the coarse and yellow paper was the same in all four, the odor of tobacco was the same, and, although an attempt had been made to vary the style, the same orthographical faults were reproduced with the greatest tranquillity, and the man of letters Genflot was no more exempt from them than the Spanish captain.

It was waste of trouble to try to solve this petty mystery. Had it not been a chance find, it would have borne the air of a mystification. Marius was too melancholy to take even a chance pleasantry well, and to lend himself to a game which the pavement of the street seemed desirous of playing with him. It seemed to him that he was playing the part of the blind man in blind man's buff between the four letters, and that they were making sport of him.

Nothing, however, indicated that these letters belonged to the two young girls whom Marius had met on the boulevard. After all, they were evidently papers of no value. Marius

replaced them in their envelope, flung the whole into a corner and went to bed. About seven o'clock in the morning, he had just risen and breakfasted, and was trying to settle down to work, when there came a soft knock at his door.

As he owned nothing, he never locked his door, unless occasionally, though very rarely, when he was engaged in some pressing work. Even when absent he left his key in the lock. "You will be robbed," said Ma'am Bougon. "Of what?" said Marius. The truth is, however, that he had, one day, been robbed of an old pair of boots, to the great triumph of Ma'am Bougon.

There came a second knock, as gentle as the first.

"Come in," said Marius.

The door opened.

"What do you want, Ma'am Bougon?" asked Marius, without raising his eyes from the books and manuscripts on his table.

A voice which did not belong to Ma'am Bougon replied:—

"Excuse me, sir—"

It was a dull, broken, hoarse, strangled voice, the voice of an old man, roughened with brandy and liquor.

Marius turned round hastily, and beheld a young girl.

CHAPTER IV

A ROSE IN MISERY

A VERY young girl was standing in the half-open door. The dormer window of the garret, through which the light fell, was precisely opposite the door, and illuminated the figure with a wan light. She was a frail, emaciated, slender creature; there was nothing but a chemise and a petticoat upon that chilled and shivering nakedness. Her girdle was a string, her head ribbon a string, her pointed shoulders emerged from her chemise, a blond and lymphatic pallor, earth-colored collar-bones, red hands, a half-open and de-

graded mouth, missing teeth, dull, bold, base eyes; she had the form of a young girl who has missed her youth, and the look of a corrupt old woman; fifty years mingled with fifteen; one of those beings which are both feeble and horrible, and which cause those to shudder whom they do not cause to weep.

Marius had risen, and was staring in a sort of stupor at this being, who was almost like the forms of the shadows which traverse dreams.

The most heart-breaking thing of all was, that this young girl had not come into the world to be homely. In her early childhood she must even have been pretty. The grace of her age was still struggling against the hideous, premature decrepitude of debauchery and poverty. The remains of beauty were dying away in that face of sixteen, like the pale sunlight which is extinguished under hideous clouds at dawn on a winter's day.

That face was not wholly unknown to Marius. He thought he remembered having seen it somewhere.

"What do you wish, Mademoiselle?" he asked.

The young girl replied in her voice of a drunken convict:—

"Here is a letter for you, Monsieur Marius."

She called Marius by his name; he could not doubt that he was the person whom she wanted; but who was this girl? How did she know his name?

Without waiting for him to tell her to advance, she entered. She entered resolutely, staring, with a sort of assurance that made the heart bleed, at the whole room and the unmade bed. Her feet were bare. Large holes in her petticoat permitted glimpses of her long legs and her thin knees. She was shivering.

She held a letter in her hand, which she presented to Marius.

Marius, as he opened the letter, noticed that the enormous wafer which sealed it was still moist. The message could not have come from a distance. He read:—

MY AMIABLE NEIGHBOR, YOUNG MAN: I have learned of your goodness to me, that you paid my rent six months ago. I bless

you, young man. My eldest daughter will tell you that we have been without a morsel of bread for two days, four persons and my spouse ill. If I am not deceived in my opinion, I think I may hope that your generous heart will melt at this statement and the desire will subjugate you to be propitious to me by daigning to lavish on me a slight favor.

I am with the distinguished consideration which is due to the benefactors of humanity,—

JONDRETTE.

P. S. My eldest daughter will await your orders, dear Monsieur Marius.

This letter, coming in the very midst of the mysterious adventure which had occupied Marius' thoughts ever since the preceding evening, was like a candle in a cellar. All was suddenly illuminated.

This letter came from the same place as the other four. There was the same writing, the same style, the same orthography, the same paper, the same odor of tobacco.

There were five missives, five histories, five signatures, and a single signer. The Spanish Captain Don Alvarés, the unhappy Mistress Balizard, the dramatic poet Genflot, the old comedian Fabantou, were all four named Jondrette, if, indeed, Jondrette himself were named Jondrette.

Marius had lived in the house for a tolerably long time, and he had had, as we have said, but very rare occasion to see, to even catch a glimpse of, his extremely mean neighbors. His mind was elsewhere, and where the mind is, there the eyes are also. He had been obliged more than once to pass the Jondrettes in the corridor or on the stairs; but they were mere forms to him; he had paid so little heed to them, that, on the preceding evening, he had jostled the Jondrette girls on the boulevard, without recognizing them, for it had evidently been they, and it was with great difficulty that the one who had just entered his room had awakened in him, in spite of disgust and pity, a vague recollection of having met her elsewhere.

Now he saw everything clearly. He understood that his neighbor Jondrette, in his distress, exercised the industry of speculating on the charity of benevolent persons, that he pro-

cured addresses, and that he wrote under feigned names to people whom he judged to be wealthy and compassionate, letters which his daughters delivered at their risk and peril, for this father had come to such a pass, that he risked his daughters; he was playing a game with fate, and he used them as the stake. Marius understood that probably, judging from their flight on the evening before, from their breathless condition, from their terror and from the words of slang which he had overheard, these unfortunate creatures were plying some inexplicably sad profession, and that the result of the whole was, in the midst of human society, as it is now constituted, two miserable beings who were neither girls nor women, a species of impure and innocent monsters produced by misery.

Sad creatures, without name, or sex, or age, to whom neither good nor evil were any longer possible, and who, on emerging from childhood, have already nothing in this world, neither liberty, nor virtue, nor responsibility. Souls which blossomed out yesterday, and are faded to-day, like those flowers let fall in the streets, which are soiled with every sort of mire, while waiting for some wheel to crush them. Nevertheless, while Marius bent a pained and astonished gaze on her, the young girl was wandering back and forth in the garret with the audacity of a spectre. She kicked about, without troubling herself as to her nakedness. Occasionally her chemise, which was untied and torn, fell almost to her waist. She moved the chairs about, she disarranged the toilet articles which stood on the commode, she handled Marius' clothes, she rummaged about to see what there was in the corners.

"Hullo!" said she, "you have a mirror!"

And she hummed scraps of vaudevilles, as though she had been alone, frolicsome refrains which her hoarse and guttural voice rendered lugubrious.

An indescribable constraint, weariness, and humiliation were perceptible beneath this hardihood. Effrontery is a disgrace.

Nothing could be more melancholy than to see her sport



"HULLO!" SAID SHE, "YOU HAVE A MIRROR!"



about the room, and, so to speak, flit with the movements of a bird which is frightened by the daylight, or which has broken its wing. One felt that under other conditions of education and destiny, the gay and over-free mien of this young girl might have turned out sweet and charming. Never, even among animals, does the creature born to be a dove change into an osprey. That is only to be seen among men.

Marius reflected, and allowed her to have her way.

She approached the table.

“Ah!” said she, “books!”

A flash pierced her glassy eye. She resumed, and her accent expressed the happiness which she felt in boasting of something, to which no human creature is insensible:—

“I know how to read, I do!”

She eagerly seized a book which lay open on the table, and read with tolerable fluency:—

“—General Bauduin received orders to take the château of Hougomont which stands in the middle of the plain of Waterloo, with five battalions of his brigade.”

She paused.

“Ah! Waterloo! I know about that. It was a battle long ago. My father was there. My father has served in the armies. We are fine Bonapartists in our house, that we are! Waterloo was against the English.”

She laid down the book, caught up a pen, and exclaimed:—

“And I know how to write, too!”

She dipped her pen in the ink, and turning to Marius:—

“Do you want to see? Look here, I’m going to write a word to show you.”

And before he had time to answer, she wrote on a sheet of white paper, which lay in the middle of the table: “The bobbies are here.”

Then throwing down the pen:—

“There are no faults of orthography. You can look. We have received an education, my sister and I. We have not always been as we are now. We were not made—”

Here she paused, fixed her dull eyes on Marius, and burst

out laughing, saying, with an intonation which contained every form of anguish, stifled by every form of cynicism:—

“Bah!”

And she began to hum these words to a gay air:—

“J’ai faim, mon père.
Pas de fricot.
J’ai froid, ma mère.
Pas de tricot.
Grelotte,
Lolotte!
Sanglote,
Jacquot!”

“I am hungry, father.
I have no food.
I am cold, mother.
I have no clothes.
Lolotte!
Shiver,
Sob,
Jacquot!”

She had hardly finished this couplet, when she exclaimed:—

“Do you ever go to the play, Monsieur Marius? I do. I have a little brother who is a friend of the artists, and who gives me tickets sometimes. But I don’t like the benches in the galleries. One is cramped and uncomfortable there. There are rough people there sometimes; and people who smell bad.”

Then she scrutinized Marius, assumed a singular air and said:—

“Do you know, Mr. Marius, that you are a very handsome fellow?”

And at the same moment the same idea occurred to them both, and made her smile and him blush. She stepped up to him, and laid her hand on his shoulder: “You pay no heed to me, but I know you, Mr. Marius. I meet you here on the staircase, and then I often see you going to a person named Father Mabeuf who lives in the direction of Austerlitz, sometimes when I have been strolling in that quarter. It is very becoming to you to have your hair tumbled thus.”

She tried to render her voice soft, but only succeeded in making it very deep. A portion of her words was lost in the transit from her larynx to her lips, as though on a piano where some notes are missing.

Marius had retreated gently.

"Mademoiselle," said he, with his cool gravity, "I have here a package which belongs to you, I think. Permit me to return it to you."

And he held out the envelope containing the four letters.

She clapped her hands and exclaimed:—

"We have been looking everywhere for that!"

Then she eagerly seized the package and opened the envelope, saying as she did so:—

"Dieu de Dieu! how my sister and I have hunted! And it was you who found it! On the boulevard, was it not? It must have been on the boulevard? You see, we let it fall when we were running. It was that brat of a sister of mine who was so stupid. When we got home, we could not find it anywhere. As we did not wish to be beaten, as that is useless, as that is entirely useless, as that is absolutely useless, we said that we had carried the letters to the proper persons, and that they had said to us: 'Nix.' So here they are, those poor letters! And how did you find out that they belonged to me? Ah! yes, the writing. So it was you that we jostled as we passed last night. We couldn't see. I said to my sister: 'Is it a gentleman?' My sister said to me: 'I think it is a gentleman.'"

In the meanwhile, she had unfolded the petition addressed to "the benevolent gentleman of the church of Saint-Jacques-du-Haut-Pas."

"Here!" said she, "this is for that old fellow who goes to mass. By the way, this is his hour. I'll go and carry it to him. Perhaps he will give us something to breakfast on."

Then she began to laugh again, and added:—

"Do you know what it will mean if we get a breakfast to-day? It will mean that we shall have had our breakfast of the day before yesterday, our breakfast of yesterday, our dinner of to-day, and all that at once, and this morning. Come! Par-bleu! if you are not satisfied, dogs, burst!"

This reminded Marins of the wretched girl's errand to himself. He fumbled in his waistcoat pocket, and found nothing there.

The young girl went on, and seemed to have no consciousness of Marius' presence.

"I often go off in the evening. Sometimes I don't come home again. Last winter, before we came here, we lived under the arches of the bridges. We huddled together to keep from freezing. My little sister cried. How melancholy the water is! When I thought of drowning myself, I said to myself: 'No, it's too cold.' I go out alone, whenever I choose. I sometimes sleep in the ditches. Do you know, at night, when I walk along the boulevard, I see the trees like forks, I see houses, all black and as big as Notre Dame, I fancy that the white walls are the river, I say to myself: 'Why, there's water there!' The stars are like the lamps in illuminations, one would say that they smoked and that the wind blew them out, I am bewildered, as though horses were breathing in my ears; although it is night, I hear hand-organs and spinning-machines, and I don't know what all. I think people are flinging stones at me, I flee without knowing whither, everything whirls and whirls. You feel very queer when you have had no food."

And then she stared at him with a bewildered air.

By dint of searching and ransacking his pockets, Marius had finally collected five francs sixteen sous. This was all he owned in the world for the moment. "At all events," he thought, "there is my dinner for to-day, and to-morrow we will see." He kept the sixteen sous, and handed the five francs to the young girl.

She seized the coin.

"Good!" said she, "the sun is shining!"

And, as though the sun had possessed the property of melting the avalanches of slang in her brain, she went on:—

"Five francs! the shiner! a monarch! in this hole! Ain't this fine! You're a jolly thief! I'm your humble servant! Bravo for the good fellows! Two days' wine! and meat! and stew! we'll have a royal feast! and a good fill!"

She pulled her chemise up on her shoulders, made a low bow to Marius, then a familiar sign with her hand, and went towards the door, saying:—

“Good morning, sir. It’s all right. I’ll go and find my old man.”

As she passed, she caught sight of a dry crust of bread on the commode, which was moulding there amid the dust; she flung herself upon it and bit into it, muttering:—

“That’s good! it’s hard! it breaks my teeth!”

Then she departed.

CHAPTER V

A PROVIDENTIAL PEEP-HOLE

MARIUS had lived for five years in poverty, in destitution, even in distress, but he now perceived that he had not known real misery. True misery he had but just had a view of. It was its spectre which had just passed before his eyes. In fact, he who has only beheld the misery of man has seen nothing; the misery of woman is what he must see; he who has seen only the misery of woman has seen nothing; he must see the misery of the child.

When a man has reached his last extremity, he has reached his last resources at the same time. Woe to the defenceless beings who surround him! Work, wages, bread, fire, courage, good will, all fail him simultaneously. The light of day seems extinguished without, the moral light within; in these shadows man encounters the feebleness of the woman and the child, and bends them violently to ignominy.

Then all horrors become possible. Despair is surrounded with fragile partitions which all open on either vice or crime.

Health, youth, honor, all the shy delicacies of the young body, the heart, virginity, modesty, that epidermis of the soul, are manipulated in sinister wise by that fumbling which seeks resources, which encounters opprobrium, and which accommodates itself to it. Fathers, mothers, children, brothers, sisters, men, women, daughters, adhere and become incorporated,

almost like a mineral formation, in that dusky promiscuousness of sexes, relationships, ages, infamies, and innocences. They crouch, back to back, in a sort of hut of fate. They exchange woe-begone glances. Oh, the unfortunate wretches! How pale they are! How cold they are! It seems as though they dwelt in a planet much further from the sun than ours.

This young girl was to Marius a sort of messenger from the realm of sad shadows. She revealed to him a hideous side of the night.

Marius almost reproached himself for the preoccupations of revery and passion which had prevented his bestowing a glance on his neighbors up to that day. The payment of their rent had been a mechanical movement, which any one would have yielded to; but he, Marius, should have done better than that. What! only a wall separated him from those abandoned beings who lived gropingly in the dark outside the pale of the rest of the world, he was elbow to elbow with them, he was, in some sort, the last link of the human race which they touched, he heard them live, or rather, rattle in the death agony beside him, and he paid no heed to them! Every day, every instant, he heard them walking on the other side of the wall, he heard them go, and come, and speak, and he did not even lend an ear! And groans lay in those words, and he did not even listen to them, his thoughts were elsewhere, given up to dreams, to impossible radiances, to loves in the air, to follies; and all the while, human creatures, his brothers in Jesus Christ, his brothers in the people, were agonizing in vain beside him! He even formed a part of their misfortune, and he aggravated it. For if they had had another neighbor who was less chimerical and more attentive, any ordinary and charitable man, evidently their indigence would have been noticed, their signals of distress would have been perceived, and they would have been taken hold of and rescued! They appeared very corrupt and very depraved, no doubt, very vile, very odious even; but those who fall without becoming degraded are rare; besides, there is a point where the unfortunate and the in-

famous unite and are confounded in a single word, a fatal word, *the miserable*; whose fault is this? And then should not the charity be all the more profound, in proportion as the fall is great?

While reading himself this moral lesson, for there were occasions on which Marius, like all truly honest hearts, was his own pedagogue and scolded himself more than he deserved, he stared at the wall which separated him from the Jondrettes, as though he were able to make his gaze, full of pity, penetrate that partition and warm these wretched people. The wall was a thin layer of plaster upheld by lathes and beams, and, as the reader had just learned, it allowed the sound of voices and words to be clearly distinguished. Only a man as dreamy as Marius could have failed to perceive this long before. There was no paper pasted on the wall, either on the side of the Jondrettes or on that of Marius; the coarse construction was visible in its nakedness. Marius examined the partition, almost unconsciously; sometimes revery examines, observes, and scrutinizes as thought would. All at once he sprang up; he had just perceived, near the top, close to the ceiling, a triangular hole, which resulted from the space between three lathes. The plaster, which should have filled this cavity was missing, and by mounting on the commode, a view could be had through this aperture into the Jondrettes' attic. Commiseration has, and should have, its curiosity. This aperture formed a sort of peep-hole. It is permissible to gaze at misfortune like a traitor in order to succor it.¹

"Let us get some little idea of what these people are like," thought Marius, "and in what condition they are."

He climbed upon the commode, put his eye to the crevice, and looked.

¹The peep-hole is a *Judas* in French. Hence the half-punning allusion.

CHAPTER VI

THE WILD MAN IN HIS LAIR

CITIES, like forests, have their caverns in which all the most wicked and formidable creatures which they contain conceal themselves. Only, in cities, that which thus conceals itself is ferocious, unclean, and petty, that is to say, ugly; in forests, that which conceals itself is ferocious, savage, and grand, that is to say, beautiful. Taking one lair with another, the beast's is preferable to the man's. Caverns are better than hovels.

What Marius now beheld was a hovel.

Marius was poor, and his chamber was poverty-stricken, but as his poverty was noble, his garret was neat. The den upon which his eye now rested was abject, dirty, fetid, pestiferous, mean, sordid. The only furniture consisted of a straw chair, an infirm table, some old bits of crockery, and in two of the corners, two indescribable pallets; all the light was furnished by a dormer window of four panes, draped with spiders' webs. Through this aperture there penetrated just enough light to make the face of a man appear like the face of a phantom. The walls had a leprous aspect, and were covered with seams and scars, like a visage disfigured by some horrible malady; a repulsive moisture exuded from them. Obscene sketches roughly sketched with charecoal could be distinguished upon them.

The chamber which Marius occupied had a dilapidated brick pavement; this one was neither tiled nor planked; its inhabitants stepped directly on the antique plaster of the hovel, which had grown black under the long-continued pressure of feet. Upon this uneven floor, where the dirt seemed to be fairly incrustated, and which possessed but one virginity, that of the broom, were capriciously grouped constellations of old shoes, socks, and repulsive rags; however, this room had a fire-place, so it was let for forty francs a year. There was every sort of thing in that fireplace, a brazier, a pot, broken boards,

rags suspended from nails, a bird-cage, ashes, and even a little fire. Two brands were smouldering there in a melancholy way.

One thing which added still more to the horrors of this garret was, that it was large. It had projections and angles and black holes, the lower sides of roofs, bays, and promontories. Hence horrible, unfathomable nooks where it seemed as though spiders as big as one's fist, wood-lice as large as one's foot, and perhaps even—who knows?—some monstrous human beings, must be hiding.

One of the pallets was near the door, the other near the window. One end of each touched the fireplace and faced Marius. In a corner near the aperture through which Marius was gazing, a colored engraving in a black frame was suspended to a nail on the wall, and at its bottom, in large letters, was the inscription: THE DREAM. This represented a sleeping woman, and a child, also asleep, the child on the woman's lap, an eagle in a cloud, with a crown in his beak, and the woman thrusting the crown away from the child's head, without awaking the latter; in the background, Napoleon in a glory, leaning on a very blue column with a yellow capital ornamented with this inscription:

MARINGO
AUSTERLITS
IENA
WAGRAMME
ELOT

Beneath this frame, a sort of wooden panel, which was no longer than it was broad, stood on the ground and rested in a sloping attitude against the wall. It had the appearance of a picture with its face turned to the wall, of a frame probably showing a daub on the other side, of some pier-glass detached from a wall and lying forgotten there while waiting to be rehung.

Near the table, upon which Marius descried a pen, ink, and paper, sat a man about sixty years of age, small, thin, livid,

haggard, with a cunning, cruel, and uneasy air; a hideous scoundrel.

If Lavater had studied this visage, he would have found the vulture mingled with the attorney there, the bird of prey and the pettifogger rendering each other mutually hideous and complementing each other; the pettifogger making the bird of prey ignoble, the bird of prey making the pettifogger horrible.

This man had a long gray beard. He was clad in a woman's chemise, which allowed his hairy breast and his bare arms, bristling with gray hair, to be seen. Beneath this chemise, muddy trousers and boots through which his toes projected were visible.

He had a pipe in his mouth and was smoking. There was no bread in the hovel, but there was still tobacco.

He was writing probably some more letters like those which Marius had read.

On the corner of the table lay an ancient, dilapidated, reddish volume, and the size, which was the antique 12mo of reading-rooms, betrayed a romance. On the cover sprawled the following title, printed in large capitals: GOD; THE KING; HONOR AND THE LADIES; BY DUCRAY DUMINIL, 1814.

As the man wrote, he talked aloud, and Marius heard his words:—

“The idea that there is no equality, even when you are dead! Just look at Pere Lachaise! The great, those who are rich, are up above, in the acacia alley, which is paved. They can reach it in a carriage. The little people, the poor, the unhappy, well, what of them? they are put down below, where the mud is up to your knees, in the damp places. They are put there so that they will decay the sooner! You cannot go to see them without sinking into the earth.”

He paused, smote the table with his fist, and added, as he ground his teeth:—

“Oh! I could eat the whole world!”

A big woman, who might be forty years of age, or a hundred, was crouching near the fireplace on her bare heels.

She, too, was elad only in a chemise and a knitted petticoat patched with bits of old cloth. A coarse linen apron concealed the half of her petticoat. Although this woman was doubled up and bent together, it could be seen that she was of very lofty stature. She was a sort of giant, beside her husband. She had hideous hair, of a reddish blond which was turning gray, and which she thrust back from time to time, with her enormous shining hands, with their flat nails.

Beside her, on the floor, wide open, lay a book of the same form as the other, and probably a volume of the same romance.

On one of the pallets, Marius caught a glimpse of a sort of tall pale young girl, who sat there half naked and with pendant feet, and who did not seem to be listening or seeing or living.

No doubt the younger sister of the one who had come to his room.

She seemed to be eleven or twelve years of age. On closer scrutiny it was evident that she really was fourteen. She was the child who had said, on the boulevard the evening before: "I bolted, bolted, bolted!"

She was of that puny sort which remains backward for a long time, then suddenly starts up rapidly. It is indigence which produces these melancholy human plants. These creatures have neither childhood nor youth. At fifteen years of age they appear to be twelve, at sixteen they seem twenty. To-day a little girl, to-morrow a woman. One might say that they stride through life, in order to get through with it the more speedily.

At this moment, this being had the air of a child.

Moreover, no trace of work was revealed in that dwelling; no handicraft, no spinning-wheel, not a tool. In one corner lay some ironmongery of dubious aspect. It was the dull listlessness which follows despair and precedes the death agony.

Marius gazed for a while at this gloomy interior, more terrifying than the interior of a tomb, for the human soul could be felt fluttering there, and life was palpitating there. The garret, the cellar, the lowly ditch where certain indigent

wretches crawl at the very bottom of the social edifice, is not exactly the sepulchre, but only its antechamber; but, as the wealthy display their greatest magnificence at the entrance of their palaces, it seems that death, which stands directly side by side with them, places its greatest miseries in that vestibule.

The man held his peace, the woman spoke no word, the young girl did not even seem to breathe. The scratching of the pen on the paper was audible.

The man grumbled, without pausing in his writing. "Canaille! canaille! everybody is canaille!"

This variation to Solomon's exclamation elicited a sigh from the woman.

"Calm yourself, my little friend," she said. "Don't hurt yourself, my dear. You are too good to write to all those people, husband."

Bodies press close to each other in misery, as in cold, but hearts draw apart. This woman must have loved this man, to all appearance, judging from the amount of love within her; but probably, in the daily and reciprocal reproaches of the horrible distress which weighed on the whole group, this had become extinct. There no longer existed in her anything more than the ashes of affection for her husband. Nevertheless, caressing appellations had survived, as is often the case. She called him: *My dear, my little friend, my good man, etc.*, with her mouth while her heart was silent.

The man resumed his writing.

CHAPTER VII

STRATEGY AND TACTICS

MARIUS, with a load upon his breast, was on the point of descending from the species of observatory which he had improvised, when a sound attracted his attention and caused him to remain at his post.

The door of the attic had just burst open abruptly. The eldest girl made her appearance on the threshold. On her feet, she had large, coarse, men's shoes, bespattered with mud, which had splashed even to her red ankles, and she was wrapped in an old mantle which hung in tatters. Marius had not seen it on her an hour previously, but she had probably deposited it at his door, in order that she might inspire the more pity, and had picked it up again on emerging. She entered, pushed the door to behind her, paused to take breath, for she was completely breathless, then exclaimed with an expression of triumph and joy:—

“He is coming!”

The father turned his eyes towards her, the woman turned her head, the little sister did not stir.

“Who?” demanded her father.

“The gentleman!”

“The philanthropist?”

“Yes.”

“From the church of Saint-Jacques?”

“Yes.”

“That old fellow?”

“Yes.”

“And he is coming?”

“He is following me.”

“You are sure?”

“I am sure.”

“There, truly, he is coming?”

“He is coming in a fiacre.”

“In a fiacre. He is Rothschild.”

The father rose.

“How are you sure? If he is coming in a fiacre, how is it that you arrive before him? You gave him our address at least? Did you tell him that it was the last door at the end of the corridor, on the right? If he only does not make a mistake! So you found him at the church? Did he read my letter? What did he say to you?”

“Ta, ta, ta,” said the girl, “how you do gallop on, my good

man! See here: I entered the church, he was in his usual place, I made him a reverence, and I handed him the letter; he read it and said to me: 'Where do you live, my child?' I said: 'Monsieur, I will show you.' He said to me: 'No, give me your address, my daughter has some purchases to make, I will take a carriage and reach your house at the same time that you do.' I gave him the address. When I mentioned the house, he seemed surprised and hesitated for an instant, then he said: 'Never mind, I will come.' When the mass was finished, I watched him leave the church with his daughter, and I saw them enter a carriage. I certainly did tell him the last door in the corridor, on the right."

"And what makes you think that he will come?"

"I have just seen the fiacre turn into the Rue Petit-Banquier. That is what made me run so."

"How do you know that it was the same fiacre?"

"Because I took notice of the number, so there!"

"What was the number?"

"440."

"Good, you are a clever girl."

The girl stared boldly at her father, and showing the shoes which she had on her feet:—

"A clever girl, possibly; but I tell you I won't put these shoes on again, and that I won't, for the sake of my health, in the first place, and for the sake of cleanliness, in the next. I don't know anything more irritating than shoes that squelch, and go *ghi, ghi, ghi*, the whole time. I prefer to go barefoot."

"You are right," said her father, in a sweet tone which contrasted with the young girl's rudeness, "but then, you will not be allowed to enter churches, for poor people must have shoes to do that. One cannot go barefoot to the good God," he added bitterly.

Then, returning to the subject which absorbed him:—

"So you are sure that he will come?"

"He is following on my heels," said she.

The man started up. A sort of illumination appeared on his countenance.

“Wife!” he exclaimed, “you hear. Here is the philanthropist. Extinguish the fire.”

The stupefied mother did not stir.

The father, with the agility of an acrobat, seized a broken-nosed jug which stood on the chimney, and flung the water on the brands.

Then, addressing his eldest daughter:—

“Here you! Pull the straw off that chair!”

His daughter did not understand.

He seized the chair, and with one kick he rendered it seatless. His leg passed through it.

As he withdrew his leg, he asked his daughter:—

“Is it cold?”

“Very cold. It is snowing.”

The father turned towards the younger girl who sat on the bed near the window, and shouted to her in a thundering voice:—

“Quick! get off that bed, you lazy thing! will you never do anything? Break a pane of glass!”

The little girl jumped off the bed with a shiver.

“Break a pane!” he repeated.

The child stood still in bewilderment.

“Do you hear me?” repeated her father, “I tell you to break a pane!”

The child, with a sort of terrified obedience, rose on tiptoe, and struck a pane with her fist. The glass broke and fell with a loud clatter.

“Good,” said the father.

He was grave and abrupt. His glance swept rapidly over all the crannies of the garret. One would have said that he was a general making the final preparation at the moment when the battle is on the point of beginning.

The mother, who had not said a word so far, now rose and demanded in a dull, slow, languid voice, whence her words seemed to emerge in a congealed state:—

“What do you mean to do, my dear?”

“Get into bed,” replied the man.

His intonation admitted of no deliberation. The mother obeyed, and threw herself heavily on one of the pallets.

In the meantime, a sob became audible in one corner.

"What's that?" cried the father.

The younger daughter exhibited her bleeding fist, without quitting the corner in which she was cowering. She had wounded herself while breaking the window; she went off, near her mother's pallet and wept silently.

It was now the mother's turn to start up and exclaim:—

"Just see there! What follies you commit! She has cut herself breaking that pane for you!"

"So much the better!" said the man. "I foresaw that."

"What? So much the better?" retorted his wife.

"Peace!" replied the father, "I suppress the liberty of the press."

Then tearing the woman's chemise which he was wearing, he made a strip of cloth with which he hastily swathed the little girl's bleeding wrist.

That done, his eye fell with a satisfied expression on his torn chemise.

"And the chemise too," said he, "this has a good appearance."

An icy breeze whistled through the window and entered the room. The outer mist penetrated thither and diffused itself like a whitish sheet of wadding vaguely spread by invisible fingers. Through the broken pane the snow could be seen falling. The snow promised by the Candlemas sun of the preceding day had actually come.

The father cast a glance about him as though to make sure that he had forgotten nothing. He seized an old shovel and spread ashes over the wet brands in such a manner as to entirely conceal them.

Then drawing himself up and leaning against the chimney-piece:—

"Now," said he, "we can receive the philanthropist."

CHAPTER VIII

THE RAY OF LIGHT IN THE HOVEL

THE big girl approached and laid her hand in her father's. "Feel how cold I am," said she.

"Bah!" replied the father, "I am much colder than that."

The mother exclaimed impetuously:—

"You always have something better than any one else, so you do! even bad things."

"Down with you!" said the man.

The mother, being eyed after a certain fashion, held her tongue.

Silence reigned for a moment in the hovel. The elder girl was removing the mud from the bottom of her mantle, with a careless air; her younger sister continued to sob; the mother had taken the latter's head between her hands, and was covering it with kisses, whispering to her the while:—

"My treasure, I entreat you, it is nothing of consequence, don't cry, you will anger your father."

"No!" exclaimed the father, "quite the contrary! sob! sob! that's right."

Then turning to the elder:—

"There now! He is not coming! What if he were not to come! I shall have extinguished my fire, wrecked my chair, torn my shirt, and broken my pane all for nothing."

"And wounded the child!" murmured the mother.

"Do you know," went on the father, "that it's beastly cold in this devil's garret! What if that man should not come! Oh! See there, you! He makes us wait! He says to himself: 'Well! they will wait for me! That's what they're there for.' Oh! how I hate them, and with what joy, jubilation, enthusiasm, and satisfaction I could strangle all those rich folks! all those rich folks! These men who pretend to be charitable, who put on airs, who go to mass, who make

presents to the priesthood, *preachy, preachy*, in their skull-caps, and who think themselves above us, and who come for the purpose of humiliating us, and to bring us 'clothes,' as they say! old duds that are not worth four sous! And bread! That's not what I want, pack of rascals that they are, it's money! Ah! money! Never! Because they say that we would go off and drink it up, and that we are drunkards and idlers! And they! What are they, then, and what have they been in their time! Thieves! They never could have become rich otherwise! Oh! Society ought to be grasped by the four corners of the cloth and tossed into the air, all of it! It would all be smashed, very likely, but at least, no one would have anything, and there would be that much gained! But what is that blockhead of a benevolent gentleman doing? Will he come? Perhaps the animal has forgotten the address! I'll bet that that old beast—"

At that moment there came a light tap at the door, the man rushed to it and opened it, exclaiming, amid profound bows and smiles of adoration:—

"Enter, sir! Deign to enter, most respected benefactor, and your charming young lady, also."

A man of ripe age and a young girl made their appearance on the threshold of the attic.

Marius had not quitted his post. His feelings for the moment surpassed the powers of the human tongue.

It was She!

Whoever has loved knows all the radiant meanings contained in those three letters of that word: She.

It was certainly she. Marius could hardly distinguish her through the luminous vapor which had suddenly spread before his eyes. It was that sweet, absent being, that star which had beamed upon him for six months; it was those eyes, that brow, that mouth, that lovely vanished face which had created night by its departure. The vision had been eclipsed, now it reappeared.

It reappeared in that gloom, in that garret, in that misshapen attic, in all that horror.

Marius shuddered in dismay. What! It was she! The palpitations of his heart troubled his sight. He felt that he was on the brink of bursting into tears! What! He beheld her again at last, after having sought her so long! It seemed to him that he had lost his soul, and that he had just found it again.

She was the same as ever, only a little pale; her delicate face was framed in a bonnet of violet velvet, her figure was concealed beneath a pelisse of black satin. Beneath her long dress, a glimpse could be caught of her tiny foot shod in a silken boot.

She was still accompanied by M. Leblanc.

She had taken a few steps into the room, and had deposited a tolerably bulky parcel on the table.

The eldest Jondrette girl had retired behind the door, and was staring with sombre eyes at that velvet bonnet, that silk mantle, and that charming, happy face.

CHAPTER IX

JONDRETTE COMES NEAR WEEPING

THE hovel was so dark, that people coming from without felt on entering it the effect produced on entering a cellar. The two new-comers advanced, therefore, with a certain hesitation, being hardly able to distinguish the vague forms surrounding them, while they could be clearly seen and scrutinized by the eyes of the inhabitants of the garret, who were accustomed to this twilight.

M. Leblanc approached, with his sad but kindly look, and said to Jondrette the father:—

“Monsieur, in this package you will find some new clothes and some woollen stockings and blankets.”

“Our angelic benefactor overwhelms us,” said Jondrette, bowing to the very earth.

Then, bending down to the ear of his eldest daughter, while

the two visitors were engaged in examining this lamentable interior, he added in a low and rapid voice:—

“Hey? What did I say? Duds! No money! They are all alike! By the way, how was the letter to that old block-head signed?”

“Fabantou,” replied the girl.

“The dramatic artist, good!”

It was lucky for Jondrette, that this had occurred to him, for at the very moment, M. Leblanc turned to him, and said to him with the air of a person who is seeking to recall a name:—

“I see that you are greatly to be pitied, Monsieur—”

“Fabantou,” replied Jondrette quickly.

“Monsieur Fabantou, yes, that is it. I remember.”

“Dramatic artist, sir, and one who has had some success.”

Here Jondrette evidently judged the moment propitious for capturing the “philanthropist.” He exclaimed with an accent which smacked at the same time of the vainglory of the mountebank at fairs, and the humility of the mendicant on the highway:—

“A pupil of Talma! Sir! I am a pupil of Talma! Fortune formerly smiled on me—Alas! Now it is misfortune’s turn. You see, my benefactor, no bread, no fire. My poor babes have no fire! My only chair has no seat! A broken pane! And in such weather! My spouse in bed! Ill!”

“Poor woman!” said M. Leblanc.

“My child wounded!” added Jondrette.

The child, diverted by the arrival of the strangers, had fallen to contemplating “the young lady,” and had ceased to sob.

“Cry! bawl!” said Jondrette to her in a low voice.

At the same time he pinched her sore hand. All this was done with the talent of a juggler.

The little girl gave vent to loud shrieks.

The adorable young girl, whom Marius, in his heart, called “his Ursule,” approached her hastily.

“Poor, dear child!” said she.

"You see, my beautiful young lady," pursued Jondrette, "her bleeding wrist! It came through an accident while working at a machine to earn six sous a day. It may be necessary to cut off her arm."

"Really?" said the old gentleman, in alarm.

The little girl, taking this seriously, fell to sobbing more violently than ever.

"Alas! yes, my benefactor!" replied the father.

For several minutes, Jondrette had been scrutinizing "the benefactor" in a singular fashion. As he spoke, he seemed to be examining the other attentively, as though seeking to summon up his recollections. All at once, profiting by a moment when the new-comers were questioning the child with interest as to her injured hand, he passed near his wife, who lay in her bed with a stupid and dejected air, and said to her in a rapid but very low tone:—

"Take a look at that man!"

Then, turning to M. Leblanc, and continuing his lamentations:—

"You see, sir! All the clothing that I have is my wife's chemise! And all torn at that! In the depths of winter! I can't go out for lack of a coat. If I had a coat of any sort, I would go and see Mademoiselle Mars, who knows me and is very fond of me. Does she not still reside in the Rue de la Tour-des-Dames? Do you know, sir? We played together in the provinces. I shared her laurels. Célimène would come to my succor, sir! Elmire would bestow alms on Bélisaire! But no, nothing! And not a sou in the house! My wife ill, and not a sou! My daughter dangerously injured, not a sou! My wife suffers from fits of suffocation. It comes from her age, and besides, her nervous system is affected. She ought to have assistance, and my daughter also! But the doctor! But the apothecary! How am I to pay them? I would kneel to a penny, sir! Such is the condition to which the arts are reduced. And do you know, my charming young lady, and you, my generous protector, do you know, you who breathe forth virtue and goodness, and who perfume that church where my

daughter sees you every day when she says her prayers?—For I have brought up my children religiously, sir. I did not want them to take to the theatre. Ah! the hussies! If I catch them tripping! I do not jest, that I don't! I read them lessons on honor, on morality, on virtue! Ask them! They have got to walk straight. They are none of your unhappy wretches who begin by having no family, and end by espousing the public. One is Mamselle Nobody, and one becomes Madame Everybody. Deuce take it! None of that in the Fabantou family! I mean to bring them up virtuously, and they shall be honest, and nice, and believe in God, by the sacred name! Well, sir, my worthy sir, do you know what is going to happen to-morrow? To-morrow is the fourth day of February, the fatal day, the last day of grace allowed me by my landlord; if by this evening I have not paid my rent, to-morrow my oldest daughter, my spouse with her fever, my child with her wound,—we shall all four be turned out of here and thrown into the street, on the boulevard, without shelter, in the rain, in the snow. There, sir. I owe for four quarters—a whole year! that is to say, sixty francs.”

Jondrette lied. Four quarters would have amounted to only forty francs, and he could not owe four, because six months had not elapsed since Marius had paid for two.

M. Leblanc drew five francs from his pocket and threw them on the table.

Jondrette found time to mutter in the ear of his eldest daughter:—

“The scoundrel! What does he think I can do with his five francs? That won't pay me for my chair and pane of glass! That's what comes of incurring expenses!”

In the meanwhile, M. Leblanc had removed the large brown great-coat which he wore over his blue coat, and had thrown it over the back of the chair.

“Monsieur Fabantou,” he said, “these five francs are all that I have about me, but I shall now take my daughter home, and I will return this evening,—it is this evening that you must pay, is it not?”

Jondrette's face lighted up with a strange expression. He replied vivaciously:—

"Yes, respected sir. At eight o'clock, I must be at my landlord's."

"I will be here at six, and I will fetch you the sixty francs."

"My benefactor!" exclaimed Jondrette, overwhelmed. And he added, in a low tone: "Take a good look at him, wife!"

M. Leblanc had taken the arm of the young girl, once more, and had turned towards the door.

"Farewell until this evening, my friends!" said he.

"Six o'clock?" said Jondrette.

"Six o'clock precisely."

At that moment, the overcoat lying on the chair caught the eye of the elder Jondrette girl.

"You are forgetting your coat, sir," said she.

Jondrette darted an annihilating look at his daughter, accompanied by a formidable shrug of the shoulders.

M. Leblanc turned back and said, with a smile:—

"I have not forgotten it, I am leaving it."

"O my protector!" said Jondrette, "my august benefactor, I melt into tears! Permit me to accompany you to your carriage."

"If you come out," answered M. Leblanc, "put on this coat. It really is very cold."

Jondrette did not need to be told twice. He hastily donned the brown great-coat. And all three went out, Jondrette preceding the two strangers.

CHAPTER X

TARIFF OF LICENSED CABS: TWO FRANCS AN HOUR

MARIUS had lost nothing of this entire scene, and yet, in reality, had seen nothing. His eyes had remained fixed on the young girl, his heart had, so to speak, seized her and wholly enveloped her from the moment of her very first step in that

garret. During her entire stay there, he had lived that life of ecstasy which suspends material perceptions and precipitates the whole soul on a single point. He contemplated, not that girl, but that light which wore a satin pelisse and a velvet bonnet. The star Sirius might have entered the room, and he would not have been any more dazzled.

While the young girl was engaged in opening the package, unfolding the clothing and the blankets, questioning the sick mother kindly, and the little injured girl tenderly, he watched her every movement, he sought to catch her words. He knew her eyes, her brow, her beauty, her form, her walk, he did not know the sound of her voice. He had once fancied that he had caught a few words at the Luxembourg, but he was not absolutely sure of the fact. He would have given ten years of his life to hear it, in order that he might bear away in his soul a little of that music. But everything was drowned in the lamentable exclamations and trumpet bursts of Jondrette. This added a touch of genuine wrath to Marius' ecstasy. He devoured her with his eyes. He could not believe that it really was that divine creature whom he saw in the midst of those vile creatures in that monstrous lair. It seemed to him that he beheld a humming-bird in the midst of toads.

When she took her departure, he had but one thought, to follow her, to cling to her trace, not to quit her until he learned where she lived, not to lose her again, at least, after having so miraculously re-discovered her. He leaped down from the commode and seized his hat. As he laid his hand on the lock of the door, and was on the point of opening it, a sudden reflection caused him to pause. The corridor was long, the staircase steep, Jondrette was talkative, M. Leblanc had, no doubt, not yet regained his carriage; if, on turning round in the corridor, or on the staircase, he were to catch sight of him, Marius, in that house, he would, evidently, take the alarm, and find means to escape from him again, and this time it would be final. What was he to do? Should he wait a little? But while he was waiting, the carriage might drive off. Marius was perplexed. At last he accepted the risk and quitted his room.

There was no one in the corridor. He hastened to the stairs. There was no one on the staircase. He descended in all haste, and reached the boulevard in time to see a fiacre turning the corner of the Rue du Petit-Banquier, on its way back to Paris.

Marius rushed headlong in that direction. On arriving at the angle of the boulevard, he caught sight of the fiacre again, rapidly descending the Rue Mouffetard; the carriage was already a long way off, and there was no means of overtaking it; what! run after it? Impossible; and besides, the people in the carriage would assuredly notice an individual running at full speed in pursuit of a fiacre, and the father would recognize him. At that moment, wonderful and unprecedented good luck, Marius perceived an empty cab passing along the boulevard. There was but one thing to be done, to jump into this cab and follow the fiacre. That was sure, efficacious, and free from danger.

Marius made the driver a sign to halt, and called to him:—
“By the hour?”

Marius wore no cravat, he had on his working-coat, which was destitute of buttons, his shirt was torn along one of the plaits on the bosom.

The driver halted, winked, and held out his left hand to Marius, rubbing his forefinger gently with his thumb.

“What is it?” said Marius.

“Pay in advance,” said the coachman.

Marius recollected that he had but sixteen sous about him.

“How much?” he demanded.

“Forty sous.”

“I will pay on my return.”

The driver’s only reply was to whistle the air of *La Palisse* and to whip up his horse.

Marius stared at the retreating cabriolet with a bewildered air. For the lack of four and twenty sous, he was losing his joy, his happiness, his love! He had seen, and he was becoming blind again. He reflected bitterly, and it must be confessed, with profound regret, on the five francs which he had

bestowed, that very morning, on that miserable girl. If he had had those five francs, he would have been saved, he would have been born again, he would have emerged from the limbo and darkness, he would have made his escape from isolation and spleen, from his widowed state; he might have re-knotted the black thread of his destiny to that beautiful golden thread, which had just floated before his eyes and had broken at the same instant, once more! He returned to his hovel in despair.

He might have told himself that M. Leblanc had promised to return in the evening, and that all he had to do was to set about the matter more skilfully, so that he might follow him on that occasion; but, in his contemplation, it is doubtful whether he had heard this.

As he was on the point of mounting the staircase, he perceived, on the other side of the boulevard, near the deserted wall skirting the Rue De la Barrière-des-Gobelins, Jondrette, wrapped in the "philanthropist's" great-coat, engaged in conversation with one of those men of disquieting aspect who have been dubbed by common consent, *prowlers of the barriers*; people of equivocal face, of suspicious monologues, who present the air of having evil minds, and who generally sleep in the daytime, which suggests the supposition that they work by night.

These two men, standing there motionless and in conversation, in the snow which was falling in whirlwinds, formed a group that a policeman would surely have observed, but which Marius hardly noticed.

Still, in spite of his mournful preoccupation, he could not refrain from saying to himself that this prowler of the barriers with whom Jondrette was talking resembled a certain Panchaud, alias Printanier, alias Bigrenaille, whom Courfeyrac had once pointed out to him as a very dangerous nocturnal roamer. This man's name the reader has learned in the preceding book. This Panchaud, alias Printanier, alias Bigrenaille, figured later on in many criminal trials, and became a notorious rascal. He was at that time only a famous rascal. To-day he exists in the state of tradition among ruffians and

assassins. He was at the head of a school towards the end of the last reign. And in the evening, at nightfall, at the hour when groups form and talk in whispers, he was discussed at La Force in the Fosse-aux-Lions. One might even, in that prison, precisely at the spot where the sewer which served the unprecedented escape, in broad daylight, of thirty prisoners, in 1843, passes under the culvert, read his name, PAN-CHAUD, audaciously carved by his own hand on the wall of the sewer, during one of his attempts at flight. In 1832, the police already had their eye on him, but he had not as yet made a serious beginning.

CHAPTER XI

OFFERS OF SERVICE FROM MISERY TO WRETCHEDNESS

MARIUS ascended the stairs of the hovel with slow steps; at the moment when he was about to re-enter his cell, he caught sight of the elder Jondrette girl following him through the corridor. The very sight of this girl was odious to him; it was she who had his five francs, it was too late to demand them back, the cab was no longer there, the fiacre was far away. Moreover, she would not have given them back. As for questioning her about the residence of the persons who had just been there, that was useless; it was evident that she did not know, since the letter signed Fabantou had been addressed "to the benevolent gentleman of the church of Saint-Jacques-du-Haut-Pas."

Marius entered his room and pushed the door to after him.

It did not close; he turned round and beheld a hand which held the door half open.

"What is it?" he asked, "who is there?"

It was the Jondrette girl.

"Is it you?" resumed Marius almost harshly, "still you! What do you want with me?"

She appeared to be thoughtful and did not look at him.

She no longer had the air of assurance which had characterized her that morning. She did not enter, but held back in the darkness of the corridor, where Marius could see her through the half-open door.

“Come now, will you answer?” cried Marius. “What do you want with me?”

She raised her dull eyes, in which a sort of gleam seemed to flicker vaguely, and said:—

“Monsieur Marius, you look sad. What is the matter with you?”

“With me!” said Marius.

“Yes, you.”

“There is nothing the matter with me.”

“Yes, there is!”

“No.”

“I tell you there is!”

“Let me alone!”

Marius gave the door another push, but she retained her hold on it.

“Stop,” said she, “you are in the wrong. Although you are not rich, you were kind this morning. Be so again now. You gave me something to eat, now tell me what ails you. You are grieved, that is plain. I do not want you to be grieved. What can be done for it? Can I be of any service? Employ me. I do not ask for your secrets, you need not tell them to me, but I may be of use, nevertheless. I may be able to help you, since I help my father. When it is necessary to carry letters, to go to houses, to inquire from door to door, to find out an address, to follow any one, I am of service. Well, you may assuredly tell me what is the matter with you, and I will go and speak to the persons; sometimes it is enough if some one speaks to the persons, that suffices to let them understand matters, and everything comes right. Make use of me.”

An idea flashed across Marius' mind. What branch does one disdain when one feels that one is falling?

He drew near to the Jondrette girl.

“Listen—” he said to her.

She interrupted him with a gleam of joy in her eyes.

"Oh yes, do call me *thou!* I like that better."

"Well," he resumed, "thou hast brought hither that old gentleman and his daughter!"

"Yes."

"Dost thou know their address?"

"No."

"Find it for me."

The Jondrette's dull eyes had grown joyous, and they now became gloomy.

"Is that what you want?" she demanded.

"Yes."

"Do you know them?"

"No."

"That is to say," she resumed quickly, "you do not know her, but you wish to know her."

This *them* which had turned into *her* had something indescribably significant and bitter about it.

"Well, can you do it?" said Marius.

"You shall have the beautiful lady's address."

There was still a shade in the words "the beautiful lady" which troubled Marius. He resumed:—

"Never mind, after all, the address of the father and daughter. Their address, indeed!"

She gazed fixedly at him.

"What will you give me?"

"Anything you like."

"Anything I like?"

"Yes."

"You shall have the address."

She dropped her head; then, with a brusque movement, she pulled to the door, which closed behind her.

Marius found himself alone.

He dropped into a chair, with his head and both elbows on his bed, absorbed in thoughts which he could not grasp, and as though a prey to vertigo. All that had taken place since the morning, the appearance of the angel, her disappearance,

what that creature had just said to him, a gleam of hope floating in an immense despair,—this was what filled his brain confusedly.

All at once he was violently aroused from his reverie.

He heard the shrill, hard voice of Jondrette utter these words, which were fraught with a strange interest for him:—

“I tell you that I am sure of it, and that I recognized him.”

Of whom was Jondrette speaking? Whom had he recognized? M. Leblanc? The father of “his Ursule”? What! Did Jondrette know him? Was Marius about to obtain in this abrupt and unexpected fashion all the information without which his life was so dark to him? Was he about to learn at last who it was that he loved, who that young girl was? Who her father was? Was the dense shadow which enwrapped them on the point of being dispelled? Was the veil about to be rent? Ah! Heavens!

He bounded rather than climbed upon his commode, and resumed his post near the little peep-hole in the partition wall.

Again he beheld the interior of Jondrette’s hovel.

CHAPTER XII

THE USE MADE OF M. LEBLANC’S FIVE-FRANC PIECE

NOTHING in the aspect of the family was altered, except that the wife and daughters had levied on the package and put on woollen stockings and jackets. Two new blankets were thrown across the two beds.

Jondrette had evidently just returned. He still had the breathlessness of out of doors. His daughters were seated on the floor near the fireplace, the elder engaged in dressing the younger’s wounded hand. His wife had sunk back on the bed near the fireplace, with a face indicative of astonishment. Jondrette was pacing up and down the garret with long strides. His eyes were extraordinary.

The woman, who seemed timid and overwhelmed with stupor in the presence of her husband, turned to say:—

“What, really? You are sure?”

“Sure! Eight years have passed! But I recognize him! Ah! I recognize him. I knew him at once! What! Didn't it force itself on you?”

“No.”

“But I told you: ‘Pay attention!’ Why, it is his figure, it is his face, only older,—there are people who do not grow old, I don't know how they manage it,—it is the very sound of his voice. He is better dressed, that is all! Ah! you mysterious old devil, I've got you, that I have!”

He paused, and said to his daughters:—

“Get out of here, you!—It's queer that it didn't strike you!”

They arose to obey.

The mother stammered:—

“With her injured hand.”

“The air will do it good,” said Jondrette. “Be off.”

It was plain that this man was of the sort to whom no one offers to reply. The two girls departed.

At the moment when they were about to pass through the door, the father detained the elder by the arm, and said to her with a peculiar accent:—

“You will be here at five o'clock precisely. Both of you. I shall need you.”

Marius redoubled his attention.

On being left alone with his wife, Jondrette began to pace the room again, and made the tour of it two or three times in silence. Then he spent several minutes in tucking the lower part of the woman's chemise which he wore into his trousers.

All at once, he turned to the female Jondrette, folded his arms and exclaimed:—

“And would you like to have me tell you something? The young lady—”

“Well, what?” retorted his wife, “the young lady?”

Marius could not doubt that it was really she of whom they

were speaking. He listened with ardent anxiety. His whole life was in his ears.

But Jondrette had bent over and spoke to his wife in a whisper. Then he straightened himself up and concluded aloud:—

“It is she!”

“That one?” said his wife.

“That very one,” said the husband.

No expression can reproduce the significance of the mother’s words. Surprise, rage, hate, wrath, were mingled and combined in one monstrous intonation. The pronunciation of a few words, the name, no doubt, which her husband had whispered in her ear, had sufficed to rouse this huge, somnolent woman, and from being repulsive she became terrible.

“It is not possible!” she cried. “When I think that my daughters are going barefoot, and have not a gown to their backs! What! A satin pelisse, a velvet bonnet, boots, and everything; more than two hundred francs’ worth of clothes! so that one would think she was a lady! No, you are mistaken! Why, in the first place, the other was hideous, and this one is not so bad-looking! She really is not bad-looking! It can’t be she!”

“I tell you that it is she. You will see.”

At this absolute assertion, the Jondrette woman raised her large, red, blonde face and stared at the ceiling with a horrible expression. At that moment, she seemed to Marius even more to be feared than her husband. She was a sow with the look of a tigress.

“What!” she resumed, “that horrible, beautiful young lady, who gazed at my daughters with an air of pity,—she is that beggar brat! Oh! I should like to kick her stomach in for her!”

She sprang off of the bed, and remained standing for a moment, her hair in disorder, her nostrils dilating, her mouth half open, her fists clenched and drawn back. Then she fell back on the bed once more. The man paced to and fro and paid no attention to his female.

After a silence lasting several minutes, he approached the female Jondrette, and halted in front of her, with folded arms, as he had done a moment before:—

“And shall I tell you another thing?”

“What is it?” she asked.

He answered in a low, curt voice:—

“My fortune is made.”

The woman stared at him with the look that signifies: “Is the person who is addressing me on the point of going mad?”

He went on:—

“Thunder! It was not so very long ago that I was a parish-ioner of the parish of die-of-hunger-if-you-have-a-fire,-die-of-cold-if-you-have-bread! I have had enough of misery! my share and other people’s share! I am not joking any longer. I don’t find it comic any more. I’ve had enough of puns, good God! no more farces, Eternal Father! I want to eat till I am full, I want to drink my fill! to gormandize! to sleep! to do nothing! I want to have my turn, so I do, come now! before I die! I want to be a bit of a millionaire!”

He took a turn round the hovel, and added:—

“Like other people.”

“What do you mean by that?” asked the woman.

He shook his head, winked, serewed up one eye, and raised his voice like a medical professor who is about to make a demonstration:—

“What do I mean by that? Listen!”

“Hush!” muttered the woman, “not so loud! These are matters which must not be overheard.”

“Bah! Who’s here? Our neighbor? I saw him go out a little while ago. Besides, he doesn’t listen, the big booby. And I tell you that I saw him go out.”

Nevertheless, by a sort of instinct, Jondrette lowered his voice, although not sufficiently to prevent Marius hearing his words. One favorable circumstance, which enabled Marius not to lose a word of this conversation was the falling snow which deadened the sound of vehicles on the boulevard.

This is what Marius heard:—

"Listen carefully. The Cræsus is caught, or as good as caught! That's all settled already. Everything is arranged. I have seen some people. He will come here this evening at six o'clock. To bring sixty francs, the rascal! Did you notice how I played that game on him, my sixty francs, my landlord, my fourth of February? I don't even owe for one quarter! Isn't he a fool! So he will come at six o'clock! That's the hour when our neighbor goes to his dinner. Mother Bougon is off washing dishes in the city. There's not a soul in the house. The neighbor never comes home until eleven o'clock. The children shall stand on watch. You shall help us. He will give in."

"And what if he does not give in?" demanded his wife.

Jondrette made a sinister gesture, and said:—

"We'll fix him."

And he burst out laughing.

This was the first time Marius had seen him laugh. The laugh was cold and sweet, and provoked a shudder.

Jondrette opened a cupboard near the fireplace, and drew from it an old cap, which he placed on his head, after brushing it with his sleeve.

"Now," said he, "I'm going out. I have some more people that I must see. Good ones. You'll see how well the whole thing will work. I shall be away as short a time as possible, it's a fine stroke of business, do you look after the house."

And with both fists thrust into the pockets of his trousers, he stood for a moment in thought, then exclaimed:—

"Do you know, it's mighty lucky, by the way, that he didn't recognize me! If he had recognized me on his side, he would not have come back again. He would have slipped through our fingers! It was my beard that saved us! my romantic beard! my pretty little romantic beard!"

And again he broke into a laugh.

He stepped to the window. The snow was still falling, and streaking the gray of the sky.

"What beastly weather!" said he.

Then lapping his overcoat across his breast:—

"This rind is too large for me. Never mind," he added, "he did a devilish good thing in leaving it for me, the old scoundrel! If it hadn't been for that, I couldn't have gone out, and everything would have gone wrong! What small points things hang on, anyway!"

And pulling his cap down over his eyes, he quitted the room.

He had barely had time to take half a dozen steps from the door, when the door opened again, and his savage but intelligent face made its appearance once more in the opening.

"I came near forgetting," said he. "You are to have a brazier of charcoal ready."

And he flung into his wife's apron the five-franc piece which the "philanthropist" had left with him.

"A brazier of charcoal?" asked his wife.

"Yes."

"How many bushels?"

"Two good ones."

"That will come to thirty sous. With the rest I will buy something for dinner."

"The devil, no."

"Why?"

"Don't go and spend the hundred-sou piece."

"Why?"

"Because I shall have to buy something, too."

"What?"

"Something."

"How much shall you need?"

"Whereabouts in the neighborhood is there an ironmonger's shop?"

"Rue Mouffetard."

"Ah! yes, at the corner of a street; I can see the shop."

"But tell me how much you will need for what you have to purchase?"

"Fifty sous—three francs."

"There won't be much left for dinner."

"Eating is not the point to-day. There's something better to be done."

“That’s enough, my jewel.”

At this word from his wife, Jondrette closed the door again, and this time, Marius heard his step die away in the corridor of the hovel, and descend the staircase rapidly.

At that moment, one o’clock struck from the church of Saint-Médard.

CHAPTER XIII

SOLUS CUM SOLO, IN LOCO REMOTO, NON COGITABUNTUR ORARE
PATER NOSTER

MARIUS, dreamer as he was, was, as we have said, firm and energetic by nature. His habits of solitary meditation, while they had developed in him sympathy and compassion, had, perhaps, diminished the faculty for irritation, but had left intact the power of waxing indignant; he had the kindness of a brahmin, and the severity of a judge; he took pity upon a toad, but he crushed a viper. Now, it was into a hole of vipers that his glance had just been directed, it was a nest of monsters that he had beneath his eyes.

“These wretches must be stamped upon,” said he.

Not one of the enigmas which he had hoped to see solved had been elucidated; on the contrary, all of them had been rendered more dense, if anything; he knew nothing more about the beautiful maiden of the Luxembourg and the man whom he called M. Leblanc, except that Jondrette was acquainted with them. Athwart the mysterious words which had been uttered, the only thing of which he caught a distinct glimpse was the fact that an ambush was in course of preparation, a dark but terrible trap; that both of them were incurring great danger, she probably, her father certainly; that they must be saved; that the hideous plots of the Jondrettes must be thwarted, and the web of these spiders broken.

He scanned the female Jondrette for a moment. She had pulled an old sheet-iron stove from a corner, and she was rummaging among the old heap of iron.

He descended from the commode as softly as possible, taking care not to make the least noise. Amid his terror as to what was in preparation, and in the horror with which the Jondrettes had inspired him, he experienced a sort of joy at the idea that it might be granted to him perhaps to render a service to the one whom he loved.

But how was it to be done? How warn the persons threatened? He did not know their address. They had reappeared for an instant before his eyes, and had then plunged back again into the immense depths of Paris. Should he wait for M. Leblanc at the door that evening at six o'clock, at the moment of his arrival, and warn him of the trap? But Jondrette and his men would see him on the watch, the spot was lonely, they were stronger than he, they would devise means to seize him or to get him away, and the man whom Marius was anxious to save would be lost. One o'clock had just struck, the trap was to be sprung at six. Marius had five hours before him.

There was but one thing to be done.

He put on his decent coat, knotted a silk handkerchief round his neck, took his hat, and went out, without making any more noise than if he had been treading on moss with bare feet.

Moreover, the Jondrette woman continued to rummage among her old iron.

Once outside of the house, he made for the Rue du Petit-Banquier.

He had almost reached the middle of this street, near a very low wall which a man can easily step over at certain points, and which abuts on a waste space, and was walking slowly, in consequence of his preoccupied condition, and the snow deadened the sound of his steps; all at once he heard voices talking very close by. He turned his head, the street was deserted, there was not a soul in it, it was broad daylight, and yet he distinctly heard voices.

It occurred to him to glance over the wall which he was skirting.

There, in fact, sat two men, flat on the snow, with their backs against the wall, talking together in subdued tones.

These two persons were strangers to him; one was a bearded man in a blouse, and the other a long-haired individual in rags. The bearded man had on a fez, the other's head was bare, and the snow had lodged in his hair.

By thrusting his head over the wall, Marius could hear their remarks.

The hairy one jogged the other man's elbow and said:—

“—With the assistance of Patron-Minette, it can't fail.”

“Do you think so?” said the bearded man.

And the long-haired one began again:—

“It's as good as a warrant for each one, of five hundred balls, and the worst that can happen is five years, six years, ten years at the most!”

The other replied with some hesitation, and shivering beneath his fez:—

“That's a real thing. You can't go against such things.”

“I tell you that the affair can't go wrong,” resumed the long-haired man. “Father What's-his-name's team will be already harnessed.”

Then they began to discuss a melodrama that they had seen on the preceding evening at the Gaîté Theatre.

Marius went his way.

It seemed to him that the mysterious words of these men, so strangely hidden behind that wall, and crouching in the snow, could not but bear some relation to Jondrette's abominable projects. That must be *the affair*.

He directed his course towards the faubourg Saint-Marceau and asked at the first shop he came to where he could find a commissary of police.

He was directed to Rue de Pontoise, No. 14.

Thither Marius betook himself.

As he passed a baker's shop, he bought a two-penny roll, and ate it, foreseeing that he should not dine.

On the way, he rendered justice to Providence. He reflected that had he not given his five francs to the Jondrette girl in

the morning, he would have followed M. Leblanc's fiacre, and consequently have remained ignorant of everything, and that there would have been no obstacle to the trap of the Jondrettes and that M. Leblanc would have been lost, and his daughter with him, no doubt.

CHAPTER XIV

IN WHICH A POLICE AGENT BESTOWS TWO FISTFULS ON A LAWYER

ON arriving at No. 14, Rue de Pontoise, he ascended to the first floor and inquired for the commissary of police.

"The commissary of police is not here," said a clerk; "but there is an inspector who takes his place. Would you like to speak to him? Are you in haste?"

"Yes," said Marius.

The clerk introduced him into the commissary's office. There stood a tall man behind a grating, leaning against a stove, and holding up with both hands the tails of a vast top-coat, with three collars. His face was square, with a thin, firm mouth, thick, gray, and very ferocious whiskers, and a look that was enough to turn your pockets inside out. Of that glance it might have been well said, not that it penetrated, but that it searched.

This man's air was not much less ferocious nor less terrible than Jondrette's; the dog is, at times, no less terrible to meet than the wolf.

"What do you want?" he said to Marius, without adding "monsieur."

"Is this Monsieur le Commissaire de Police?"

"He is absent. I am here in his stead."

"The matter is very private."

"Then speak."

"And great haste is required."

"Then speak quick."

This calm, abrupt man was both terrifying and reassuring

at one and the same time. He inspired fear and confidence. Marius related the adventure to him: That a person with whom he was not acquainted otherwise than by sight, was to be inveigled into a trap that very evening; that, as he occupied the room adjoining the den, he, Marius Pontmercy, a lawyer, had heard the whole plot through the partition; that the wretch who had planned the trap was a certain Jondrette; that there would be accomplices, probably some prowlers of the barriers, among others a certain Panchaud, alias Printanier, alias Bigrenaille; that Jondrette's daughters were to lie in wait; that there was no way of warning the threatened man, since he did not even know his name; and that, finally, all this was to be carried out at six o'clock that evening, at the most deserted point of the Boulevard de l'Hôpital, in house No. 50-52.

At the sound of this number, the inspector raised his head, and said coldly:—

“So it is in the room at the end of the corridor?”

“Precisely,” answered Marius, and he added: “Are you acquainted with that house?”

The inspector remained silent for a moment, then replied, as he warmed the heel of his boot at the door of the stove:—

“Apparently.”

He went on, muttering between his teeth, and not addressing Marius so much as his cravat:—

“Patron-Minette must have had a hand in this.”

This word struck Marius.

“Patron-Minette,” said he, “I did hear that word pronounced, in fact.”

And he repeated to the inspector the dialogue between the long-haired man and the bearded man in the snow behind the wall of the Rue du Petit-Banquier.

The inspector muttered:—

“The long-haired man must be Brujon, and the bearded one Demi-Liard, alias Deux-Milliards.”

He had dropped his eyelids again, and became absorbed in thought.

"As for Father What's-his-name, I think I recognize him. Here, I've burned my coat. They always have too much fire in these cursed stoves. Number 50-52. Former property of Gorbeau."

Then he glanced at Marius.

"You saw only that bearded and that long-haired man?"

"And Panehaud."

"You didn't see a little imp of a dandy prowling about the premises?"

"No."

"Nor a big lump of matter, resembling an elephant in the Jardin des Plantes?"

"No."

"Nor a scamp with the air of an old red tail?"

"No."

"As for the fourth, no one sees him, not even his adjutants, clerks, and employees. It is not surprising that you did not see him."

"No. Who are all those persons?" asked Marius.

The inspector answered:—

"Besides, this is not the time for them."

He relapsed into silence, then resumed:—

"50-52. I know that barraek. Impossible to conceal ourselves inside it without the artists seeing us, and then they will get off simply by countermanding the vaudeville. They are so modest! An audience embarrasses them. None of that, none of that. I want to hear them sing and make them dance."

This monologue concluded, he turned to Marius, and demanded, gazing at him intently the while:—

"Are you afraid?"

"Of what?" said Marius.

"Of these men?"

"No more than yourself!" retorted Marius rudely, who had begun to notice that this police agent had not yet said "monsieur" to him.

The inspector stared still more intently at Marius, and continued with sententious solemnity:—

“There, you speak like a brave man, and like an honest man. Courage does not fear crime, and honesty does not fear authority.”

Marius interrupted him :—

“That is well, but what do you intend to do?”

The inspector contented himself with the remark :—

“The lodgers have pass-keys with which to get in at night. You must have one.”

“Yes,” said Marius.

“Have you it about you?”

“Yes.”

“Give it to me,” said the inspector.

Marius took his key from his waistcoat pocket, handed it to the inspector and added :—

“If you will take my advice, you will come in force.”

The inspector cast on Marius such a glance as Voltaire might have bestowed on a provincial academician who had suggested a rhyme to him ; with one movement he plunged his hands, which were enormous, into the two immense pockets of his top-coat, and pulled out two small steel pistols, of the sort called “knock-me-downs.” Then he presented them to Marius, saying rapidly, in a curt tone :—

“Take these. Go home. Hide in your chamber, so that you may be supposed to have gone out. They are loaded. Each one carries two balls. You will keep watch ; there is a hole in the wall, as you have informed me. These men will come. Leave them to their own devices for a time. When you think matters have reached a crisis, and that it is time to put a stop to them, fire a shot. Not too soon. The rest concerns me. A shot into the ceiling, the air, no matter where. Above all things, not too soon. Wait until they begin to put their project into execution ; you are a lawyer ; you know the proper point.” Marius took the pistols and put them in the side pocket of his coat.

“That makes a lump that can be seen,” said the inspector. “Put them in your trousers pocket.”

Marius hid the pistols in his trousers pockets.

"Now," pursued the inspector, "there is not a minute more to be lost by any one. What time is it? Half-past two. Seven o'clock is the hour?"

"Six o'clock," answered Marius.

"I have plenty of time," said the inspector, "but no more than enough. Don't forget anything that I have said to you. Bang. A pistol shot."

"Rest easy," said Marius.

And as Marius laid his hand on the handle of the door on his way out, the inspector called to him:—

"By the way, if you have occasion for my services between now and then, come or send here. You will ask for Inspector Javert."

CHAPTER XV

JONDRETTE MAKES HIS PURCHASES

A FEW moments later, about three o'clock, Courfeyrac chanced to be passing along the Rue Mouffetard in company with Bossuet. The snow had redoubled in violence, and filled the air. Bossuet was just saying to Courfeyrac:—

"One would say, to see all these snow-flakes fall, that there was a plague of white butterflies in heaven." All at once, Bossuet caught sight of Marius coming up the street towards the barrier with a peculiar air.

"Hold!" said Bossuet. "There's Marius."

"I saw him," said Courfeyrac. "Don't let's speak to him."

"Why?"

"He is busy."

"With what?"

"Don't you see his air?"

"What air?"

"He has the air of a man who is following some one."

"That's true," said Bossuet.

"Just see the eyes he is making!" said Courfeyrac.

"But who the deuce is he following?"

"Some fine, flowery bonneted wench! He's in love."

"But," observed Bossuet, "I don't see any wench nor any flowery bonnet in the street. There's not a woman round."

Courfeyrac took a survey, and exclaimed:—

"He's following a man!"

A man, in fact, wearing a gray cap, and whose gray beard could be distinguished, although they only saw his back, was walking along about twenty paces in advance of Marius.

This man was dressed in a great-coat which was perfectly new and too large for him, and in a frightful pair of trousers all hanging in rags and black with mud.

Bossuet burst out laughing.

"Who is that man?"

"He?" retorted Courfeyrac, "he's a poet. Poets are very fond of wearing the trousers of dealers in rabbit skins and the overcoats of peers of France."

"Let's see where Marius will go," said Bossuet; "let's see where the man is going, let's follow them, hey?"

"Bossuet!" exclaimed Courfeyrac, "eagle of Meaux! You are a prodigious brute. Follow a man who is following another man, indeed!"

They retraced their steps.

Marius had, in fact, seen Jondrette passing along the Rue Mouffetard, and was spying on his proceedings.

Jondrette walked straight ahead, without a suspicion that he was already held by a glance.

He quitted the Rue Mouffetard, and Marius saw him enter one of the most terrible hovels in the Rue Gracieuse; he remained there about a quarter of an hour, then returned to the Rue Mouffetard. He halted at an ironmonger's shop, which then stood at the corner of the Rue Pierre-Lombard, and a few minutes later Marius saw him emerge from the shop, holding in his hand a huge cold chisel with a white wood handle, which he concealed beneath his great-coat. At the top of the Rue Petit-Gentilly he turned to the left and pro-

ceeded rapidly to the Rue du Petit-Banquier. The day was declining; the snow, which had ceased for a moment, had just begun again. Marius posted himself on the watch at the very corner of the Rue du Petit-Banquier, which was deserted, as usual, and did not follow Jondrette into it. It was lucky that he did so, for, on arriving in the vicinity of the wall where Marius had heard the long-haired man and the bearded man conversing, Jondrette turned round, made sure that no one was following him, did not see him, then sprang across the wall and disappeared.

The waste land bordered by this wall communicated with the back yard of an ex-livery stable-keeper of bad repute, who had failed and who still kept a few old single-seated berlins under his sheds.

Marius thought that it would be wise to profit by Jondrette's absence to return home; moreover, it was growing late; every evening, Ma'am Bougon when she set out for her dish-washing in town, had a habit of locking the door, which was always closed at dusk. Marius had given his key to the inspector of police; it was important, therefore, that he should make haste.

Evening had arrived, night had almost closed in; on the horizon and in the immensity of space, there remained but one spot illuminated by the sun, and that was the moon.

It was rising in a ruddy glow behind the low dome of Salpêtrière.

Marius returned to No. 50-52 with great strides. The door was still open when he arrived. He mounted the stairs on tip-toe and glided along the wall of the corridor to his chamber. This corridor, as the reader will remember, was bordered on both sides by attics, all of which were, for the moment, empty and to let. Ma'am Bougon was in the habit of leaving all the doors open. As he passed one of these attics, Marius thought he perceived in the uninhabited cell the motionless heads of four men, vaguely lighted up by a remnant of daylight, falling through a dormer window.

Marius made no attempt to see, not wishing to be seen himself. He succeeded in reaching his chamber without being seen and without making any noise. It was high time. A moment later he heard Ma'am Bougon take her departure, locking the door of the house behind her.

CHAPTER XVI

IN WHICH WILL BE FOUND THE WORDS TO AN ENGLISH AIR
WHICH WAS IN FASHION IN 1832

MARIUS seated himself on his bed. It might have been half-past five o'clock. Only half an hour separated him from what was about to happen. He heard the beating of his arteries as one hears the ticking of a watch in the dark. He thought of the double march which was going on at that moment in the dark,—crime advancing on one side, justice coming up on the other. He was not afraid, but he could not think without a shudder of what was about to take place. As is the case with all those who are suddenly assailed by an unforeseen adventure, the entire day produced upon him the effect of a dream, and in order to persuade himself that he was not the prey of a nightmare, he had to feel the cold barrels of the steel pistols in his trousers pockets.

It was no longer snowing; the moon disengaged itself more and more clearly from the mist, and its light, mingled with the white reflection of the snow which had fallen, communicated to the chamber a sort of twilight aspect.

There was a light in the Jondrette den. Marius saw the hole in the wall shining with a reddish glow which seemed bloody to him.

It was true that the light could not be produced by a candle. However, there was not a sound in the Jondrette quarters, not a soul was moving there, not a soul speaking, not a breath; the silence was glacial and profound, and had it not been for that light, he might have thought himself next door to a sepulchre.

Marius softly removed his boots and pushed them under his bed.

Several minutes elapsed. Marius heard the lower door turn on its hinges; a heavy step mounted the staircase, and hastened along the corridor; the latch of the hovel was noisily lifted; it was Jondrette returning.

Instantly, several voices arose. The whole family was in the garret. Only, it had been silent in the master's absence, like wolf whelps in the absence of the wolf.

"It's I," said he.

"Good evening, daddy," yelped the girls.

"Well?" said the mother.

"All's going first-rate," responded Jondrette, "but my feet are beastly cold. Good! You have dressed up. You have done well! You must inspire confidence."

"All ready to go out."

"Don't forget what I told you. You will do everything sure?"

"Rest easy."

"Because—" said Jondrette. And he left the phrase unfinished.

Marius heard him lay something heavy on the table, probably the chisel which he had purchased.

"By the way," said Jondrette, "have you been eating here?"

"Yes," said the mother. "I got three large potatoes and some salt. I took advantage of the fire to cook them."

"Good," returned Jondrette. "To-morrow I will take you out to dine with me. We will have a duck and fixings. You shall dine like Charles the Tenth; all is going well!"

Then he added:—

"The mouse-trap is open. The cats are there."

He lowered his voice still further, and said:—

"Put this in the fire."

Marius heard a sound of charcoal being knocked with the tongs or some iron utensil, and Jondrette continued:—

"Have you greased the hinges of the door so that they will not squeak?"

"Yes," replied the mother.

"What time is it?"

"Nearly six. The half-hour struck from Saint-Médard a while ago."

"The devil!" ejaculated Jondrette; "the children must go and watch. Come you, do you listen here."

A whispering ensued.

Jondrette's voice became audible again:—

"Has old Bougon left?"

"Yes," said the mother.

"Are you sure that there is no one in our neighbor's room?"

"He has not been in all day, and you know very well that this is his dinner hour."

"You are sure?"

"Sure."

"All the same," said Jondrette, "there's no harm in going to see whether he is there. Here, my girl, take the candle and go there."

Marius fell on his hands and knees and crawled silently under his bed.

Hardly had he concealed himself, when he perceived a light through the crack of his door.

"P'pa," cried a voice, "he is not in here."

He recognized the voice of the eldest daughter.

"Did you go in?" demanded her father.

"No," replied the girl, "but as his key is in the door, he must be out."

The father exclaimed:—

"Go in, nevertheless."

The door opened, and Marius saw the tall Jondrette come in with a candle in her hand. She was as she had been in the morning, only still more repulsive in this light.

She walked straight up to the bed. Marius endured an indescribable moment of anxiety; but near the bed there was a mirror nailed to the wall, and it was thither that she was directing her steps. She raised herself on tiptoe and looked

at herself in it. In the neighboring room, the sound of iron articles being moved was audible.

She smoothed her hair with the palm of her hand, and smiled into the mirror, humming with her cracked and sepulchral voice:—

Nos amours ont duré toute une semaine,¹
 Mais que du bonheur les instants sont courts!
 S'adorer huit jours, c' était bien la peine!
 Le temps des amours devait durer toujours!
 Devrait durer toujours! devrait durer toujours!

In the meantime, Marius trembled. It seemed impossible to him that she should not hear his breathing.

She stepped to the window and looked out with the half-foolish way she had.

"How ugly Paris is when it has put on a white chemise!" said she.

She returned to the mirror and began again to put on airs before it, scrutinizing herself full-face and three-quarters face in turn.

"Well!" cried her father, "what are you about there?"

"I am looking under the bed and the furniture," she replied, continuing to arrange her hair; "there's no one here."

"Booby!" yelled her father. "Come here this minute! And don't waste any time about it!"

"Coming! Coming!" said she. "One has no time for anything in this hovel!"

She hummed:—

Vous me quittez pour aller à la gloire;²
 Mon triste cœur suivra partout.

She cast a parting glance in the mirror and went out, shutting the door behind her.

¹Our love has lasted a whole week, but how short are the instants of happiness! To adore each other for eight days was hardly worth the while! The time of love should last forever.

²You leave me to go to glory; my sad heart will follow you everywhere.

A moment more, and Marius heard the sound of the two young girls' bare feet in the corridor, and Jondrette's voice shouting to them:—

“Pay strict heed! One on the side of the barrier, the other at the corner of the Rue du Petit-Banquier. Don't lose sight for a moment of the door of this house, and the moment you see anything, rush here on the instant! as hard as you can go! You have a key to get in.”

The eldest girl grumbled:—

“The idea of standing watch in the snow barefoot!”

“To-morrow you shall have some dainty little green silk boots!” said the father.

They ran down stairs, and a few seconds later the shock of the outer door as it banged to announced that they were outside.

There now remained in the house only Marius, the Jondrettes and probably, also, the mysterious persons of whom Marius had caught a glimpse in the twilight, behind the door of the unused attic.

CHAPTER XVII

THE USE MADE OF MARIUS' FIVE-FRANC PIECE

MARIUS decided that the moment had now arrived when he must resume his post at his observatory. In a twinkling, and with the agility of his age, he had reached the hole in the partition.

He looked.

The interior of the Jondrette apartment presented a curious aspect, and Marius found an explanation of the singular light which he had noticed. A candle was burning in a candlestick covered with verdigris, but that was not what really lighted the chamber. The hovel was completely illuminated, as it were, by the reflection from a rather large sheet-iron brazier standing in the fireplace, and filled with burning chareoal, the brazier pre-

pared by the Jondrette woman that morning. The charcoal was glowing hot and the brazier was red ; a blue flame flickered over it, and helped him to make out the form of the chisel purchased by Jondrette in the Rue Pierre-Lombard, where it had been thrust into the brazier to heat. In one corner, near the door, and as though prepared for some definite use, two heaps were visible, which appeared to be, the one a heap of old iron, the other a heap of ropes. All this would have caused the mind of a person who knew nothing of what was in preparation, to waver between a very sinister and a very simple idea. The lair thus lighted up more resembled a forge than a mouth of hell, but Jondrette, in this light, had rather the air of a demon than of a smith.

The heat of the brazier was so great, that the candle on the table was melting on the side next the chafing-dish, and was drooping over. An old dark-lantern of copper, worthy of Diogenes turned Cartouche, stood on the chimney-piece.

The brazier, placed in the fireplace itself, beside the nearly extinct brands, sent its vapors up the chimney, and gave out no odor.

The moon, entering through the four panes of the window, cast its whiteness into the crimson and flaming garret ; and to the poetic spirit of Marius, who was dreamy even in the moment of action, it was like a thought of heaven mingled with the misshapen reveries of earth.

A breath of air which made its way in through the open pane, helped to dissipate the smell of the charcoal and to conceal the presence of the brazier.

The Jondrette lair was, if the reader recalls what we have said of the Gorbeau building, admirably chosen to serve as the theatre of a violent and sombre deed, and as the envelope for a crime. It was the most retired chamber in the most isolated house on the most deserted boulevard in Paris. If the system of ambush and traps had not already existed, they would have been invented there.

The whole thickness of a house and a multitude of uninhabited rooms separated this den from the boulevard, and the

only window that existed opened on waste lands enclosed with walls and palisades.

Jondrette had lighted his pipe, seated himself on the seatless chair, and was engaged in smoking. His wife was talking to him in a low tone.

If Marius had been Courfeyrae, that is to say, one of those men who laugh on every occasion in life, he would have burst with laughter when his gaze fell on the Jondrette woman. She had on a black bonnet with plumes not unlike the hats of the heralds-at-arms at the coronation of Charles X., an immense tartan shawl over her knitted petticoat, and the man's shoes which her daughter had scorned in the morning. It was this toilette which had extracted from Jondrette the exclamation: "Good! You have dressed up. You have done well. You must inspire confidence!"

As for Jondrette, he had not taken off the new surtout, which was too large for him, and which M. Leblanc had given him, and his costume continued to present that contrast of coat and trousers which constituted the ideal of a poet in Courfeyrae's eyes.

All at once, Jondrette lifted up his voice:—

"By the way! Now that I think of it. In this weather, he will come in a carriage. Light the lantern, take it and go down stairs. You will stand behind the lower door. The very moment that you hear the carriage stop, you will open the door, instantly, he will come up, you will light the staircase and the corridor, and when he enters here, you will go down stairs again as speedily as possible, you will pay the coachman, and dismiss the fiacre.

"And the money?" inquired the woman.

Jondrette fumbled in his trousers pocket and handed her five francs.

"What's this?" she exclaimed.

Jondrette replied with dignity:—

"That is the monarch which our neighbor gave us this morning."

And he added:—

"Do you know what? Two chairs will be needed here."

"What for?"

"To sit on."

Marius felt a cold chill pass through his limbs at hearing this mild answer from Jondrette.

"Pardieu! I'll go and get one of our neighbor's."

And with a rapid movement, she opened the door of the den, and went out into the corridor.

Marius absolutely had not the time to descend from the commode, reach his bed, and conceal himself beneath it.

"Take the candle," cried Jondrette.

"No," said she, "it would embarrass me, I have the two chairs to carry. There is moonlight."

Marius heard Mother Jondrette's heavy hand fumbling at his lock in the dark. The door opened. He remained nailed to the spot with the shock and with horror.

The Jondrette entered.

The dormer window permitted the entrance of a ray of moonlight between two blocks of shadow. One of these blocks of shadow entirely covered the wall against which Marius was leaning, so that he disappeared within it.

Mother Jondrette raised her eyes, did not see Marius, took the two chairs, the only ones which Marius possessed, and went away, letting the door fall heavily to behind her.

She re-entered the lair.

"Here are the two chairs."

"And here is the lantern. Go down as quick as you can."

She hastily obeyed, and Jondrette was left alone.

He placed the two chairs on opposite sides of the table, turned the *écluse* in the brazier, set in front of the fireplace an old screen which masked the chafing-dish, then went to the corner where lay the pile of rope, and bent down as though to examine something. Marius then recognized the fact, that what he had taken for a shapeless mass was a very well-made rope-ladder, with wooden rungs and two hooks with which to attach it.

This ladder, and some large tools, veritable masses of iron,

which were mingled with the old iron piled up behind the door, had not been in the Jondrette hovel in the morning, and had evidently been brought thither in the afternoon, during Marius' absence.

"Those are the utensils of an edge-tool maker," thought Marius.

Had Marius been a little more learned in this line, he would have recognized in what he took for the engines of an edge-tool maker, certain instruments which will force a lock or pick a lock, and others which will cut or slice, the two families of tools which burglars call *cadets* and *fauchants*.

The fireplace and the two chairs were exactly opposite Marius. The brazier being concealed, the only light in the room was now furnished by the candle; the smallest bit of crockery on the table or on the chimney-piece cast a large shadow. There was something indescribably calm, threatening, and hideous about this chamber. One felt that there existed in it the anticipation of something terrible.

Jondrette had allowed his pipe to go out, a serious sign of preoccupation, and had again seated himself. The candle brought out the fierce and the fine angles of his countenance. He indulged in scowls and in abrupt unfoldings of the right hand, as though he were responding to the last counsels of a sombre inward monologue. In the course of one of these dark replies which he was making to himself, he pulled the table drawer rapidly towards him, took out a long kitchen knife which was concealed there, and tried the edge of its blade on his nail. That done, he put the knife back in the drawer and shut it.

Marius, on his side, grasped the pistol in his right pocket, drew it out and cocked it.

The pistol emitted a sharp, clear click, as he cocked it.

Jondrette started, half rose, listened a moment, then began to laugh and said:—

"What a fool I am! It's the partition cracking!"

Marius kept the pistol in his hand.

CHAPTER XVIII

MARIUS' TWO CHAIRS FORM A VIS-A-VIS

SUDDENLY, the distant and melancholy vibration of a clock shook the panes. Six o'clock was striking from Saint-Médard.

Jondrette marked off each stroke with a toss of his head. When the sixth had struck, he snuffed the candle with his fingers.

Then he began to pace up and down the room, listened at the corridor, walked on again, then listened once more.

"Provided only that he comes!" he muttered, then he returned to his chair.

He had hardly reseated himself when the door opened.

Mother Jondrette had opened it, and now remained in the corridor making a horrible, amiable grimace, which one of the holes of the dark-lantern illuminated from below.

"Enter, sir," she said.

"Enter, my benefactor," repeated Jondrette, rising hastily.

M. Leblanc made his appearance.

He wore an air of serenity which rendered him singularly venerable.

He laid four louis on the table.

"Monsieur Fabantou," said he, "this is for your rent and your most pressing necessities. We will attend to the rest hereafter."

"May God requite it to you, my generous benefactor!" said Jondrette.

And rapidly approaching his wife:—

"Dismiss the carriage!"

She slipped out while her husband was lavishing salutes and offering M. Leblanc a chair. An instant later she returned and whispered in his ear:—

"'Tis done."

The snow, which had not ceased falling since the morning,

was so deep that the arrival of the *fiacre* had not been audible, and they did not now hear its departure.

Meanwhile, M. Leblane had seated himself.

Jondrette had taken possession of the other chair, facing M. Leblane.

Now, in order to form an idea of the scene which is to follow, let the reader picture to himself in his own mind, a cold night, the solitudes of the *Salpêtrière* covered with snow and white as winding-sheets in the moonlight, the taper-like lights of the street lanterns which shone redly here and there along those tragie boulevards, and the long rows of black elms, not a passer-by for perhaps a quarter of a league around, the *Gorbeau* hovel, at its highest pitch of silence, of horror, and of darkness; in that building, in the midst of those solitudes, in the midst of that darkness, the vast Jondrette garret lighted by a single candle, and in that den two men seated at a table, M. Leblane tranquil, Jondrette smiling and alarming, the Jondrette woman, the female wolf, in one corner, and, behind the partition, Marius, invisible, erect, not losing a word, not missing a single movement, his eye on the watch, and pistol in hand.

However, Marius experienced only an emotion of horror, but no fear. He elaped the stock of the pistol firmly and felt reassured. "I shall be able to stop that wretch whenever I please," he thought.

He felt that the police were there somewhere in ambuscade, waiting for the signal agreed upon and ready to stretch out their arm.

Moreover, he was in hopes, that this violent encounter between Jondrette and M. Leblane would cast some light on all the things which he was interested in learning.

CHAPTER XIX

OCCUPYING ONE'S SELF WITH OBSCURE DEPTHS

HARDLY was M. Leblanc seated, when he turned his eyes towards the pallets, which were empty.

"How is the poor little wounded girl?" he inquired.

"Bad," replied Jondrette with a heart-broken and grateful smile, "very bad, my worthy sir. Her elder sister has taken her to the Bourbe to have her hurt dressed. You will see them presently; they will be back immediately."

"Madame Fabantou seems to me to be better," went on M. Leblanc, casting his eyes on the eccentric costume of the Jondrette woman, as she stood between him and the door, as though already guarding the exit, and gazed at him in an attitude of menace and almost of combat.

"She is dying," said Jondrette. "But what do you expect, sir! She has so much courage, that woman has! She's not a woman, she's an ox."

The Jondrette, touched by his compliment, deprecated it with the affected airs of a flattered monster.

"You are always too good to me, Monsieur Jondrette!"

"Jondrette!" said M. Leblanc, "I thought your name was Fabantou?"

"Fabantou, alias Jondrette!" replied the husband hurriedly. "An artistic sobriquet!"

And launching at his wife a shrug of the shoulders which M. Leblanc did not catch, he continued with an emphatic and caressing inflection of voice:—

"Ah! we have had a happy life together, this poor darling and I! What would there be left for us if we had not that? We are so wretched, my respectable sir! We have arms, but there is no work! We have the will, no work! I don't know how the government arranges that, but, on my word of honor, sir, I am not Jacobin, sir, I am not a bousingot.¹ I don't wish

¹A democrat.

them any evil, but if I were the ministers, on my most sacred word, things would be different. Here, for instance, I wanted to have my girls taught the trade of paper-box makers. You will say to me: 'What! a trade?' Yes! A trade! A simple trade! A bread-winner! What a fall, my benefactor! What a degradation, when one has been what we have been! Alas! There is nothing left to us of our days of prosperity! One thing only, a picture, of which I think a great deal, but which I am willing to part with, for I must live! Item, one must live!"

While Jondrette thus talked, with an apparent incoherence which detracted nothing from the thoughtful and sagacious expression of his physiognomy, Marius raised his eyes, and perceived at the other end of the room a person whom he had not seen before. A man had just entered, so softly that the door had not been heard to turn on its hinges. This man wore a violet knitted vest, which was old, worn, spotted, cut and gaping at every fold, wide trousers of cotton velvet, wooden shoes on his feet, no shirt, had his neck bare, his bare arms tattooed, and his face smeared with black. He had seated himself in silence on the nearest bed, and, as he was behind Jondrette, he could only be indistinctly seen.

That sort of magnetic instinct which turns aside the gaze, caused M. Leblanc to turn round almost at the same moment as Marius. He could not refrain from a gesture of surprise which did not escape Jondrette.

"Ah! I see!" exclaimed Jondrette, buttoning up his coat with an air of complaisance, "you are looking at your overcoat? It fits me! My faith, but it fits me!"

"Who is that man?" said M. Leblanc.

"Him?" ejaculated Jondrette, "he's a neighbor of mine. Don't pay any attention to him."

The neighbor was a singular-looking individual. However, manufactories of chemical products abound in the Faubourg Saint-Marceau. Many of the workmen might have black faces. Besides this, M. Leblanc's whole person was expressive of candid and intrepid confidence.

He went on:—

“Excuse me; what were you saying, M. Fabantou?”

“I was telling you, sir, and dear protector,” replied Jondrette, placing his elbows on the table and contemplating M. Leblanc with steady and tender eyes, not unlike the eyes of the boa-constrictor, “I was telling you, that I have a picture to sell.”

A slight sound came from the door. A second man had just entered and seated himself on the bed, behind Jondrette.

Like the first, his arms were bare, and he had a mask of ink or lampblack.

Although this man had, literally, glided into the room, he had not been able to prevent M. Leblanc catching sight of him.

“Don’t mind them,” said Jondrette, “they are people who belong in the house. So I was saying, that there remains in my possession a valuable picture. But stop, sir, take a look at it.”

He rose, went to the wall at the foot of which stood the panel which we have already mentioned, and turned it round, still leaving it supported against the wall. It really was something which resembled a picture, and which the candle illuminated, somewhat. Marius could make nothing out of it, as Jondrette stood between the picture and him; he only saw a coarse daub, and a sort of principal personage colored with the harsh crudity of foreign canvasses and screen paintings.

“What is that?” asked M. Leblanc.

Jondrette exclaimed:—

“A painting by a master, a picture of great value, my benefactor! I am as much attached to it as I am to my two daughters; it recalls souvenirs to me! But I have told you, and I will not take it back, that I am so wretched that I will part with it.”

Either by chance, or because he had begun to feel a dawning uneasiness, M. Leblanc’s glance returned to the bottom of the room as he examined the picture.

There were now four men, three seated on the bed, one

standing near the door-post, all four with bare arms and motionless, with faces smeared with black. One of those on the bed was leaning against the wall, with closed eyes, and it might have been supposed that he was asleep. He was old; his white hair contrasting with his blackened face produced a horrible effect. The other two seemed to be young; one wore a beard, the other wore his hair long. None of them had on shoes; those who did not wear socks were barefooted.

Jondrette noticed that M. Leblanc's eye was fixed on these men.

"They are friends. They are neighbors," said he. "Their faces are black because they work in charecoal. They are chimney-builders. Don't trouble yourself about them, my benefactor, but buy my picture. Have pity on my misery. I will not ask you much for it. How much do you think it is worth?"

"Well," said M. Leblanc, looking Jondrette full in the eye, and with the manner of a man who is on his guard, "it is some signboard for a tavern, and is worth about three francs."

Jondrette replied sweetly:—

"Have you your pocket-book with you? I should be satisfied with a thousand crowns."

M. Leblanc sprang up, placed his back against the wall, and cast a rapid glance around the room. He had Jondrette on his left, on the side next the window, and the Jondrette woman and the four men on his right, on the side next the door. The four men did not stir, and did not even seem to be looking on.

Jondrette had again begun to speak in a plaintive tone, with so vague an eye, and so lamentable an intonation, that M. Leblanc might have supposed that what he had before him was a man who had simply gone mad with misery.

"If you do not buy my picture, my dear benefactor," said Jondrette, "I shall be left without resources; there will be nothing left for me but to throw myself into the river. When I think that I wanted to have my two girls taught the middle-class paper-box trade, the making of boxes for New Year's

gifts! Well! A table with a board at the end to keep the glasses from falling off is required, then a special stove is needed, a pot with three compartments for the different degrees of strength of the paste, according as it is to be used for wood, paper, or stuff, a paring-knife to cut the cardboard, a mould to adjust it, a hammer to nail the steels, pincers, how the devil do I know what all? And all that in order to earn four sous a day! And you have to work fourteen hours a day! And each box passes through the workwoman's hands thirteen times! And you can't wet the paper! And you mustn't spot anything! And you must keep the paste hot. 'The devil, I tell you! Four sous a day! How do you suppose a man is to live?'

As he spoke, Jondrette did not look at M. Leblanc, who was observing him. M. Leblanc's eye was fixed on Jondrette, and Jondrette's eye was fixed on the door. Marius' eager attention was transferred from one to the other. M. Leblanc seemed to be asking himself: "Is this man an idiot?" Jondrette repeated two or three distinct times, with all manner of varying inflections of the whining and supplicating order: "There is nothing left for me but to throw myself into the river! I went down three steps at the side of the bridge of Austerlitz the other day for that purpose."

All at once his dull eyes lighted up with a hideous flash; the little man drew himself up and became terrible, took a step toward M. Leblanc and cried in a voice of thunder: "That has nothing to do with the question! Do you know me?"

CHAPTER XX

THE TRAP

THE door of the garret had just opened abruptly, and allowed a view of three men clad in blue linen blouses, and masked with masks of black paper. The first was thin, and had a long, iron-tipped cudgel; the second, who was a

sort of colossus, carried, by the middle of the handle, with the blade downward, a butcher's pole-axe for slaughtering cattle. The third, a man with thick-set shoulders, not so slender as the first, held in his hand an enormous key stolen from the door of some prison.

It appeared that the arrival of these men was what Jondrette had been waiting for. A rapid dialogue ensued between him and the man with the cudgel, the thin one.

"Is everything ready?" said Jondrette.

"Yes," replied the thin man.

"Where is Montparnasse?"

"The young principal actor stopped to chat with your girl."

"Which?"

"The eldest."

"Is there a carriage at the door?"

"Yes."

"Is the team harnessed?"

"Yes."

"With two good horses?"

"Excellent."

"Is it waiting where I ordered?"

"Yes."

"Good," said Jondrette.

M. Leblanc was very pale. He was scrutinizing everything around him in the den, like a man who understands what he has fallen into, and his head, directed in turn toward all the heads which surrounded him, moved on his neck with an astonished and attentive slowness, but there was nothing in his air which resembled fear. He had improvised an intrenchment out of the table; and the man, who but an instant previously, had borne merely the appearance of a kindly old man, had suddenly become a sort of athlete, and placed his robust fist on the back of his chair, with a formidable and surprising gesture.

This old man, who was so firm and so brave in the presence of such a danger, seemed to possess one of those natures which are as courageous as they are kind, both easily and simply.



"MY NAME IS THÉNARDIER!"

The father of a woman whom we love is never a stranger to us. Marius felt proud of that unknown man.

Three of the men, of whom Jondrette had said: "They are chimney-builders," had armed themselves from the pile of old iron, one with a heavy pair of shears, the second with weighing-tongs, the third with a hammer, and had placed themselves across the entrance without uttering a syllable. The old man had remained on the bed, and had merely opened his eyes. The Jondrette woman had seated herself beside him.

Marius decided that in a few seconds more the moment for intervention would arrive, and he raised his right hand towards the ceiling, in the direction of the corridor, in readiness to discharge his pistol.

Jondrette having terminated his colloquy with the man with the cudgel, turned once more to M. Leblanc, and repeated his question, accompanying it with that low, repressed, and terrible laugh which was peculiar to him:—

"So you do not recognize me?"

M. Leblanc looked him full in the face, and replied:—

"No."

Then Jondrette advanced to the table. He leaned across the candle, crossing his arms, putting his angular and ferocious jaw close to M. Leblanc's calm face, and advancing as far as possible without forcing M. Leblanc to retreat, and, in this posture of a wild beast who is about to bite, he exclaimed:—

"My name is not Fabantou, my name is not Jondrette. my name is Thénardier. I am the inn-keeper of Montfermeil! Do you understand? Thénardier! Now do you know me?"

An almost imperceptible flush crossed M. Leblanc's brow, and he replied with a voice which neither trembled nor rose above its ordinary level, with his accustomed placidity:—

"No more than before."

Marius did not hear this reply. Any one who had seen him at that moment through the darkness would have perceived that he was haggard, stupid, thunder-struck. At the moment

when Jondrette said: "My name is Thénardier," Marius had trembled in every limb, and had leaned against the wall, as though he felt the cold of a steel blade through his heart. Then his right arm, all ready to discharge the signal shot, dropped slowly, and at the moment when Jondrette repeated, "Thénardier, do you understand?" Marius's faltering fingers had come near letting the pistol fall. Jondrette, by revealing his identity, had not moved M. Leblanc, but he had quite upset Marius. That name of Thénardier, with which M. Leblanc did not seem to be acquainted, Marius knew well. Let the reader recall what that name meant to him! That name he had worn on his heart, inscribed in his father's testament! He bore it at the bottom of his mind, in the depths of his memory, in that sacred injunction: "A certain Thénardier saved my life. If my son encounters him, he will do him all the good that lies in his power." That name, it will be remembered, was one of the pieties of his soul; he mingled it with the name of his father in his worship. What! This man was that Thénardier, that inn-keeper of Montfermeil whom he had so long and so vainly sought! He had found him at last, and how? His father's saviour was a ruffian! That man, to whose service Marius was burning to devote himself, was a monster! That liberator of Colonel Pontmercy was on the point of committing a crime whose scope Marius did not, as yet, clearly comprehend, but which resembled an assassination! And against whom, great God! what a fatality! What a bitter mockery of fate! His father had commanded him from the depths of his coffin to do all the good in his power to this Thénardier, and for four years Marius had cherished no other thought than to acquit this debt of his father's, and at the moment when he was on the eve of having a brigand seized in the very act of crime by justice, destiny cried to him: "This is Thénardier!" He could at last repay this man for his father's life, saved amid a hail-storm of grape-shot on the heroic field of Waterloo, and repay it with the scaffold! He had sworn to himself that if ever he found that Thénardier, he would address him only by

throwing himself at his feet; and now he actually had found him, but it was only to deliver him over to the executioner! His father said to him: "Succor Thénardier!" And he replied to that adored and sainted voice by crushing Thénardier! He was about to offer to his father in his grave the spectacle of that man who had torn him from death at the peril of his own life, executed on the Place Saint-Jacques through the means of his son, of that Marius to whom he had entrusted that man by his will! And what a mockery to have so long worn on his breast his father's last commands, written in his own hand, only to act in so horribly contrary a sense! But, on the other hand, now look on that trap and not prevent it! Condemn the victim and to spare the assassin! Could one be held to any gratitude towards so miserable a wretch? All the ideas which Marius had cherished for the last four years were pierced through and through, as it were, by this unforeseen blow.

He shuddered. Everything depended on him. Unknown to themselves, he held in his hand all those beings who were moving about there before his eyes. If he fired his pistol, M. Leblanc was saved, and Thénardier lost; if he did not fire, M. Leblanc would be sacrificed, and, who knows? Thénardier would escape. Should he dash down the one or allow the other to fall? Remorse awaited him in either case.

What was he to do? What should he choose? Be false to the most imperious souvenirs, to all those solemn vows to himself, to the most sacred duty, to the most venerated text! Should he ignore his father's testament, or allow the perpetration of a crime! On the one hand, it seemed to him that he heard "his Ursule" supplicating for her father, and on the other, the colonel commending Thénardier to his care. He felt that he was going mad. His knees gave way beneath him. And he had not even the time for deliberation, so great was the fury with which the scene before his eyes was hastening to its catastrophe. It was like a whirlwind of which he had thought himself the master, and which was now sweeping him away. He was on the verge of swooning.

In the meantime, Thénardier, whom we shall henceforth call by no other name, was pacing up and down in front of the table in a sort of frenzy and wild triumph.

He seized the candle in his fist, and set it on the chimney-piece with so violent a bang that the wick came near being extinguished, and the tallow bespattered the wall.

Then he turned to M. Leblanc with a horrible look, and spit out these words:—

“Done for! Smoked brown! Cooked! Spitchcocked!”

And again he began to march back and forth, in full eruption.

“Ah!” he cried, “so I’ve found you again at last, Mister philanthropist! Mister threadbare millionaire! Mister giver of dolls! you old ninny! Ah! so you don’t recognize me! No, it wasn’t you who came to Montfermeil, to my inn, eight years ago, on Christmas eve, 1823! It wasn’t you who carried off that Fantine’s child from me! The Lark! It wasn’t you who had a yellow great-coat! No! Nor a package of duds in your hand, as you had this morning here! Say, wife, it seems to be his mania to carry packets of woollen stockings into houses! Old charity monger, get out with you! Are you a hosier, Mister millionaire? You give away your stock in trade to the poor, holy man! What bosh! merry Andrew! Ah! and you don’t recognize me? Well, I recognize you, that I do! I recognized you the very moment you poked your snout in here. Ah! you’ll find out presently, that it isn’t all roses to thrust yourself in that fashion into people’s houses, under the pretext that they are taverns, in wretched clothes, with the air of a poor man, to whom one would give a sou, to deceive persons, to play the generous, to take away their means of livelihood, and to make threats in the woods, and you can’t call things quits because afterwards, when people are ruined, you bring a coat that is too large, and two miserable hospital blankets, you old blackguard, you child-stealer!”

He paused, and seemed to be talking to himself for a moment. One would have said that his wrath had fallen into some hole, like the Rhone; then, as though he were concluding

aloud the things which he had been saying to himself in a whisper, he smote the table with his fist, and shouted:—

“And with his goody-goody air!”

And, apostrophizing M. Leblanc:—

“Parbleu! You made game of me in the past! You are the cause of all my misfortunes! For fifteen hundred francs you got a girl whom I had, and who certainly belonged to rich people, and who had already brought in a great deal of money, and from whom I might have extracted enough to live on all my life! A girl who would have made up to me for everything that I lost in that vile cook-shop, where there was nothing but one continual row, and where, like a fool, I ate up my last farthing! Oh! I wish all the wine folks drank in my house had been poison to those who drank it! Well, never mind! Say, now! You must have thought me ridiculous when you went off with the Lark! You had your cudgel in the forest. You were the stronger. Revenge. I’m the one to hold the trumps to-day! You’re in a sorry case, my good fellow! Oh, but I can laugh! Really, I laugh! Didn’t he fall into the trap! I told him that I was an actor, that my name was Fabantou, that I had played comedy with Mamselle Mars, with Mamselle Muche, that my landlord insisted on being paid to-morrow, the 4th of February, and he didn’t even notice that the 8th of January, and not the 4th of February is the time when the quarter runs out! Absurd idiot! And the four miserable Philippes which he has brought me! Scoundrel! He hadn’t the heart even to go as high as a hundred francs! And how he swallowed my platitudes! That did amuse me. I said to myself: ‘Blockhead! Come, I’ve got you! I lick your paws this morning, but I’ll gnaw your heart this evening!’”

Thénardier paused. He was out of breath. His little, narrow chest panted like a forge bellows. His eyes were full of the ignoble happiness of a feeble, cruel, and cowardly creature, which finds that it can, at last, harass what it has feared, and insult what it has flattered, the joy of a dwarf who should be able to set his heel on the head of Goliath, the joy of a jackal which is beginning to rend a sick bull, so nearly dead that he

can no longer defend himself, but sufficiently alive to suffer still.

M. Leblanc did not interrupt him, but said to him when he paused:—

“I do not know what you mean to say. You are mistaken in me. I am a very poor man, and anything but a millionaire. I do not know you. You are mistaking me for some other person.”

“Ah!” roared Thénardier hoarsely, “a pretty lie! You stick to that pleasantry, do you! You’re floundering, my old buck! Ah! You don’t remember! You don’t see who I am?”

“Excuse me, sir,” said M. Leblanc with a politeness of accent, which at that moment seemed peculiarly strange and powerful, “I see that you are a villain!”

Who has not remarked the fact that odious creatures possess a susceptibility of their own, that monsters are ticklish! At this word “villain,” the female Thénardier sprang from the bed, Thénardier grasped his chair as though he were about to crush it in his hands. “Don’t you stir!” he shouted to his wife: and, turning to M. Leblanc:—

“Villain! Yes, I know that you call us that, you rich gentlemen! Stop! it’s true that I became bankrupt, that I am in hiding, that I have no bread, that I have not a single sou, that I am a villain! It’s three days since I have had anything to eat, so I’m a villain! Ah! you folks warm your feet, you have Sakoski boots, you have wadded great-coats, like archbishops, you lodge on the first floor in houses that have porters, you eat truffles, you eat asparagus at forty francs the bunch in the month of January, and green peas, you gorge yourselves, and when you want to know whether it is cold, you look in the papers to see what the engineer Chevalier’s thermometer says about it. We, it is we who are thermometers. We don’t need to go out and look on the quay at the corner of the Tour de l’Horologe, to find out the number of degrees of cold; we feel our blood congealing in our veins, and the ice forming round our hearts, and we say: ‘There is no God!’ And you come

to our caverns, yes, our caverns, for the purpose of calling us villains! But we'll devour you! But we'll devour you, poor little things! Just see here, Mister millionaire: I have been a solid man, I have held a license, I have been an elector, I am a bourgeois, that I am! And it's quite possible that you are not!"

Here Thénardier took a step towards the men who stood near the door, and added with a shudder:—

"When I think that he has dared to come here and talk to me like a cobbler!"

Then addressing M. Leblanc with a fresh outburst of frenzy:—

"And listen to this also, Mister philanthropist! I'm not a suspicious character, not a bit of it! I'm not a man whose name nobody knows, and who comes and abducts children from houses! I'm an old French soldier, I ought to have been decorated! I was at Waterloo, so I was! And in the battle I saved a general called the Comte of I don't know what. He told me his name, but his beastly voice was so weak that I didn't hear. All I caught was Merei [thanks]. I'd rather have had his name than his thanks. That would have helped me to find him again. The picture that you see here, and which was painted by David at Bruqueselles,—do you know what it represents? It represents me. David wished to immortalize that feat of prowess. I have that general on my back, and I am carrying him through the grape-shot. There's the history of it! That general never did a single thing for me; he was no better than the rest! But none the less, I saved his life at the risk of my own, and I have the certificate of the fact in my pocket! I am a soldier of Waterloo, by all the furies! And now that I have had the goodness to tell you all this, let's have an end of it. I want money, I want a deal of money, I must have an enormous lot of money, or I'll exterminate you, by the thunder of the good God!"

Marius had regained some measure of control over his anguish, and was listening. The last possibility of doubt had just vanished. It certainly was the Thénardier of the will.

Marius shuddered at that reproach of ingratitude directed against his father, and which he was on the point of so fatally justifying. His perplexity was redoubled.

Moreover, there was in all these words of Thénardier, in his accent, in his gesture, in his glance which darted flames at every word, there was, in this explosion of an evil nature disclosing everything, in that mixture of braggadocio and abjectness, of pride and pettiness, of rage and folly, in that chaos of real griefs and false sentiments, in that immodesty of a malicious man tasting the voluptuous delights of violence, in that shameless nudity of a repulsive soul, in that conflagration of all sufferings combined with all hatreds, something which was as hideous as evil, and as heart-rending as the truth.

The picture of the master, the painting by David which he had proposed that M. Leblanc should purchase, was nothing else, as the reader has divined, than the sign of his tavern painted, as it will be remembered, by himself, the only relic which he had preserved from his shipwreck at Montfermeil.

As he had ceased to intercept Marius' visual ray, Marius could examine this thing, and in the daub, he actually did recognize a battle, a background of smoke, and a man carrying another man. It was the group composed of Pontinercy and Thénardier; the sergeant the rescuer, the colonel rescued. Marius was like a drunken man; this picture restored his father to life in some sort; it was no longer the signboard of the wine-shop at Montfermeil, it was a resurrection; a tomb had yawned, a phantom had risen there. Marius heard his heart beating in his temples, he had the cannon of Waterloo in his ears, his bleeding father, vaguely depicted on that sinister panel terrified him, and it seemed to him that the misshapen spectre was gazing intently at him.

When Thénardier had recovered his breath, he turned his bloodshot eyes on M. Leblanc, and said to him in a low, curt voice:—

“What have you to say before we put the handcuffs on you?”

M. Leblanc held his peace.

In the midst of this silence, a cracked voice launched this lugubrious sarcasm from the corridor:—

“If there’s any wood to be split, I’m there!”

It was the man with the axe, who was growing merry.

At the same moment, an enormous, bristling, and clayey face made its appearance at the door, with a hideous laugh which exhibited not teeth, but fangs.

It was the face of the man with the butcher’s axe.

“Why have you taken off your mask?” cried Thénardier in a rage.

“For fun,” retorted the man.

For the last few minutes M. Leblanc had appeared to be watching and following all the movements of Thénardier, who, blinded and dazzled by his own rage, was stalking to and fro in the den with full confidence that the door was guarded, and of holding an unarmed man fast, he being armed himself, of being nine against one, supposing that the female Thénardier counted for but one man.

During his address to the man with the pole-axe, he had turned his back to M. Leblanc.

M. Leblanc seized this moment, overturned the chair with his foot and the table with his fist, and with one bound, with prodigious agility, before Thénardier had time to turn round, he had reached the window. To open it, to scale the frame, to bestride it, was the work of a second only. He was half out when six robust fists seized him and dragged him back energetically into the hovel. These were the three “chimney-builders,” who had flung themselves upon him. At the same time the Thénardier woman had wound her hands in his hair.

At the trampling which ensued, the other ruffians rushed up from the corridor. The old man on the bed, who seemed under the influence of wine, descended from the pallet and came reeling up, with a stone-breaker’s hammer in his hand.

One of the “chimney-builders,” whose smirched face was lighted up by the candle, and in whom Marius recognized, in spite of his daubing, Panchaud, alias Printanier, alias Bigre-

naïlle, lifted above M. Leblanc's head a sort of bludgeon made of two balls of lead, at the two ends of a bar of iron.

Marius could not resist this sight. "My father," he thought, "forgive me!"

And his finger sought the trigger of his pistol.

The shot was on the point of being discharged when Thénardier's voice shouted:—

"Don't harm him!"

This desperate attempt of the victim, far from exasperating Thénardier, had calmed him. There existed in him two men, the ferocious man and the adroit man. Up to that moment, in the excess of his triumph in the presence of the prey which had been brought down, and which did not stir, the ferocious man had prevailed; when the victim struggled and tried to resist, the adroit man reappeared and took the upper hand.

"Don't hurt him!" he repeated, and without suspecting it, his first success was to arrest the pistol in the act of being discharged, and to paralyze Marius, in whose opinion the urgency of the case disappeared, and who, in the face of this new phase, saw no inconvenience in waiting a while longer.

Who knows whether some chance would not arise which would deliver him from the horrible alternative of allowing Ursule's father to perish, or of destroying the colonel's saviour?

A herculean struggle had begun. With one blow full in the chest, M. Leblanc had sent the old man tumbling, rolling in the middle of the room, then with two backward sweeps of his hand he had overthrown two more assailants, and he held one under each of his knees; the wretches were rattling in the throat beneath this pressure as under a granite millstone; but the other four had seized the formidable old man by both arms and the back of his neck, and were holding him doubled up over the two "chimney-builders" on the floor.

Thus, the master of some and mastered by the rest, crushing those beneath him and stifling under those on top of him, endeavoring in vain to shake off all the efforts which were heaped upon him, M. Leblanc disappeared under the horrible group of

ruffians like the wild boar beneath a howling pile of dogs and hounds.

They succeeded in overthrowing him upon the bed nearest the window, and there they held him in awe. The Thénardier woman had not released her clutch on his hair.

"Don't you mix yourself up in this affair," said Thénardier. "You'll tear your shawl."

The Thénardier obeyed, as the female wolf obeys the male wolf, with a growl.

"Now," said Thénardier, "search him, you other fellows!"

M. Leblanc seemed to have renounced the idea of resistance.

They searched him.

He had nothing on his person except a leather purse containing six francs, and his handkerchief.

Thénardier put the handkerchief into his own pocket.

"What! No pocket-book?" he demanded.

"No, nor watch," replied one of the "chimney-builders."

"Never mind," murmured the masked man who carried the big key, in the voice of a ventriloquist, "he's a tough old fellow."

Thénardier went to the corner near the door, picked up a bundle of ropes and threw them at the men.

"Tie him to the leg of the bed," said he.

And, catching sight of the old man who had been stretched across the room by the blow from M. Leblanc's fist, and who made no movement, he added:—

"Is Boulatruelle dead?"

"No," replied Bigrenaille, "he's drunk."

"Sweep him into a corner," said Thénardier.

Two of the "chimney-builders" pushed the drunken man into the corner near the heap of old iron with their feet.

"Babet," said Thénardier in a low tone to the man with the cudgel, "why did you bring so many; they were not needed."

"What can you do?" replied the man with the cudgel. "they all wanted to be in it. This is a bad season. There's no business going on."

The pallet on which M. Leblanc had been thrown was a sort

of hospital bed, elevated on four coarse wooden legs, roughly hewn.

M. Leblanc let them take their own course.

The ruffians bound him securely, in an upright attitude, with his feet on the ground at the head of the bed, the end which was most remote from the window, and nearest to the fireplace.

When the last knot had been tied, Thénardier took a chair and seated himself almost facing M. Leblanc.

Thénardier no longer looked like himself; in the course of a few moments his face had passed from unbridled violence to tranquil and cunning sweetness.

Marius found it difficult to recognize in that polished smile of a man in official life the almost bestial mouth which had been foaming but a moment before; he gazed with amazement on that fantastic and alarming metamorphosis, and he felt as a man might feel who should behold a tiger converted into a lawyer.

“Monsieur—” said Thénardier.

And dismissing with a gesture the ruffians who still kept their hands on M. Leblanc:—

“Stand off a little, and let me have a talk with the gentleman.”

All retired towards the door.

He went on:—

“Monsieur, you did wrong to try to jump out of the window. You might have broken your leg. Now, if you will permit me, we will converse quietly. In the first place, I must communicate to you an observation which I have made, which is, that you have not uttered the faintest cry.”

Thénardier was right, this detail was correct, although it had escaped Marius in his agitation. M. Leblanc had barely pronounced a few words, without raising his voice, and even during his struggle with the six ruffians near the window he had preserved the most profound and singular silence.

Thénardier continued:—

“Mon Dieu! You might have shouted ‘stop thief’ a bit,

and I should not have thought it improper. 'Murder!' That, too, is said occasionally, and, so far as I am concerned, I should not have taken it in bad part. It is very natural that you should make a little row when you find yourself with persons who don't inspire you with sufficient confidence. You might have done that, and no one would have troubled you on that account. You would not even have been gagged. And I will tell you why. This room is very private. That's its only recommendation, but it has that in its favor. You might fire off a mortar and it would produce about as much noise at the nearest police station as the snores of a drunken man. Here a cannon would make a *boum*, and the thunder would make a *pouf*. It's a handy lodging. But, in short, you did not shout, and it is better so. I present you my compliments, and I will tell you the conclusion that I draw from that fact: My dear sir, when a man shouts, who comes? The police. And after the police? Justice. Well! You have not made an outcry; that is because you don't care to have the police and the courts come in any more than we do. It is because,—I have long suspected it,—you have some interest in hiding something. On our side we have the same interest. So we can come to an understanding."

As he spoke thus, it seemed as though Thénardier, who kept his eyes fixed on M. Leblanc, were trying to plunge the sharp points which darted from the pupils into the very conscience of his prisoner. Moreover, his language, which was stamped with a sort of moderated, subdued insolence and crafty insolence, was reserved and almost choice, and in that rascal, who had been nothing but a robber a short time previously, one now felt "the man who had studied for the priesthood."

The silence preserved by the prisoner, that precaution which had been carried to the point of forgetting all anxiety for his own life, that resistance opposed to the first impulse of nature, which is to utter a cry, all this, it must be confessed, now that his attention had been called to it, troubled Marius, and affected him with painful astonishment.

Thénardier's well-grounded observation still further ob-

scured for Marius the dense mystery which enveloped that grave and singular person on whom Courfeyrac had bestowed the sobriquet of Monsieur Leblanc.

But whoever he was, bound with ropes, surrounded with executioners, half plunged, so to speak, in a grave which was closing in upon him to the extent of a degree with every moment that passed, in the presence of Thénardier's wrath, as in the presence of his sweetness, this man remained impassive; and Marius could not refrain from admiring at such a moment the superbly melancholy visage.

Here, evidently, was a soul which was inaccessible to terror, and which did not know the meaning of despair. Here was one of those men who command amazement in desperate circumstances. Extreme as was the crisis, inevitable as was the catastrophe, there was nothing here of the agony of the drowning man, who opens his horror-filled eyes under the water.

Thénardier rose in an unpretending manner, went to the fireplace, shoved aside the screen, which he leaned against the neighboring pallet, and thus unmasked the brazier full of glowing coals, in which the prisoner could plainly see the chisel white-hot and spotted here and there with tiny scarlet stars.

Then Thénardier returned to his seat beside M. Leblanc.

"I continue," said he. "We can come to an understanding. Let us arrange this matter in an amicable way. I was wrong to lose my temper just now, I don't know what I was thinking of, I went a great deal too far, I said extravagant things. For example, because you are a millionaire, I told you that I exacted money, a lot of money, a deal of money. That would not be reasonable. Mon Dieu, in spite of your riches, you have expenses of your own—who has not? I don't want to ruin you, I am not a greedy fellow, after all. I am not one of those people who, because they have the advantage of the position, profit by the fact to make themselves ridiculous. Why. I'm taking things into consideration and making a sacrifice on my side. I only want two hundred thousand francs."

M. Leblanc uttered not a word.

Thénardier went on:—

“You see that I put not a little water in my wine; I’m very moderate. I don’t know the state of your fortune, but I do know that you don’t stick at money, and a benevolent man like yourself can certainly give two hundred thousand francs to the father of a family who is out of luck. Certainly, you are reasonable, too; you haven’t imagined that I should take all the trouble I have to-day and organized this affair this evening, which has been labor well bestowed, in the opinion of these gentlemen, merely to wind up by asking you for enough to go and drink red wine at fifteen sous and eat veal at Desnoyer’s. Two hundred thousand francs—it’s surely worth all that. This trifle once out of your pocket, I guarantee you that that’s the end of the matter, and that you have no further demands to fear. You will say to me: ‘But I haven’t two hundred thousand francs about me.’ Oh! I’m not extortionate. I don’t demand that. I only ask one thing of you. Have the goodness to write what I am about to dictate to you.”

Here Thénardier paused; then he added, emphasizing his words, and casting a smile in the direction of the brazier:—

“I warn you that I shall not admit that you don’t know how to write.”

A grand inquisitor might have envied that smile.

Thénardier pushed the table close to M. Leblanc, and took an inkstand, a pen, and a sheet of paper from the drawer which he left half open, and in which gleamed the long blade of the knife.

He placed the sheet of paper before M. Leblanc.

“Write,” said he.

The prisoner spoke at last.

“How do you expect me to write? I am bound.”

“That’s true, excuse me!” ejaculated Thénardier, “you are quite right.”

And turning to Bigrenaille:—

“Untie the gentleman’s right arm.”

Panchaud, alias Printanier, alias Bigrenaille, executed Thénardier's order.

When the prisoner's right arm was free, Thénardier dipped the pen in the ink and presented it to him.

"Understand thoroughly, sir, that you are in our power, at our discretion, that no human power can get you out of this, and that we shall be really grieved if we are forced to proceed to disagreeable extremities. I know neither your name, nor your address, but I warn you, that you will remain bound until the person charged with carrying the letter which you are about to write shall have returned. Now, be so good as to write."

"What?" demanded the prisoner.

"I will dictate."

M. Leblanc took the pen.

Thénardier began to dictate:—

"My daughter—"

The prisoner shuddered, and raised his eyes to Thénardier.

"Put down 'My dear daughter'—" said Thénardier.

M. Leblanc obeyed.

Thénardier continued:—

"Come instantly—"

He paused:—

"You address her as *thou*, do you not?"

"Who?" asked M. Leblanc.

"Parbleu!" cried Thénardier, "the little one, the Lark."

M. Leblanc replied without the slightest apparent emotion:—

"I do not know what you mean."

"Go on, nevertheless," ejaculated Thénardier, and he continued to dictate:—

"Come immediately, I am in absolute need of thee. The person who will deliver this note to thee is instructed to conduct thee to me. I am waiting for thee. Come with confidence."

M. Leblanc had written the whole of this.

Thénardier resumed:—

“Ah! erase ‘come with confidence’; that might lead her to suppose that everything was not as it should be, and that distrust is possible.”

M. Leblanc erased the three words.

“Now,” pursued Thénardier, “sign it. What’s your name?”

The prisoner laid down the pen and demanded:—

“For whom is this letter?”

“You know well, retorted Thénardier, “for the little one I just told you so.”

It was evident that Thénardier avoided naming the young girl in question. He said “the Lark,” he said “the little one,” but he did not pronounce her name—the precaution of a clever man guarding his secret from his accomplices. To mention the name was to deliver the whole “affair” into their hands, and to tell them more about it than there was any need of their knowing.

He went on:—

“Sign. What is your name?”

“Urbain Fabre,” said the prisoner.

Thénardier, with the movement of a cat, dashed his hand into his pocket and drew out the handkerchief which had been seized on M. Leblanc. He looked for the mark on it, and held it close to the candle.

“U. F. That’s it. Urbain Fabre. Well, sign it U. F.”

The prisoner signed.

“As two hands are required to fold the letter, give it to me, I will fold it.”

That done, Thénardier resumed:—

“Address it, ‘Mademoiselle Fabre,’ at your house. I know that you live a long distance from here, near Saint-Jacques-du-Haut-Pas, because you go to mass there every day, but I don’t know in what street. I see that you understand your situation. As you have not lied about your name, you will not lie about your address. Write it yourself.”

The prisoner paused thoughtfully for a moment, then he took the pen and wrote:—

“Mademoiselle Fabre, at M. Urbain Fabre’s, Rue Saint-Dominique-D’Enfer, No. 17.”

Thénardier seized the letter with a sort of feverish convulsion.

“Wife!” he cried.

The Thénardier woman hastened to him.

“Here’s the letter. You know what you have to do. There is a carriage at the door. Set out at once, and return ditto.”

And addressing the man with the meat-axe:—

“Since you have taken off your nose-screen, accompany the mistress. You will get up behind the fiacre. You know where you left the team?”

“Yes,” said the man.

And depositing his axe in a corner, he followed Madame Thénardier.

As they set off, Thénardier thrust his head through the half-open door, and shouted into the corridor:—

“Above all things, don’t lose the letter! remember that you carry two hundred thousand francs with you!”

The Thénardier’s hoarse voice replied:—

“Be easy. I have it in my bosom.”

A minute had not elapsed, when the sound of the cracking of a whip was heard, which rapidly retreated and died away.

“Good!” growled Thénardier. “They’re going at a fine pace. At such a gallop, the bourgeoisie will be back inside three-quarters of an hour.”

He drew a chair close to the fireplace, folding his arms, and presenting his muddy boots to the brazier.

“My feet are cold!” said he.

Only five ruffians now remained in the den with Thénardier and the prisoner.

These men, through the black masks or paste which covered their faces, and made of them, at fear’s pleasure, charcoal-burners, negroes, or demons, had a stupid and gloomy air, and it could be felt that they perpetrated a crime like a bit of work, tranquilly, without either wrath or mercy, with a sort of ennui.

They were crowded together in one corner like brutes, and remained silent.

Thénardier warmed his feet.

The prisoner had relapsed into his taciturnity. A sombre calm had succeeded to the wild uproar which had filled the garret but a few moments before.

The candle, on which a large "stranger" had formed, cast but a dim light in the immense hovel, the brazier had grown dull, and all those monstrous heads cast misshapen shadows on the walls and ceiling.

No sound was audible except the quiet breathing of the old drunken man, who was fast asleep.

Marius waited in a state of anxiety that was augmented by every trifle. The enigma was more impenetrable than ever.

Who was this "little one" whom Thénardier had called the Lark? Was she his "Ursule"? The prisoner had not seemed to be affected by that word, "the Lark," and had replied in the most natural manner in the world: "I do not know what you mean." On the other hand, the two letters U. F. were explained; they meant Urbain Fabre; and Ursule was no longer named Ursule. This was what Marius perceived most clearly of all.

A sort of horrible fascination held him nailed to his post, from which he was observing and commanding this whole scene. There he stood, almost incapable of movement or reflection, as though annihilated by the abominable things viewed at such close quarters. He waited, in the hope of some incident, no matter of what nature, since he could not collect his thoughts and did not know upon what course to decide.

"In any case," he said, "if she is the Lark, I shall see her, for the Thénardier woman is to bring her hither. That will be the end, and then I will give my life and my blood if necessary, but I will deliver her! Nothing shall stop me."

Nearly half an hour passed in this manner. Thénardier seemed to be absorbed in gloomy reflections, the prisoner did not stir. Still, Marius fancied that at intervals, and for the

last few moments, he had heard a faint, dull noise in the direction of the prisoner.

All at once, Thénardier addressed the prisoner:—

“By the way, Monsieur Fabre, I might as well say it to you at once.”

These few words appeared to be the beginning of an explanation. Marius strained his ears.

“My wife will be back shortly, don’t get impatient. I think that the Lark really is your daughter, and it seems to me quite natural that you should keep her. Only, listen to me a bit. My wife will go and hunt her up with your letter. I told my wife to dress herself in the way she did, so that your young lady might make no difficulty about following her. They will both enter the carriage with my comrade behind. Somewhere, outside the barrier, there is a trap harnessed to two very good horses. Your young lady will be taken to it. She will alight from the fiacre. My comrade will enter the other vehicle with her, and my wife will come back here to tell us: ‘It’s done.’ As for the young lady, no harm will be done to her; the trap will conduct her to a place where she will be quiet, and just as soon as you have handed over to me those little two hundred thousand francs, she will be returned to you. If you have me arrested, my comrade will give a turn of his thumb to the Lark, that’s all”

The prisoner uttered not a syllable. After a pause, Thénardier continued:—

“It’s very simple, as you see. There’ll be no harm done unless you wish that there should be harm done. I’m telling you how things stand. I warn you so that you may be prepared.”

He paused: the prisoner did not break the silence, and Thénardier resumed:—

“As soon as my wife returns and says to me: ‘The Lark is on the way,’ we will release you, and you will be free to go and sleep at home. You see that our intentions are not evil.”

Terrible images passed through Marius’ mind. What! That

young girl whom they were abducting was not to be brought back? One of those monsters was to bear her off into the darkness? Whither? And what if it were she!

It was clear that it was she. Marius felt his heart stop beating.

What was he to do? Discharge the pistol? Place all those scoundrels in the hands of justice? But the horribile man with the meat-axe would, none the less, be out of reach with the young girl, and Marius reflected on Thénardier's words, of which he perceived the bloody significance: "If you have me arrested, my comrade will give a turn of his thumb to the Lark."

Now, it was not alone by the colonel's testament, it was by his own love, it was by the peril of the one he loved, that he felt himself restrained.

This frightful situation, which had already lasted above half an hour, was changing its aspect every moment.

Marius had sufficient strength of mind to review in succession all the most heart-breaking conjectures, seeking hope and finding none.

The tumult of his thoughts contrasted with the funereal silence of the den.

In the midst of this silence, the door at the bottom of the staircase was heard to open and shut again.

The prisoner made a movement in his bonds.

"Here's the bourgeoisie," said Thénardier.

He had hardly uttered the words, when the Thénardier woman did in fact rush hastily into the room, red, panting, breathless, with flaming eyes, and cried, as she smote her huge hands on her thighs simultaneously:—

"False address!"

The ruffian who had gone with her made his appearance behind her and picked up his axe again.

She resumed:—

"Nobody there! Rue Saint-Dominique, No. 17, no Monsieur Urbain Fabre! They know not what it means!"

She paused, choking, then went on:—

“Monsieur Thénardier! That old fellow has duped you! You are too good, you see! If it had been me, I'd have chopped the beast in four quarters to begin with! And if he had acted ugly, I'd have boiled him alive! He would have been obliged to speak, and say where the girl is and where he keeps his shiners! That's the way I should have managed matters! People are perfectly right when they say that men are a deal stupider than women! Nobody at No. 17. It's nothing but a big carriage gate! No Monsieur Fabre in the Rue Saint-Dominique! And after all that racing and fee to the coachman and all! I spoke to both the porter and the portress, a fine, stout woman, and they know nothing about him!”

Marius breathed freely once more.

She, Ursule or the Lark, he no longer knew what to call her, was safe.

While his exasperated wife vociferated, Thénardier had seated himself on the table.

For several minutes he uttered not a word, but swung his right foot, which hung down, and stared at the brazier with an air of savage revery.

Finally, he said to the prisoner, with a slow and singularly ferocious tone:

“A false address? What did you expect to gain by that?”

“To gain time!” cried the prisoner in a thundering voice, and at the same instant he shook off his bonds; they were cut. The prisoner was only attached to the bed now by one leg.

Before the seven men had time to collect their senses and dash forward, he had bent down into the fireplace, had stretched out his hand to the brazier, and had then straightened himself up again, and now Thénardier, the female Thénardier, and the ruffians, huddled in amazement at the extremity of the hovel, stared at him in stupefaction, as almost free and in a formidable attitude, he brandished above his head the red-hot chisel, which emitted a threatening glow.

The judicial examination to which the ambush in the Gorbau house eventually gave rise, established the fact that a

large sou piece, cut and worked in a peculiar fashion, was found in the garret, when the police made their descent on it. This sou piece was one of those marvels of industry, which are engendered by the patience of the galley-men in the shadows and for the shadows, marvels which are nothing else than instruments of escape. These hideous and delicate products of wonderful art are to jewellers' work what the metaphors of slang are to poetry. There are Benvenuto Cellinis in the galleys, just as there are Villons in language. The unhappy wretch who aspires to deliverance finds means sometimes without tools, sometimes with a common wooden-handled knife, to saw a sou into two thin plates, to hollow out these plates without affecting the coinage stamp, and to make a furrow on the edge of the sou in such a manner that the plates will adhere again. This can be screwed together and unscrewed at will; it is a box. In this box he hides a watch-spring, and this watch-spring, properly handled, cuts good-sized chains and bars of iron. The unfortunate convict is supposed to possess merely a sou; not at all, he possesses liberty. It was a large sou of this sort which, during the subsequent search of the police, was found under the bed near the window. They also found a tiny saw of blue steel which would fit the sou.

It is probable that the prisoner had this sou piece on his person at the moment when the ruffians searched him, that he contrived to conceal it in his hand, and that afterward, having his right hand free, he unscrewed it, and used it as a saw to cut the cords which fastened him, which would explain the faint noise and almost imperceptible movements which Marius had observed.

As he had not been able to bend down, for fear of betraying himself, he had not cut the bonds of his left leg.

The ruffians had recovered from their first surprise.

"Be easy," said Bigrenaille to Thénardier. "He still holds by one leg, and he can't get away. I'll answer for that. I tied that paw for him."

In the meanwhile, the prisoner had begun to speak:—

"You are wretches, but my life is not worth the trouble of

defending it. When you think that you can make me speak, that you can make me write what I do not choose to write, that you can make me say what I do not choose to say—”

He stripped up his left sleeve, and added:—

“See here.”

At the same moment he extended his arm, and laid the glowing chisel which he held in his left hand by its wooden handle on his bare flesh.

The crackling of the burning flesh became audible, and the odor peculiar to chambers of torture filled the hovel.

Marius reeled in utter horror, the very ruffians shuddered, hardly a muscle of the old man’s face contracted, and while the red-hot iron sank into the smoking wound, impassive and almost august, he fixed on Thénardier his beautiful glance, in which there was no hatred, and where suffering vanished in serene majesty.

With grand and lofty natures, the revolts of the flesh and the senses when subjected to physical suffering cause the soul to spring forth, and make it appear on the brow, just as rebellions among the soldiery force the captain to show himself.

“Wretches!” said he, “have no more fear of me than I have for you!”

And, tearing the chisel from the wound, he hurled it through the window, which had been left open; the horrible, glowing tool disappeared into the night, whirling as it flew, and fell far away on the snow.

The prisoner resumed:—

“Do what you please with me.” He was disarmed.

“Seize him!” said Thénardier.

Two of the ruffians laid their hands on his shoulder, and the masked man with the ventriloquist’s voice took up his station in front of him, ready to smash his skull at the slightest movement.

At the same time, Marius heard below him, at the base of the partition, but so near that he could not see who was speaking, this colloquy conducted in a low tone:—

“There is only one thing left to do.”

“Cut his throat.”

“That’s it.”

It was the husband and wife taking counsel together.

Thénardier walked slowly towards the table, opened the drawer, and took out the knife. Marius fretted with the handle of his pistol. Unprecedented perplexity! For the last hour he had had two voices in his conscience, the one enjoining him to respect his father’s testament, the other crying to him to rescue the prisoner. These two voices continued uninterruptedly that struggle which tormented him to agony. Up to that moment he had cherished a vague hope that he should find some means of reconciling these two duties, but nothing within the limits of possibility had presented itself.

However, the peril was urgent, the last bounds of delay had been reached; Thénardier was standing thoughtfully a few paces distant from the prisoner.

Marius cast a wild glance about him, the last mechanical resource of despair. All at once a shudder ran through him.

At his feet, on the table, a bright ray of light from the full moon illuminated and seemed to point out to him a sheet of paper. On this paper he read the following line written that very morning, in large letters, by the eldest of the Thénardier girls:—

“THE BOBBIES ARE HERE.”

An idea, a flash, crossed Marius’ mind; this was the expedient of which he was in search, the solution of that frightful problem which was torturing him, of sparing the assassin and saving the victim.

He knelt down on his commode, stretched out his arm, seized the sheet of paper, softly detached a bit of plaster from the wall, wrapped the paper round it, and tossed the whole through the crevice into the middle of the den.

It was high time. Thénardier had conquered his last fears or his last scruples, and was advancing on the prisoner.

“Something is falling!” cried the Thénardier woman.

“What is it?” asked her husband.

The woman darted forward and picked up the bit of plaster. She handed it to her husband.

"Where did this come from?" demanded Thénardier.

"Pardie!" ejaculated his wife, "where do you suppose it came from? Through the window, of course."

"I saw it pass," said Bigrenaille.

Thénardier rapidly unfolded the paper and held it close to the candle.

"It's in Éponine's handwriting. The devil!"

He made a sign to his wife, who hastily drew near, and showed her the line written on the sheet of paper, then he added in a subdued voice:—

"Quick! The ladder! Let's leave the bacon in the mouse-trap and decamp!"

"Without cutting that man's throat?" asked the Thénardier woman.

"We haven't the time."

"Through what?" resumed Bigrenaille.

"Through the window," replied Thénardier. "Since Ponine has thrown the stone through the window, it indicates that the house is not watched on that side."

The mask with the ventriloquist's voice deposited his huge key on the floor, raised both arms in the air, and opened and clenched his fists three times rapidly without uttering a word.

This was the signal like the signal for clearing the decks for action on board ship.

The ruffians who were holding the prisoner released him; in the twinkling of an eye the rope ladder was unrolled outside the window, and solidly fastened to the sill by the two iron hooks.

The prisoner paid no attention to what was going on around him. He seemed to be dreaming or praying.

As soon as the ladder was arranged, Thénardier cried:

"Come! the bourgeoisie first!"

And he rushed headlong to the window.

But just as he was about to throw his leg over, Bigrenaille seized him roughly by the collar.

"Not much, come now, you old dog, after us!"

"After us!" yelled the ruffians.

"You are children," said Thénardier, "we are losing time. The police are on our heels."

"Well, said the ruffians, "let's draw lots to see who shall go down first."

Thénardier exclaimed:—

"Are you mad! Are you crazy! What a pack of boobies! You want to waste time, do you? Draw lots, do you? By a wet finger, by a short straw! With written names! Thrown into a hat!—"

"Would you like my hat?" cried a voice on the threshold.

All wheeled round. It was Javert.

He had his hat in his hand, and was holding it out to them with a smile.

CHAPTER XXI

ONE SHOULD ALWAYS BEGIN BY ARRESTING THE VICTIMS

AT nightfall, Javert had posted his men and had gone into ambush himself between the trees of the Rue de la Barrière-des-Gobelins which faced the Gorbeau house, on the other side of the boulevard. He had begun operations by opening "his pockets," and dropping into it the two young girls who were charged with keeping a watch on the approaches to the der. But he had only "eaged" Azelma. As for Éponine, she was not at her post, she had disappeared, and he had not been able to seize her. Then Javert had made a point and had bent his ear to waiting for the signal agreed upon. The comings and goings of the fiaeres had greatly agitated him. At last, he had grown impatient, and, *sure that there was a nest there*, sure of being in "luck," having recognized many of the ruffians who had entered, he had finally decided to go upstairs without waiting for the pistol-shot.

It will be remembered that he had Marius' pass-key.

He had arrived just in the nick of time.

The terrified ruffians flung themselves on the arms which they had abandoned in all the corners at the moment of flight. In less than a second, these seven men, horrible to behold, had grouped themselves in an attitude of defence, one with his meat-axe, another with his key, another with his bludgeon, the rest with shears, pineers, and hammers. Thénardier had his knife in his fist. The Thénardier woman snatched up an enormous paving-stone which lay in the angle of the window and served her daughters as an ottoman.

Javert put on his hat again, and advanced a couple of paces into the room, with arms folded, his cane under one arm, his sword in its sheath.

"Halt there," said he. "You shall not go out by the window, you shall go through the door. It's less unhealthy. There are seven of you, there are fifteen of us. Don't let's fall to collaring each other like men of Auvergne."

Bigrenaille drew out a pistol which he had kept concealed under his blouse, and put it in Thénardier's hand, whispering in the latter's ear:—

"It's Javert. I don't dare fire at that man. Do you dare?"

"Parbleu!" replied Thénardier.

"Well, then, fire."

Thénardier took the pistol and aimed at Javert.

Javert, who was only three paces from him, stared intently at him and contented himself with saying:—

"Come now, don't fire. You'll miss fire."

Thénardier pulled the trigger. The pistol missed fire.

"Didn't I tell you so!" ejaculated Javert.

Bigrenaille flung his bludgeon at Javert's feet.

"You're the emperor of the fiends! I surrender."

"And you?" Javert asked the rest of the ruffians.

They replied:—

"So do we."

Javert began again calmly:—

"That's right, that's good, I said so, you are nice fellows."

"I only ask one thing," said Bigrenaille, "and that is, that I may not be denied tobacco while I am in confinement."

"Granted," said Javert.

And turning round and calling behind him:—

"Come in now!"

A squad of policemen, sword in hand, and agents armed with bludgeons and cudgels, rushed in at Javert's summons. They pinioned the ruffians.

This throng of men, sparsely lighted by the single candle, filled the den with shadows.

"Handcuff them all!" shouted Javert.

"Come on!" cried a voice which was not the voice of a man, but of which no one would ever have said: "It is a woman's voice."

The Thénardier woman had entrenched herself in one of the angles of the window, and it was she who had just given vent to this roar.

The policemen and agents recoiled.

She had thrown off her shawl, but retained her bonnet; her husband, who was crouching behind her, was almost hidden under the discarded shawl, and she was shielding him with her body, as she elevated the paving-stone above her head with the gesture of a giantess on the point of hurling a rock.

"Beware!" she shouted.

All crowded back towards the corridor. A broad open space was cleared in the middle of the garret.

The Thénardier woman cast a glance at the ruffians who had allowed themselves to be pinioned, and muttered in hoarse and guttural accents:—

"The cowards!"

Javert smiled, and advanced across the open space which the Thénardier was devouring with her eyes.

"Don't come near me," she cried, "or I'll crush you."

"What a grenadier!" ejaculated Javert; "you've got a beard like a man, mother, but I have claws like a woman."

And he continued to advance.

The Thénardier, dishevelled and terrible, set her feet far apart, threw herself backwards, and hurled the paving-stone at Javert's head. Javert ducked, the stone passed over him,

struck the wall behind, knocked off a huge piece of plastering, and, rebounding from angle to angle across the hovel, now luckily almost empty, rested at Javert's feet.

At the same moment, Javert reached the Thénardier couple. One of his big hands descended on the woman's shoulder; the other on the husband's head.

"The handcuffs!" he shouted.

The policemen trooped in in force, and in a few seconds Javert's order had been executed.

The Thénardier female, overwhelmed, stared at her pinioned hands, and at those of her husband, who had dropped to the floor, and exclaimed, weeping:—

"My daughters!"

"They are in the jug," said Javert.

In the meanwhile, the agents had caught sight of the drunken man asleep behind the door, and were shaking him:—

He awoke, stammering:—

"Is it all over, Jondrette?"

"Yes," replied Javert.

The six pinioned ruffians were standing, and still preserved their spectral mien; all three besmeared with black, all three masked.

"Keep on your masks," said Javert.

And passing them in review with a glance of a Frederick II. at a Potsdam parade, he said to the three "chimney-builders":—

"Good day, Bigrenaille! good day, Brujon! good day, Deux-milliards!"

Then turning to the three masked men, he said to the man with the meat-axe:—

"Good day, Gueulemer!"

And to the man with the cudgel:—

"Good day, Babet!"

And to the ventriloquist:—

"Your health, Claquesous."

At that moment, he caught sight of the ruffians' prisoner,

who, ever since the entrance of the police, had not uttered a word, and had held his head down.

"Untie the gentleman!" said Javert, "and let no one go out!"

That said, he seated himself with sovereign dignity before the table, where the candle and the writing-materials still remained, drew a stamped paper from his pocket, and began to prepare his report.

When he had written the first lines, which are formulas that never vary, he raised his eyes:—

"Let the gentleman whom these gentlemen bound step forward."

The policemen glanced round them.

"Well," said Javert, "where is he?"

The prisoner of the ruffians, M. Leblanc, M. Urbain Fabre, the father of Ursule or the Lark, had disappeared.

The door was guarded, but the window was not. As soon as he had found himself released from his bonds, and while Javert was drawing up his report, he had taken advantage of confusion, the crowd, the darkness, and of a moment when the general attention was diverted from him, to dash out of the window.

An agent sprang to the opening and looked out. He saw no one outside.

The rope ladder was still shaking.

"The devil!" ejaculated Javert between his teeth, "he must have been the most valuable of the lot."

CHAPTER XXII

THE LITTLE ONE WHO WAS CRYING IN VOLUME TWO

ON the day following that on which these events took place in the house on the Boulevard de l'Hôpital, a child, who seemed to be coming from the direction of the bridge of Austerlitz, was ascending the side-alley on the right in the direction of the Barrière de Fontainebleau.

Night had fully come.

This lad was pale, thin, clad in rags, with linen trousers in the month of February, and was singing at the top of his voice.

At the corner of the Rue du Petit-Banquier, a bent old woman was rummaging in a heap of refuse by the light of a street lantern; the child jostled her as he passed, then recoiled, exclaiming:—

“Hello! And I took it for an enormous, enormous dog!”

He pronounced the word *enormous* the second time with a jeering swell of the voice which might be tolerably well represented by capitals: “an enormous, ENORMOUS dog.”

The old woman straightened herself up in a fury.

“Nasty brat!” she grumbled. “If I hadn’t been bending over, I know well where I would have planted my foot on you.”

The boy was already far away.

“Kiss! kiss!” he cried. “After that, I don’t think I was mistaken!”

The old woman, choking with indignation, now rose completely upright, and the red gleam of the lantern fully lighted up her livid face, all hollowed into angles and wrinkles, with crow’s-feet meeting the corners of her mouth.

Her body was lost in the darkness, and only her head was visible. One would have pronounced her a mask of Deerepitude carved out by a light from the night.

The boy surveyed her.

“Madame,” said he, “does not possess that style of beauty which pleases me.”

He then pursued his road, and resumed his song:—

“Le roi Coupdesabot
S’en allait à la chasse,
À la chasse aux corbeaux—”

At the end of these three lines he paused. He had arrived in front of No. 50-52, and finding the door fastened, he began to assault it with resounding and heroic kicks, which betrayed rather the man’s shoes that he was wearing than the child’s feet which he owned.

In the meanwhile, the very old woman whom he had encountered at the corner of the Rue du Petit-Banquier hastened up behind him, uttering clamorous cries and indulging in lavish and exaggerated gestures.

"What's this? What's this? Lord God! He's battering the door down! He's knocking the house down."

The kicks continued.

The old woman strained her lungs.

"Is that the way buildings are treated nowadays?"

All at once she paused.

She had recognized the gamin.

"What! so it's that imp!"

"Why, it's the old lady," said the lad. "Good day, Bougon-muehe. I have come to see my ancestors."

The old woman retorted with a composite grimace, and a wonderful improvisation of hatred taking advantage of feebleness and ugliness, which was, unfortunately, wasted in the dark:—

"There's no one here."

"Bah!" retorted the boy, "where's my father?"

"At La Foree."

"Come, now! And my mother?"

"At Saint-Lazare."

"Well! And my sisters?"

"At the Madelonettes."

The lad scratched his head behind his ear, stared at Ma'am Bougon, and said:—

"Ah!"

Then he executed a pirouette on his heel; a moment later, the old woman, who had remained on the door-step, heard him singing in his clear, young voice, as he plunged under the black elm-trees, in the wintry wind:—

"Le roi Coupdesabot¹
S'en allait à la chasse,
À la chasse aux corbeaux,
Monté sur deux échasses.
Quand on passait dessous,
On lui payait deux sous."

¹King Bootkick went a-hunting after crows, mounted on two stilts. When one passed beneath them, one paid him two sous.

SAINT-DENIS.

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SAINT-DENIS

THE IDYL IN THE RUE PLUMET AND THE EPIC IN THE RUE
SAINT-DENIS

BOOK FIRST.—A FEW PAGES OF HISTORY

CHAPTER I

WELL CUT

1831 and 1832, the two years which are immediately connected with the Revolution of July, form one of the most peculiar and striking moments of history. These two years rise like two mountains midway between those which precede and those which follow them. They have a revolutionary grandeur. Precipices are to be distinguished there. The social masses, the very assizes of civilization, the solid group of superposed and adhering interests, the century-old profiles of the ancient French formation, appear and disappear in them every instant, athwart the storm clouds of systems, of passions, and of theories. These appearances and disappearances have been designated as movement and resistance. At intervals, truth, that daylight of the human soul, can be descried shining there.

This remarkable epoch is decidedly circumscribed and is beginning to be sufficiently distant from us to allow of our grasping the principal lines even at the present day.

We shall make the attempt.

The Restoration had been one of those intermediate phases, hard to define, in which there is fatigue, buzzing, murmurs, sleep, tumult, and which are nothing else than the arrival of a great nation at a halting-place.

These epochs are peculiar and mislead the politicians who desire to convert them to profit. In the beginning, the nation asks nothing but repose; it thirsts for but one thing, peace; it has but one ambition, to be small. Which is the translation of remaining tranquil. Of great events, great hazards, great adventures, great men, thank God, we have seen enough, we have them heaped higher than our heads. We would exchange Cæsar for Prusias, and Napoleon for the King of Yvetot. "What a good little king was he!" We have marched since daybreak, we have reached the evening of a long and toilsome day; we have made our first change with Mirabeau, the second with Robespierre, the third with Bonaparte; we are worn out. Each one demands a bed.

Devotion which is weary, heroism which has grown old, ambitions which are sated, fortunes which are made, seek, demand, implore, solicit, what? A shelter. They have it. They take possession of peace, of tranquillity, of leisure; behold, they are content. But, at the same time certain facts arise, compel recognition, and knock at the door in their turn. These facts are the products of revolutions and wars, they are, they exist, they have the right to install themselves in society, and they do install themselves therein; and most of the time, facts are the stewards of the household and fouriers¹ who do nothing but prepare lodgings for principles.

This, then, is what appears to philosophical politicians:—

At the same time that weary men demand repose, accomplished facts demand guarantees. Guarantees are the same to facts that repose is to men.

This is what England demanded of the Stuarts after the Protector; this is what France demanded of the Bourbons after the Empire.

These guarantees are a necessity of the times. They must be accorded. Princes "grant" them, but in reality, it is the force of things which gives them. A profound truth, and one

¹In olden times, fouriers were the officials who preceded the Court and allotted the lodgings.

useful to know, which the Stuarts did not suspect in 1662, and which the Bourbons did not even obtain a glimpse of in 1814.

The predestined family, which returned to France when Napoleon fell, had the fatal simplicity to believe that it was itself which bestowed, and that what it had bestowed it could take back again; that the House of Bourbon possessed the right divine, that France possessed nothing, and that the political right conceded in the charter of Louis XVIII. was merely a branch of the right divine, was detached by the House of Bourbon and graciously given to the people until such day as it should please the King to reassume it. Still, the House of Bourbon should have felt, from the displeasure created by the gift, that it did not come from it.

This house was churlish to the nineteenth century. It put on an ill-tempered look at every development of the nation. To make use of a trivial word, that is to say, of a popular and a true word, it looked glum. The people saw this.

It thought it possessed strength because the Empire had been carried away before it like a theatrical stage-setting. It did not perceive that it had, itself, been brought in in the same fashion. It did not perceive that it also lay in that hand which had removed Napoleon.

It thought that it had roots, because it was the past. It was mistaken; it formed a part of the past, but the whole past was France. The roots of French society were not fixed in the Bourbons, but in the nations. These obscure and lively roots constituted, not the right of a family, but the history of a people. They were everywhere, except under the throne.

The House of Bourbon was to France the illustrious and bleeding knot in her history, but was no longer the principal element of her destiny, and the necessary base of her politics. She could get along without the Bourbons; she had done without them for two and twenty years; there had been a break of continuity; they did not suspect the fact. And how should they have suspected it, they who fancied that Louis XVII. reigned on the 9th of Thermidor, and that Louis XVIII.

was reigning at the battle of Marengo? Never, since the origin of history, had princes been so blind in the presence of facts and the portion of divine authority which facts contain and promulgate. Never had that pretension here below which is called the right of kings denied to such a point the right from on high.

A capital error which led this family to lay its hand once more on the guarantees "granted" in 1814. on the concessions, as it termed them. Sad. A sad thing! What it termed its concessions were our conquests; what it termed our encroachments were our rights.

When the hour seemed to it to have come, the Restoration, supposing itself victorious over Bonaparte and well-rooted in the country, that is to say, believing itself to be strong and deep, abruptly decided on its plan of action, and risked its stroke. One morning it drew itself up before the face of France, and, elevating its voice, it contested the collective title and the individual right of the nation to sovereignty, of the citizen to liberty. In other words, it denied to the nation that which made it a nation, and to the citizen that which made him a citizen.

This is the foundation of those famous acts which are called the ordinances of July. The Restoration fell.

It fell justly. But, we admit, it had not been absolutely hostile to all forms of progress. Great things had been accomplished, with it alongside.

Under the Restoration, the nation had grown accustomed to calm discussion, which had been lacking under the Republic, and to grandeur in peace, which had been wanting under the Empire. France free and strong had offered an encouraging spectacle to the other peoples of Europe. The Revolution had had the word under Robespierre; the cannon had had the word under Bonaparte; it was under Louis XVIII. and Charles X. that it was the turn of intelligence to have the word. The wind ceased, the torch was lighted once more. On the lofty heights, the pure light of mind could be seen flickering. A magnificent, useful, and charming spectacle. For a space of

fifteen years, those great principles which are so old for the thinker, so new for the statesman, could be seen at work in perfect peace, on the public square; equality before the law, liberty of conscience, liberty of speech, liberty of the press, the accessibility of all aptitudes to all functions. Thus it proceeded until 1830. The Bourbons were an instrument of civilization which broke in the hands of Providence.

The fall of the Bourbons was full of grandeur, not on their side, but on the side of the nation. They quitted the throne with gravity, but without authority; their descent into the night was not one of those solemn disappearances which leave a sombre emotion in history; it was neither the spectral calm of Charles I., nor the eagle scream of Napoleon. They departed, that is all. They laid down the crown, and retained no aureole. They were worthy, but they were not august. They lacked, in a certain measure, the majesty of their misfortune. Charles X. during the voyage from Cherbourg, causing a round table to be cut over into a square table, appeared to be more anxious about imperilled etiquette than about the crumbling monarchy. This diminution saddened devoted men who loved their persons, and serious men who honored their race. The populace was admirable. The nation, attacked one morning with weapons, by a sort of royal insurrection, felt itself in the possession of so much force that it did not go into a rage. It defended itself, restrained itself, restored things to their places, the government to law, the Bourbons to exile, alas! and then halted! It took the old king Charles X. from beneath that dais which had sheltered Louis XIV. and set him gently on the ground. It touched the royal personages only with sadness and precaution. It was not one man, it was not a few men, it was France, France entire, France victorious and intoxicated with her victory, who seemed to be coming to herself, and who put into practice, before the eyes of the whole world, these grave words of Guillaume du Vair after the day of the Barricades:—

“It is easy for those who are accustomed to skim the favors

of the great, and to spring, like a bird from bough to bough, from an afflicted fortune to a flourishing one, to show themselves harsh towards their Prince in his adversity; but as for me, the fortune of my Kings and especially of my afflicted Kings, will always be venerable to me."

The Bourbons carried away with them respect, but not regret. As we have just stated, their misfortune was greater than they were. They faded out in the horizon.

The Revolution of July instantly had friends and enemies throughout the entire world. The first rushed toward her with joy and enthusiasm, the others turned away, each according to his nature. At the first blush, the princes of Europe, the owls of this dawn, shut their eyes, wounded and stupefied, and only opened them to threaten. A fright which can be comprehended, a wrath which can be pardoned. This strange revolution had hardly produced a shock; it had not even paid to vanquished royalty the honor of treating it as an enemy, and of shedding its blood. In the eyes of despotic governments, who are always interested in having liberty calumniate itself, the Revolution of July committed the fault of being formidable and of remaining gentle. Nothing, however, was attempted or plotted against it. The most discontented, the most irritated, the most trembling, saluted it; whatever our egotism and our rancor may be, a mysterious respect springs from events in which we are sensible of the collaboration of some one who is working above man.

The Revolution of July is the triumph of right overthrowing the fact. A thing which is full of splendor.

Right overthrowing the fact. Hence the brilliancy of the Revolution of 1830, hence, also, its mildness. Right triumphant has no need of being violent.

Right is the just and the true.

The property of right is to remain eternally beautiful and pure. The fact, even when most necessary to all appearances, even when most thoroughly accepted by contemporaries, if it exist only as a fact, and if it contain only too little of right, or none at all, is infallibly destined to become, in the course of

time, deformed, impure, perhaps, even monstrous. If one desires to learn at one blow, to what degree of hideousness the fact can attain, viewed at the distance of centuries, let him look at Machiavelli. Machiavelli is not an evil genius, nor a demon, nor a miserable and cowardly writer; he is nothing but the fact. And he is not only the Italian fact; he is the European fact, the fact of the sixteenth century. He seems hideous, and so he is, in the presence of the moral idea of the nineteenth.

This conflict of right and fact has been going on ever since the origin of society. To terminate this duel, to amalgamate the pure idea with the humane reality, to cause right to penetrate peacefully into the fact and the fact into right, that is the task of sages.

CHAPTER II

BADLY SEWED

BUT the task of sages is one thing, the task of clever men is another. The Revolution of 1830 came to a sudden halt.

As soon as a revolution has made the coast, the skilful make haste to prepare the shipwreck.

The skilful in our century have conferred on themselves the title of Statesmen; so that this word, *statesmen*, has ended by becoming somewhat of a slang word. It must be borne in mind, in fact, that wherever there is nothing but skill, there is necessarily pettiness. To say "the skilful" amounts to saying "the medioere."

In the same way, to say "statesmen" is sometimes equivalent to saying "traitors." If, then, we are to believe the skilful, revolutions like the Revolution of July are severed arteries; a prompt ligature is indispensable. The right, too grandly proclaimed, is shaken. Also, right once firmly fixed, the state must be strengthened. Liberty once assured, attention must be directed to power.

Here the sages are not, as yet, separated from the skilful, but they begin to be distrustful. Power, very good. But, in the first place, what is power? In the second, whence comes it? The skilful do not seem to hear the murmured objection, and they continue their manœuvres.

According to the politicians, who are ingenious in putting the mask of necessity on profitable fictions, the first requirement of a people after a revolution, when this people forms part of a monarchical continent, is to procure for itself a dynasty. In this way, say they, peace, that is to say, time to dress our wounds, and to repair the house, can be had after a revolution. The dynasty conceals the scaffolding and covers the ambulance. Now, it is not always easy to procure a dynasty.

If it is absolutely necessary, the first man of genius or even the first man of fortune who comes to hand suffices for the manufacturing of a king. You have, in the first case, Napoleon; in the second, Iturbide.

But the first family that comes to hand does not suffice to make a dynasty. There is necessarily required a certain modicum of antiquity in a race, and the wrinkle of the centuries cannot be improvised.

If we place ourselves at the point of view of the "statesmen," after making all allowances, of course, after a revolution, what are the qualities of the king which result from it? He may be and it is useful for him to be a revolutionary; that is to say, a participant in his own person in that revolution, that he should have lent a hand to it, that he should have either compromised or distinguished himself therein, that he should have touched the axe or wielded the sword in it.

What are the qualities of a dynasty? It should be national; that is to say, revolutionary at a distance, not through acts committed, but by reason of ideas accepted. It should be composed of past and be historic; be composed of future and be sympathetic.

All this explains why the early revolutions contented them-

selves with finding a man, Cromwell or Napoleon; and why the second absolutely insisted on finding a family, the House of Brunswick or the House of Orleans.

Royal houses resemble those Indian fig-trees, each branch of which, bending over to the earth, takes root and becomes a fig-tree itself. Each branch may become a dynasty. On the sole condition that it shall bend down to the people.

Such is the theory of the skilful.

Here, then, lies the great art: to make a little render to success the sound of a catastrophe in order that those who profit by it may tremble from it also, to season with fear every step that is taken, to augment the curve of the transition to the point of retarding progress, to dull that aurora, to denounce and retrench the harshness of enthusiasm, to cut all angles and nails, to wad triumph, to muffle up right, to envelop the giant-people in flannel, and to put it to bed very speedily, to impose a diet on that excess of health, to put Hercules on the treatment of a convalescent, to dilute the event with the expedient, to offer to spirits thirsting for the ideal that nectar thinned out with a potion, to take one's precautions against too much success, to garnish the revolution with a shade.

1830 practised this theory, already applied to England by 1688.

1830 is a revolution arrested midway. Half of progress, quasi-right. Now, logic knows not the "almost," absolutely as the sun knows not the candle.

Who arrests revolutions half-way? The bourgeoisie?

Why?

Because the bourgeoisie is interest which has reached satisfaction. Yesterday it was appetite, to-day it is plenitude, to-morrow it will be satiety.

The phenomenon of 1814 after Napoleon was reproduced in 1830 after Charles X.

The attempt has been made, and wrongly, to make a class of the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie is simply the contented portion of the people. The bourgeois is the man who now has time to sit down. A chair is not a caste.

But through a desire to sit down too soon, one may arrest the very march of the human race. This has often been the fault of the bourgeoisie.

One is not a class because one has committed a fault. Selfishness is not one of the divisions of the social order.

Moreover, we must be just to selfishness. The state to which that part of the nation which is called the bourgeoisie aspired after the shock of 1830 was not the inertia which is complicated with indifference and laziness, and which contains a little shame; it was not the slumber which presupposes a momentary forgetfulness accessible to dreams; it was the halt.

The halt is a word formed of a singular double and almost contradictory sense: a troop on the march, that is to say, movement; a stand, that is to say, repose.

The halt is the restoration of forces; it is repose armed and on the alert; it is the accomplished fact which posts sentinels and holds itself on its guard.

The halt presupposes the combat of yesterday and the combat of to-morrow.

It is the partition between 1830 and 1848.

What we here call combat may also be designated as progress.

The bourgeoisie then, as well as the statesmen, required a man who should express this word Halt. An Although-Because. A composite individuality, signifying revolution and signifying stability. in other terms, strengthening the present by the evident compatibility of the past with the future.

This man was "already found." His name was Louis Philippe d'Orleans.

The 221 made Louis Philippe King. Lafayette undertook the coronation.

He called it *the best of republics*. The town-hall of Paris took the place of the Cathedral of Rheims.

This substitution of a half-throne for a whole throne was "the work of 1830."

When the skilful had finished, the immense vice of their solution became apparent. All this had been accomplished outside the bounds of absolute right. Absolute right cried: "I protest!" then, terrible to say, it retired into the darkness.

CHAPTER III

LOUIS PHILIPPE

REVOLUTIONS have a terrible arm and a happy hand, they strike firmly and choose well. Even incomplete, even debased and abused and reduced to the state of a junior revolution like the Revolution of 1830, they nearly always retain sufficient providential lucidity to prevent them from falling amiss. Their eclipse is never an abdication.

Nevertheless, let us not boast too loudly; revolutions also may be deceived, and grave errors have been seen.

Let us return to 1830. 1830, in its deviation, had good luck. In the establishment which entitled itself order after the revolution had been cut short, the King amounted to more than royalty. Louis Philippe was a rare man.

The son of a father to whom history will accord certain attenuating circumstances, but also as worthy of esteem as that father had been of blame; possessing all private virtues and many public virtues; careful of his health, of his fortune, of his person, of his affairs, knowing the value of a minute and not always the value of a year; sober, serene, peaceable, patient; a good man and a good prince; sleeping with his wife, and having in his palace lackeys charged with the duty of showing the conjugal bed to the bourgeois, an ostentation of the regular sleeping-apartment which had become useful after the former illegitimate displays of the elder branch; knowing all the languages of Europe, and, what is more rare, all the languages of all interests, and speaking them; an admirable representative of the "middle class," but outstripping it, and in every way greater than it; possessing excellent sense,

while appreciating the blood from which he had sprung, counting most of all on his intrinsic worth, and, on the question of his race, very particular, declaring himself Orleans and not Bourbon; thoroughly the first Prince of the Blood Royal while he was still only a Serene Highness, but a frank bourgeois from the day he became king; diffuse in public, concise in private; reputed, but not proved to be a miser; at bottom, one of those economists who are readily prodigal at their own fancy or duty; lettered, but not very sensitive to letters; a gentleman, but not a chevalier; simple, calm, and strong; adored by his family and his household; a fascinating talker, an undeceived statesman, inwardly cold, dominated by immediate interest, always governing at the shortest range, incapable of rancor and of gratitude, making use without mercy of superiority on mediocrity, clever in getting parliamentary majorities to put in the wrong those mysterious unanimities which mutter dully under thrones; unreserved, sometimes imprudent in his lack of reserve, but with marvellous address in that imprudence; fertile in expedients, in countenances, in masks; making France fear Europe and Europe France! Incontestably fond of his country, but preferring his family; assuming more domination than authority and more authority than dignity, a disposition which has this unfortunate property, that as it turns everything to success, it admits of ruse and does not absolutely repudiate baseness, but which has this valuable side, that it preserves politics from violent shocks, the state from fractures, and society from catastrophes; minute, correct, vigilant, attentive, sagacious, indefatigable; contradicting himself at times and giving himself the lie; bold against Austria at Ancona, obstinate against England in Spain, bombarding Antwerp, and paying off Pritchard; singing the Marseillaise with conviction, inaccessible to despondency, to lassitude, to the taste for the beautiful and the ideal, to daring generosity, to Utopia, to chimeras, to wrath, to vanity, to fear; possessing all the forms of personal intrepidity: a general at Valmy; a soldier at Jemappes; attacked eight times by regicides and always smiling; brave as a grenadier, cou-

rageous as a thinker; uneasy only in the face of the chances of a European shaking up, and unfitted for great political adventures; always ready to risk his life, never his work; disguising his will in influence, in order that he might be obeyed as an intelligence rather than as a king; endowed with observation and not with divination; not very attentive to minds, but knowing men, that is to say, requiring to see in order to judge; prompt and penetrating good sense, practical wisdom, easy speech, prodigious memory; drawing incessantly on this memory, his only point of resemblance with Cæsar, Alexander, and Napoleon; knowing deeds, facts, details, dates, proper names, ignorant of tendencies, passions, the diverse geniuses of the crowd, the interior aspirations, the hidden and obscure uprisings of souls, in a word, all that can be designated as the invisible currents of consciences; accepted by the surface, but little in accord with France lower down; extricating himself by dint of tact; governing too much and not enough; his own first minister; excellent at creating out of the pettiness of realities an obstacle to the immensity of ideas; mingling a genuine creative faculty of civilization, of order and organization, an indescribable spirit of proceedings and chicanery, the founder and lawyer of a dynasty; having something of Charlemagne and something of an attorney; in short, a lofty and original figure, a prince who understood how to create authority in spite of the uneasiness of France, and power in spite of the jealousy of Europe. Louis Philippe will be classed among the eminent men of his century, and would be ranked among the most illustrious governors of history had he loved glory but a little, and if he had had the sentiment of what is great to the same degree as the feeling for what is useful.

Louis Philippe had been handsome, and in his old age he remained graceful; not always approved by the nation, he always was so by the masses; he pleased. He had that gift of charming. He lacked majesty; he wore no crown, although a king, and no white hair, although an old man; his manners belonged to the old regime and his habits to the new; a mixture of the noble and the bourgeois which suited 1830; Louis

Philippe was transition reigning ; he had preserved the ancient pronunciation and the ancient orthography which he placed at the service of opinions modern ; he loved Poland and Hungary, but he wrote *les Polonois*, and he pronounced *les Hongrais*. He wore the uniform of the national guard, like Charles X., and the ribbon of the Legion of Honor, like Napoleon.

He went a little to chapel, not at all to the chase, never to the opera. Incorruptible by sacristans, by whippers-in, by ballet-dancers ; this made a part of his bourgeois popularity. He had no heart. He went out with his umbrella under his arm, and this umbrella long formed a part of his aureole. He was a bit of a mason, a bit of a gardener, something of a doctor ; he bled a postilion who had tumbled from his horse ; Louis Philippe no more went about without his lancet, than did Henri IV. without his poniard. The Royalists jeered at this ridiculous king, the first who had ever shed blood with the object of healing.

For the grievances against Louis Philippe, there is one deduction to be made ; there is that which accuses royalty, that which accuses the reign, that which accuses the King ; three columns which all give different totals. Democratic right confiscated, progress becomes a matter of secondary interest, the protests of the street violently repressed, military execution of insurrections, the rising passed over by arms, the Rue Transnonain, the counsels of war, the absorption of the real country by the legal country, on half shares with three hundred thousand privileged persons,—these are the deeds of royalty ; Belgium refused, Algeria too harshly conquered, and, as in the case of India by the English, with more barbarism than civilization, the breach of faith, to Abd-el-Kader, Blaye, Deutz bought, Pritchard paid,—these are the doings of the reign ; the policy which was more domestic than national was the doing of the King.

As will be seen, the proper deduction having been made, the King's charge is decreased.

This is his great fault ; he was modest in the name of France.

Whence arises this fault?

We will state it.

Louis Philippe was rather too much of a paternal king; that incubation of a family with the object of founding a dynasty is afraid of everything and does not like to be disturbed; hence excessive timidity, which is displeasing to the people, who have the 14th of July in their civil and Austerlitz in their military tradition.

Moreover, if we deduct the public duties which require to be fulfilled first of all, that deep tenderness of Louis Philippe towards his family was deserved by the family. That domestic group was worthy of admiration. Virtues there dwelt side by side with talents. One of Louis Philippe's daughters, Marie d'Orleans, placed the name of her race among artists, as Charles d'Orleans had placed it among poets. She made of her soul a marble which she named Jeanne d'Arc. Two of Louis Philippe's daughters elicited from Metternich this enlogium: "They are young people such as are rarely seen, and princes such as are never seen."

This, without any dissimulation, and also without any exaggeration, is the truth about Louis Philippe.

To be Prince Equality, to bear in his own person the contradiction of the Restoration and the Revolution, to have that disquieting side of the revolutionary which becomes reassuring in governing power, therein lay the fortune of Louis Philippe in 1830; never was there a more complete adaptation of a man to an event; the one entered into the other, and the incarnation took place. Louis Philippe is 1830 made man. Moreover, he had in his favor that great recommendation to the throne, exile. He had been proscribed, a wanderer, poor. He had lived by his own labor. In Switzerland, this heir to the richest princely domains in France had sold an old horse in order to obtain bread. At Reichenau, he gave lessons in mathematics, while his sister Adelaide did wool work and sewed. These souvenirs connected with a king rendered the bourgeoisie enthusiastic. He had, with his own hands, demolished the iron cage of Mont-Saint-Michel, built by Louis XI, and used by

Louis XV. He was the companion of Dumouriez, he was the friend of Lafayette: he had belonged to the Jacobins' club; Mirabeau had slapped him on the shoulder; Danton had said to him: "Young man!" At the age of four and twenty, in '93, being then M. de Chartres, he had witnessed, from the depth of a box, the trial of Louis XVI., so well named *that poor tyrant*. The blind clairvoyance of the Revolution, breaking royalty in the King and the King with royalty, did so almost without noticing the man in the fierce crushing of the idea, the vast storm of the Assembly-Tribunal, the public wrath interrogating, Capet not knowing what to reply, the alarming, stupefied vacillation by that royal head beneath that sombre breath, the relative innocence of all in that catastrophe, of those who condemned as well as of the man condemned,—he had looked on those things, he had contemplated that giddiness; he had seen the centuries appear before the bar of the Assembly-Convention; he had beheld, behind Louis XVI., that unfortunate passer-by who was made responsible, the terrible culprit, the monarchy, rise through the shadows; and there had lingered in his soul the respectful fear of these immense justices of the populace, which are almost as impersonal as the justice of God.

The trace left in him by the Revolution was prodigious. Its memory was like a living imprint of those great years, minute by minute. One day, in the presence of a witness whom we are not permitted to doubt, he rectified from memory the whole of the letter A in the alphabetical list of the Constituent Assembly.

Louis Philippe was a king of the broad daylight. While he reigned the press was free, the tribune was free, conscience and speech were free. The laws of September are open to sight. Although fully aware of the gnawing power of light on privileges, he left his throne exposed to the light. History will do justice to him for this loyalty.

Louis Philippe, like all historical men who have passed from the scene, is to-day put on his trial by the human conscience. His case is, as yet, only in the lower court.

The hour when history speaks with its free and venerable

accent, has not yet sounded for him; the moment has not come to pronounce a definite judgment on this king; the austere and illustrious historian Louis Blanc has himself recently softened his first verdict; Louis Philippe was elected by those two *almos* which are called the 221 and 1830, that is to say, by a half-Parliament, and a half-revolution; and in any case, from the superior point of view where philosophy must place itself, we cannot judge him here, as the reader has seen above, except with certain reservations in the name of the absolute democratic principle; in the eyes of the absolute, outside these two rights, the right of man in the first place, the right of the people in the second, all is usurpation; but what we can say, even at the present day, that after making these reserves is, that to sum up the whole, and in whatever manner he is considered, Louis Philippe, taken in himself, and from the point of view of human goodness, will remain, to use the antique language of ancient history, one of the best princes who ever sat on a throne.

What is there against him? That throne. Take away Louis Philippe the king, there remains the man. And the man is good. He is good at times even to the point of being admirable. Often, in the midst of his gravest souvenirs, after a day of conflict with the whole diplomacy of the continent, he returned at night to his apartments, and there, exhausted with fatigue, overwhelmed with sleep, what did he do? He took a death sentence and passed the night in revising a criminal suit, considering it something to hold his own against Europe, but that it was a still greater matter to rescue a man from the executioner. He obstinately maintained his opinion against his keeper of the seals; he disputed the ground with the guillotine foot by foot against the crown attorneys, those *chatterers of the law*, as he called them. Sometimes the pile of sentences covered his table; he examined them all; it was anguish to him to abandon these miserable, condemned heads. One day, he said to the same witness to whom we have recently referred: "I won seven last night." During the early years of his reign, the death penalty was as good as abolished, and the erection

of a scaffold was a violence committed against the King. The Grève having disappeared with the elder branch, a bourgeois place of execution was instituted under the name of the Barrière-Saint-Jacques; "practical men" felt the necessity of a quasi-legitimate guillotine; and this was one of the victories of Casimir Périer, who represented the narrow sides of the bourgeoisie, over Louis Philippe, who represented its liberal sides. Louis Philippe annotated Beccaria with his own hand. After the Fieschi machine, he exclaimed: "What a pity that I was not wounded! Then I might have pardoned!" On another occasion, alluding to the resistance offered by his ministry, he wrote in connection with a political criminal, who is one of the most generous figures of our day: "His pardon is granted; it only remains for me to obtain it." Louis Philippe was as gentle as Louis IX. and as kindly as Henri IV.

Now, to our mind, in history, where kindness is the rarest of pearls, the man who is kindly almost takes precedence of the man who is great.

Louis Philippe having been severely judged by some, harshly, perhaps, by others, it is quite natural that a man, himself a phantom at the present day, who knew that king, should come and testify in his favor before history; this deposition, whatever else it may be, is evidently and above all things, entirely disinterested; an epitaph penned by a dead man is sincere; one shade may console another shade; the sharing of the same shadows confers the right to praise it; it is not greatly to be feared that it will ever be said of two tombs in exile: "This one flattered the other."

CHAPTER IV

CRACKS BENEATH THE FOUNDATION

At the moment when the drama which we are narrating is on the point of penetrating into the depths of one of the tragic clouds which envelop the beginning of Louis Philippe's reign, it was necessary that there should be no equivocal, and it

became requisite that this book should offer some explanation with regard to this king.

Louis Philippe had entered into possession of his royal authority without violence, without any direct action on his part, by virtue of a revolutionary change, evidently quite distinct from the real aim of the Revolution, but in which he, the Due d'Orléans, exercised no personal initiative. He had been born a Prince, and he believed himself to have been elected King. He had not served this mandate on himself; he had not taken it; it had been offered to him, and he had accepted it; convinced, wrongly, to be sure, but convinced nevertheless, that the offer was in accordance with right and that the acceptance of it was in accordance with duty. Hence his possession was in good faith. Now, we say it in good conscience, Louis Philippe being in possession in perfect good faith, and the democracy being in good faith in its attack, the amount of terror discharged by the social conflicts weighs neither on the King nor on the democracy. A clash of principles resembles a clash of elements. The ocean defends the water, the hurricane defends the air, the King defends Royalty, the democracy defends the people; the relative, which is the monarchy, resists the absolute, which is the republic; society bleeds in this conflict, but that which constitutes its suffering to-day will constitute its safety later on; and, in any case, those who combat are not to be blamed; one of the two parties is evidently mistaken; the right is not, like the Colossus of Rhodes, on two shores at once, with one foot on the republic, and one in Royalty; it is indivisible, and all on one side; but those who are in error are so sincerely; a blind man is no more a criminal than a Vendean is a ruffian. Let us, then, impute to the fatality of things alone these formidable collisions. Whatever the nature of these tempests may be, human irresponsibility is mingled with them.

Let us complete this exposition.

The government of 1840 led a hard life immediately. Born yesterday, it was obliged to fight to-day.

Hardly installed, it was already everywhere conscious of vague movements of traction on the apparatus of July so recently laid, and so lacking in solidity.

Resistance was born on the morrow; perhaps even, it was born on the preceding evening. From month to month the hostility increased, and from being concealed it became patent.

The Revolution of July, which gained but little acceptance outside of France by kings, had been diversely interpreted in France, as we have said.

God delivers over to men his visible will in events, an obscure text written in a mysterious tongue. Men immediately make translations of it; translations hasty, incorrect, full of errors, of gaps, and of nonsense. Very few minds comprehend the divine language. The most sagacious, the calmest, the most profound, decipher slowly, and when they arrive with their text, the task has long been completed; there are already twenty translations on the public place. From each remaining springs a party, and from each misinterpretation a faction: and each party thinks that it alone has the true text, and each faction thinks that it possesses the light.

Power itself is often a faction.

There are, in revolutions, swimmers who go against the current; they are the old parties.

For the old parties who cling to heredity by the grace of God, think that revolutions, having sprung from the right to revolt, one has the right to revolt against them. Error. For in these revolutions, the one who revolts is not the people; it is the king. Revolution is precisely the contrary of revolt. Every revolution, being a normal outcome, contains within itself its legitimacy, which false revolutionists sometimes dishonor, but which remains even when soiled, which survives even when stained with blood.

Revolutions spring not from an accident, but from necessity. A revolution is a return from the fictitious to the real. It is because it must be that it is.

None the less did the old legitimist parties assail the Revolution of 1830 with all the vehemence which arises from false reasoning. Errors make excellent projectiles. They strike it cleverly in its vulnerable spot, in default of a cuirass, in its lack of logic; they attacked this revolution in its royalty. They shouted to it: "Revolution, why this king?" Factions are blind men who aim correctly.

This cry was uttered equally by the republicans. But coming from them, this cry was logical. What was blindness in the legitimists was clearness of vision in the democrats. 1830 had bankrupted the people. The enraged democracy reproached it with this.

Between the attack of the past and the attack of the future, the establishment of July struggled. It represented the minute at loggerheads on the one hand with the monarchical centuries, on the other hand with eternal right.

In addition, and beside all this, as it was no longer revolution and had become a monarchy, 1830 was obliged to take precedence of all Europe. To keep the peace, was an increase of complication. A harmony established contrary to sense is often more onerous than a war. From this secret conflict, always muzzled, but always growling, was born armed peace, that ruinous expedient of civilization which in the harness of the European cabinets is suspicious in itself. The Royalty of July reared up, in spite of the fact that it caught it in the harness of European cabinets. Metternich would gladly have put it in kicking-straps. Pushed on in France by progress, it pushed on the monarchies, those loiterers in Europe. After having been towed, it undertook to tow.

Meanwhile, within her, pauperism, the proletariat, salary, education, penal servitude, prostitution, the fate of the woman, wealth, misery, production, consumption, division, exchange, coin, credit, the rights of capital, the rights of labor,—all these questions were multiplied above society, a terrible slope.

Outside of political parties properly so called, another movement became manifest. Philosophical fermentation replied to

democratic fermentation. The elect felt troubled as well as the masses; in another manner, but quite as much.

Thinkers meditated, while the soil, that is to say, the people, traversed by revolutionary currents, trembled under them with indescribably vague epileptic shocks. These dreamers, some isolated, others united in families and almost in communion, turned over social questions in a pacific but profound manner; impassive miners, who tranquilly pushed their galleries into the depths of a volcano, hardly disturbed by the dull commotion and the furnaces of which they caught glimpses.

This tranquillity was not the least beautiful spectacle of this agitated epoch.

These men left to political parties the question of rights, they occupied themselves with the question of happiness.

The well-being of man, that was what they wanted to extract from society.

They raised material questions, questions of agriculture, of industry, of commerce, almost to the dignity of a religion. In civilization, such as it has formed itself, a little by the command of God, a great deal by the agency of man, interests combine, unite, and amalgamate in a manner to form a veritable hard rock, in accordance with a dynamic law, patiently studied by economists, those geologists of politics. These men who grouped themselves under different appellations, but who may all be designated by the generic title of socialists, endeavored to pierce that rock and to cause it to spout forth the living waters of human felicity.

From the question of the scaffold to the question of war, their works embraced everything. To the rights of man, as proclaimed by the French Revolution, they added the rights of woman and the rights of the child.

The reader will not be surprised if, for various reasons, we do not here treat in a thorough manner, from the theoretical point of view, the questions raised by socialism. We confine ourselves to indicating them.

All the problems that the socialists proposed to themselves,

cosmogonic visions, revery and mysticism being cast aside, can be reduced to two principal problems.

First problem: To produce wealth.

Second problem: To share it.

The first problem contains the question of work.

The second contains the question of salary.

In the first problem the employment of forces is in question.

In the second, the distribution of enjoyment.

From the proper employment of forces results public power.

From a good distribution of enjoyments results individual happiness.

By a good distribution, not an equal but an equitable distribution must be understood.

From these two things combined, the public power without, individual happiness within, results social prosperity.

Social prosperity means the man happy, the citizen free, the nation great.

England solves the first of these two problems. She creates wealth admirably, she divides it badly. This solution which is complete on one side only leads her fatally to two extremes: monstrous opulence, monstrous wretchedness. All enjoyments for some, all privations for the rest, that is to say, for the people; privilege, exception, monopoly, feudalism, born from toil itself. A false and dangerous situation, which sates public power or private misery, which sets the roots of the State in the sufferings of the individual. A badly constituted grandeur in which are combined all the material elements and into which no moral element enters.

Communism and agrarian law think that they solve the second problem. They are mistaken. Their division kills production. Equal partition abolishes emulation; and consequently labor. It is a partition made by the butcher, which kills that which it divides. It is therefore impossible to pause over these pretended solutions. Slaying wealth is not the same thing as dividing it.

The two problems require to be solved together, to be well

solved. The two problems must be combined and made but one.

Solve only the first of the two problems; you will be Venice, you will be England. You will have, like Venice, an artificial power, or, like England, a material power; you will be the wicked rich man. You will die by an act of violence, as Venice died, or by bankruptcy, as England will fall. And the world will allow to die and fall all that is merely selfishness, all that does not represent for the human race either a virtue or an idea.

It is well understood here, that by the words Venice, England, we designate not the peoples, but social structures; the oligarchies superposed on nations, and not the nations themselves. The nations always have our respect and our sympathy. Venice, as a people, will live again; England, the aristocracy, will fall, but England, the nation, is immortal. That said, we continue.

Solve the two problems, encourage the wealthy, and protect the poor, suppress misery, put an end to the unjust farming out of the feeble by the strong, put a bridle on the iniquitous jealousy of the man who is making his way against the man who has reached the goal, adjust, mathematically and fraternally, salary to labor, mingle gratuitous and compulsory education with the growth of childhood, and make of science the base of manliness, develop minds while keeping arms busy, be at one and the same time a powerful people and a family of happy men, render property democratic, not by abolishing it, but by making it universal, so that every citizen, without exception, may be a proprietor, an easier matter than is generally supposed; in two words, learn how to produce wealth and how to distribute it, and you will have at once moral and material greatness; and you will be worthy to call yourself France.

This is what socialism said outside and above a few sects which have gone astray; that is what it sought in facts, that is what it sketched out in minds.

Efforts worthy of admiration! Sacred attempts!

These doctrines, these theories, these resistances, the unforeseen necessity for the statesman to take philosophers into account, confused evidences of which we catch a glimpse, a new system of politics to be created, which shall be in accord with the old world without too much disaccord with the new revolutionary ideal, a situation in which it became necessary to use Lafayette to defend Polignac, the intuition of progress transparent beneath the revolt, the chambers and streets, the competitions to be brought into equilibrium around him, his faith in the Revolution, perhaps an eventual indefinable resignation born of the vague acceptance of a superior definitive right, his desire to remain of his race, his domestic spirit, his sincere respect for the people, his own honesty, preoccupied Louis Philippe almost painfully, and there were moments when, strong and courageous as he was, he was overwhelmed by the difficulties of being a king.

He felt under his feet a formidable disaggregation, which was not, nevertheless, a reduction to dust, France being more France than ever.

Piles of shadows covered the horizon. A strange shade, gradually drawing nearer, extended little by little over men, over things, over ideas; a shade which came from wraths and systems. Everything which had been hastily stifled was moving and fermenting. At times the conscience of the honest man resumed its breathing, so great was the discomfort of that air in which sophisms were intermingled with truths. Spirits trembled in the social anxiety like leaves at the approach of a storm. The electric tension was such that at certain instants, the first comer, a stranger, brought light. Then the twilight obscurity closed in again. At intervals, deep and dull mutterings allowed a judgment to be formed as to the quantity of thunder contained by the cloud.

Twenty months had barely elapsed since the Revolution of July, the year 1832 had opened with an aspect of something impending and threatening.

The distress of the people, the laborers without bread, the last Prince de Condé engulfed in the shadows, Brussels expel-

ling the Nassaus as Paris did the Bourbons, Belgium offering herself to a French Prince and giving herself to an English Prince, the Russian hatred of Nicolas, behind us the demons of the South, Ferdinand in Spain, Miguel in Portugal, the earth quaking in Italy, Metternich extending his hand over Bologna, France treating Austria sharply at Ancona, at the North no one knew what sinister sound of the hammer nailing up Poland in her coffin, irritated glances watching France narrowly all over Europe, England, a suspected ally, ready to give a push to that which was tottering and to hurl herself on that which should fall, the peerage sheltering itself behind Beccaria to refuse four heads to the law, the fleurs-de-lys erased from the King's carriage, the cross torn from Notre Dame, Lafayette lessened, Laffitte ruined, Benjamin Constant dead in indigence, Casimir Périer dead in the exhaustion of his power; political and social malady breaking out simultaneously in the two capitals of the kingdom, the one in the city of thought, the other in the city of toil; at Paris civil war, at Lyons servile war; in the two cities, the same glare of the furnace; a crater-like crimson on the brow of the people; the South rendered fanatic, the West troubled, the Duchesse de Berry in la Vendée, plots, conspiracies, risings, cholera, added the sombre roar of tumult of events to the sombre roar of ideas.

CHAPTER V

FACTS WHENCE HISTORY SPRINGS AND WHICH HISTORY IGNORES

TOWARDS the end of April, everything had become aggravated. The fermentation entered the boiling state. Ever since 1830, petty partial revolts had been going on here and there, which were quickly suppressed, but ever bursting forth afresh, the sign of a vast underlying conflagration. Something terrible was in preparation. Glimpses could be caught of the features still indistinct and imperfectly lighted, of a possible

revolution. France kept an eye on Paris; Paris kept an eye on the Faubourg Saint-Antoine.

The Faubourg Saint-Antoine, which was in a dull glow, was beginning its ebullition.

The wine-shops of the Rue de Charonne were, although the union of the two epithets seems singular when applied to wine-shops, grave and stormy.

The government was there purely and simply called in question. There people publicly discussed the *question of fighting or of keeping quiet*. There were back shops where workingmen were made to swear that they would hasten into the street at the first cry of alarm, and "that they would fight without counting the number of the enemy." This engagement once entered into, a man seated in the corner of the wine-shop "assumed a sonorous tone," and said, "You understand! You have sworn!"

Sometimes they went up stairs, to a private room on the first floor, and there scenes that were almost masonic were enacted. They made the initiated take oaths *to render service to himself as well as to the fathers of families*. That was the formula.

In the tap-rooms, "subversive" pamphlets were read. *They treated the government with contempt*, says a secret report of that time.

Words like the following could be heard there:—

"I don't know the names of the leaders. We folks shall not know the day until two hours beforehand." One workman said: "There are three hundred of us, let each contribute ten sous, that will make one hundred and fifty francs with which to procure powder and shot."

Another said: "I don't ask for six months, I don't ask for even two. In less than a fortnight we shall be parallel with the government. With twenty-five thousand men we can face them." Another said: "I don't sleep at night, because I make cartridges all night." From time to time, men "of bourgeois appearance, and in good coats" came and "caused embarrassment," and with the air of "command," shook hands with *the*

most important, and then went away. They never stayed more than ten minutes. Significant remarks were exchanged in a low tone: "The plot is ripe, the matter is arranged." "It was murmured by all who were there," to borrow the very expression of one of those who were present. The exaltation was such that one day, a workingman exclaimed, before the whole wine-shop: "We have no arms!" One of his comrades replied: "The soldiers have!" thus parodying without being aware of the fact, Bonaparte's proclamation to the army in Italy: "When they had anything of a more secret nature on hand," adds one report, "they did not communicate it to each other." It is not easy to understand what they could conceal after what they said.

These reunions were sometimes periodical. At certain ones of them, there were never more than eight or ten persons present, and they were always the same. In others, any one entered who wished, and the room was so full that they were forced to stand. Some went thither through enthusiasm and passion; others because it *was on their way to their work*. As during the Revolution, there were patriotic women in some of these wine-shops who embraced new-comers.

Other expressive facts came to light.

A man would enter a shop, drink, and go his way with the remark: "Wine-merchant, the revolution will pay what is due to you."

Revolutionary agents were appointed in a wine-shop facing the Rue de Charonne. The balloting was carried on in their caps.

Workingmen met at the house of a fencing-master who gave lessons in the Rue de Cotte. There there was a trophy of arms formed of wooden broadswords, canes, clubs, and foils. One day, the buttons were removed from the foils.

A workman said: "There are twenty-five of us, but they don't count on me, because I am looked upon as a machine." Later on, that machine became Quenisset.

The indefinite things which were brewing gradually acquired a strange and indescribable notoriety. A woman sweeping off

her doorsteps said to another woman: "For a long time, there has been a strong force busy making cartridges." In the open street, proclamation could be seen addressed to the National Guard in the departments. One of these proclamations was signed: *Burtot, wine-merchant*.

One day a man with his beard worn like a collar and with an Italian accent mounted a stone post at the door of a liquor-seller in the *Marché Lenoir*, and read aloud a singular document, which seemed to emanate from an occult power. Groups formed around him, and applauded.

The passages which touched the crowd most deeply were collected and noted down. "—Our doctrines are trammelled, our proclamations torn, our bill-stickers are spied upon and thrown into prison."—"The breakdown which has recently taken place in cottons has converted to us many mediums."—"The future of nations is being worked out in our obscure ranks."—"Here are the fixed terms: action or reaction, revolution or counter-revolution. For, at our epoch, we no longer believe either in inertia or in immobility. For the people against the people, that is the question. There is no other."—"On the day when we cease to suit you, break us, but up to that day, help us to march on." All this in broad daylight.

Other deeds, more audacious still, were suspicious in the eyes of the people by reason of their very audacity. On the 4th of April, 1832, a passer-by mounted the post on the corner which forms the angle of the *Rue Sainte-Marguerite* and shouted: "I am a Babouvist!" But beneath Babeuf, the people scented Gisquet.

Among other things, this man said:—

"Down with property! The opposition of the left is cowardly and treacherous. When it wants to be on the right side, it preaches revolution, it is democratic in order to escape being beaten, and royalist so that it may not have to fight. The republicans are beasts with feathers. Distrust the republicans, citizens of the laboring classes."

"Silence, citizen spy!" cried an artisan.

This shout put an end to the discourse.

Mysterious incidents occurred.

At nightfall, a workingman encountered near the canal a "very well dressed man," who said to him: "Whither are you bound, citizen?" "Sir," replied the workingman, "I have not the honor of your acquaintance." "I know you very well, however." And the man added: "Don't be alarmed, I am an agent of the committee. You are suspected of not being quite faithful. You know that if you reveal anything, there is an eye fixed on you." Then he shook hands with the workingman and went away, saying: "We shall meet again soon."

The police, who were on the alert, collected singular dialogues, not only in the wine-shops, but in the street.

"Get yourself received very soon," said a weaver to a cabinet-maker.

"Why?"

"There is going to be a shot to fire."

Two ragged pedestrians exchanged these remarkable replies, fraught with evident *Jacquerie*:—

"Who governs us?"

"M. Philippe."

"No, it is the bourgeoisie."

The reader is mistaken if he thinks that we take the word *Jacquerie* in a bad sense. The Jacques were the poor.

On another occasion two men were heard to say to each other as they passed by: "We have a good plan of attack."

Only the following was caught of a private conversation between four men who were crouching in a ditch of the circle of the *Barrière du Trône*:—

"Everything possible will be done to prevent his walking about Paris any more."

Who was the *he*? Menacing obscurity.

"The principal leaders," as they said in the faubourg, held themselves apart. It was supposed that they met for consultation in a wine-shop near the point Saint-Enstache. A certain Aug—, chief of the Society aid for tailors, Rue Mondétour, had the reputation of serving as intermediary central between the leaders and the Faubourg Saint-Antoine.

Nevertheless, there was always a great deal of mystery about these leaders, and no certain fact can invalidate the singular arrogance of this reply made later on by a man accused before the Court of Peers:—

“Who was your leader?”

“*I knew of none and I recognized none.*”

There was nothing but words, transparent but vague; sometimes idle reports, rumors, hearsay. Other indications cropped up.

A carpenter, occupied in nailing boards to a fence around the ground on which a house was in process of construction, in the Rue de Reuilly, found on that plot the torn fragment of a letter on which were still legible the following lines:—

The committee must take measures to prevent reeruiting in the sections for the different societies.

And, as a postscript:—

We have learned that there are guns in the Rue du Faubourg-Poissonnière, No. 5 [bis], to the number of five or six thousand, in the house of a gunsmith in that court. The section owns no arms.

What excited the carpenter and caused him to show this thing to his neighbors was the fact, that a few paces further on he picked up another paper, torn like the first, and still more significant, of which we reproduce a facsimile, because of the historical interest attaching to these strange documents:—

Q	C	D	E	<p><i>Learn this list by heart. After so doing you will tear it up. The men admitted will do the same when you have transmitted their orders to them.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Health and Fraternity,</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>u og a' fe</i> <i>L.</i></p>
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It was only later on that the persons who were in the secret of this find at the time, learned the significance of those four capital letters: *quinturions, centurions, decurions, éclaireurs*

[scouts], and the sense of the letters: *u og a' fe*, which was a date, and meant April 15th, 1832. Under each capital letter were inscribed names followed by very characteristic notes. Thus: *Q. Bannerel*. 8 guns, 83 cartridges. A safe man.—*C. Boubière*. 1 pistol, 40 cartridges.—*D. Rollet*. 1 foil, 1 pistol, 1 pound of powder.—*E. Tessier*. 1 sword, 1 cartridge-box. Exact.—*Terreur*. 8 guns. Brave, etc.

Finally, this carpenter found, still in the same enclosure, a third paper on which was written in pencil, but very legibly, this sort of enigmatical list:—

Unité: Blanchard: Arbre-Sec. 6.
 Barra. Soize. Salle-au-Comte.
 Kosciusko. Aubry the Butcher?
 J. J. R.
 Caius Gracchus.
 Right of revision. Dufond. Four.
 Fall of the Girondists. Derbac. Maubuée.
 Washington. Pinson. 1 pistol, 86 cartridges.
 Marseillaise.
 Sovereignty of the people. Michel. Quincampoix. Sword.
 Hoche.
 Marceau. Plato. Arbre-Sec.
 Warsaw. Tilly, crier of the *Populaire*.

The honest bourgeois into whose hands this list fell knew its significance. It appears that this list was the complete nomenclature of the sections of the fourth arrondissement of the Society of the Rights of Man, with the names and dwellings of the chiefs of sections. To-day, when all these facts which were obscure are nothing more than history, we may publish them. It should be added, that the foundation of the Society of the Rights of Man seems to have been posterior to the date when this paper was found. Perhaps this was only a rough draft.

Still, according to all the remarks and the words, according to written notes, material facts begin to make their appearance.

In the Rue Popincourt, in the house of a dealer in bric-à-brac, there were seized seven sheets of gray paper, all folded alike lengthwise and in four; these sheets enclosed twenty-six

squares of this same gray paper folded in the form of a cartridge, and a card, on which was written the following:—

Saltpetre	12 ounces.
Sulphur	2 ounces.
Charcoal	2 ounces and a half.
Water	2 ounces.

The report of the seizure stated that the drawer exhaled a strong smell of powder.

A mason returning from his day's work, left behind him a little package on a bench near the bridge of Austerlitz. This package was taken to the police station. It was opened, and in it were found two printed dialogues, signed *Lahautière*, a song entitled: "Workmen, band together," and a tin box full of cartridges.

One artisan drinking with a comrade made the latter feel him to see how warm he was; the other man felt a pistol under his waistcoat.

In a ditch on the boulevard, between Père-Lachaise and the Barrière du Trône, at the most deserted spot, some children, while playing, discovered beneath a mass of shavings and refuse bits of wood, a bag containing a bullet-mould, a wooden punch for the preparation of cartridges, a wooden bowl, in which there were grains of hunting-powder, and a little cast-iron pot whose interior presented evident traces of melted lead.

Police agents, making their way suddenly and unexpectedly at five o'clock in the morning, into the dwelling of a certain Pardon, who was afterwards a member of the Barriade-Merry section and got himself killed in the insurrection of April, 1834, found him standing near his bed, and holding in his hand some cartridges which he was in the act of preparing.

Towards the hour when workingmen repose, two men were seen to meet between the Barrière Piepus and the Barrière Charenton in a little lane between two walls, near a wine-shop, in front of which there was a "Jeu de Siam."¹ One drew a

¹A game of ninepins, in which one side of the ball is smaller than the other, so that it does not roll straight, but describes a curve on the ground.

pistol from beneath his blouse and handed it to the other. As he was handing it to him, he noticed that the perspiration of his chest had made the powder damp. He primed the pistol and added more powder to what was already in the pan. Then the two men parted.

A certain Gallais, afterwards killed in the Rue Beaubourg in the affair of April, boasted of having in his house seven hundred cartridges and twenty-four flints.

The government one day received a warning that arms and two hundred thousand cartridges had just been distributed in the faubourg. On the following week thirty thousand cartridges were distributed. The remarkable point about it was, that the police were not able to seize a single one.

An intercepted letter read: "The day is not far distant when, within four hours by the clock, eighty thousand patriots will be under arms."

All this fermentation was public, one might almost say tranquil. The approaching insurrection was preparing its storm calmly in the face of the government. No singularity was lacking to this still subterranean crisis, which was already perceptible. The bourgeois talked peaceably to the working-classes of what was in preparation. They said: "How is the rising coming along?" in the same tone in which they would have said: "How is your wife?"

A furniture-dealer, of the Rue Moreau, inquired: "Well, when are you going to make the attack?"

Another shop-keeper said:—

"The attack will be made soon."

"I know it. A month ago, there were fifteen thousand of you, now there are twenty-five thousand." He offered his gun, and a neighbor offered a small pistol which he was willing to sell for seven francs.

Moreover, the revolutionary fever was growing. Not a point in Paris nor in France was exempt from it. The artery was beating everywhere. Like those membranes which arise from certain inflammations and form in the human body, the network of secret societies began to spread all over the country.

From the associations of the Friends of the People, which was at the same time public and secret, sprang the Society of the Rights of Man, which also dated from one of the orders of the day: *Pluviôse, Year 40 of the republican era*, which was destined to survive even the mandate of the Court of Assizes which pronounced its dissolution, and which did not hesitate to bestow on its sections significant names like the following:—

Pikes.

Tocsin.

Signal cannon.

Phrygian cap.

January 21.

The beggars.

The vagabonds.

Forward march.

Robespierre.

Level.

Ça Ira.

The Society of the Rights of Man engendered the Society of Action. These were impatient individuals who broke away and hastened ahead. Other associations sought to recruit themselves from the great mother societies. The members of sections complained that they were torn asunder. Thus, the Gallic Society, and the committee of organization of the Municipalities. Thus the associations for the liberty of the press, for individual liberty, for the instruction of the people against indirect taxes. Then the Society of Equal Workingmen which was divided into three fractions, the levellers, the communists, the reformers. Then the Army of the Bastilles, a sort of cohort organized on a military footing. four men commanded by a corporal, ten by a sergeant, twenty by a sub-lieutenant, forty by a lieutenant; there were never more than five men who knew each other. Creation where precaution is combined with audacity and which seemed stamped with the genius of Venice.

The central committee, which was at the head, had two arms, the Society of Action, and the Army of the Bastilles.

A legitimist association, the Chevaliers of Fidelity, stirred about among these the republican affiliations. It was denounced and repudiated there.

The Parisian societies had ramifications in the principal cities, Lyons, Nantes, Lille, Marseilles, and each had its Society of the Rights of Man, the Charbonnière, and The Free Men. All had a revolutionary society which was called the Cougourde. We have already mentioned this word.

In Paris, the Faubourg Saint-Mareceau kept up an equal buzzing with the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, and the schools were no less moved than the faubourgs. A café in the Rue Saint-Hyacinthe and the wine-shop of the *Seven Billiards*, Rue des Mathurins-Saint-Jacques, served as rallying points for the students. The Society of the Friends of the A B C affiliated to the Mutualists of Angers, and to the Cougourde of Aix, met, as we have seen, in the Café Musain. These same young men assembled also, as we have stated already, in a restaurant wine-shop of the Rue Mondétour which was called Corinthe. These meetings were secret. Others were as public as possible, and the reader can judge of their boldness from these fragments of an interrogatory undergone in one of the ulterior prosecutions: "Where was this meeting held?" "In the Rue de la Paix." "At whose house?" "In the street." "What sections were there?" "Only one." "Which?" "The Manuel section." "Who was its leader?" "I." "You are too young to have decided alone upon the bold course of attacking the government. Where did your instructions come from?" "From the central committee."

The army was mined at the same time as the population, as was proved subsequently by the operations of Béförd, Luneville, and Épinard. They counted on the fifty-second regiment, on the fifth, on the eighth, on the thirty-seventh, and on the twentieth light cavalry. In Burgundy and in the southern towns they planted the liberty tree; that is to say, a pole surmounted by a red cap.

Such was the situation.

The Faubourg Saint-Antoine, more than any other group of the population, as we stated in the beginning, accentuated this situation and made it felt. That was the sore point. This old faubourg, peopled like an ant-hill, laborious, courageous, and angry as a hive of bees, was quivering with expectation and with the desire for a tumult. Everything was in a state of agitation there, without any interruption, however, of the regular work. It is impossible to convey an idea of this lively yet sombre physiognomy. In this faubourg exists poignant distress hidden under attic roofs; there also exist rare and ardent minds. It is particularly in the matter of distress and intelligence that it is dangerous to have extremes meet.

The Faubourg Saint-Antoine had also other causes to tremble; for it received the counter-shock of commercial crises, of failures, strikes, slack seasons, all inherent to great political disturbances. In times of revolution misery is both cause and effect. The blow which it deals rebounds upon it. This population full of proud virtue, capable to the highest degree of latent heat, always ready to fly to arms, prompt to explode, irritated, deep, undermined, seemed to be only awaiting the fall of a spark. Whenever certain sparks float on the horizon, chased by the wind of events, it is impossible not to think of the Faubourg Saint-Antoine and of the formidable chance which has placed at the very gates of Paris that powder-house of suffering and ideas.

The wine-shops of the *Faubourg Antoiné*, which have been more than once drawn in the sketches which the reader has just perused, possess historical notoriety. In troublous times people grow intoxicated there more on words than on wine. A sort of prophetic spirit and an afflatus of the future circulates there, swelling hearts and enlarging souls. The cabarets of the Faubourg Saint-Antoine resemble those taverns of Mont Aventine erected on the cave of the Sibyl and communicating with the profound and sacred breath; taverns where the tables were almost tripods, and where was drunk what Ennius calls the *sibylline wine*.

The Faubourg Saint-Antoine is a reservoir of people. Revolutionary agitations create fissures there, through which trickles the popular sovereignty. This sovereignty may do evil; it can be mistaken like any other; but, even when led astray, it remains great. We may say of it as of the blind cyclops, *Ingens*.

In '93, according as the idea which was floating about was good or evil, according as it was the day of fanaticism or of enthusiasm, there leaped forth from the Faubourg Saint-Antoine now savage legions, now heroic bands.

Savage. Let us explain this word. When these bristling men, who in the early days of the revolutionary chaos, tattered, howling, wild, with uplifted bludgeon, pike on high, hurled themselves upon ancient Paris in an uproar, what did they want? They wanted an end to oppression, an end to tyranny, an end to the sword, work for men, instruction for the child, social sweetness for the woman, liberty, equality, fraternity, bread for all, the idea for all, the Edenizing of the world. Progress; and that holy, sweet, and good thing, progress, they claimed in terrible wise, driven to extremities as they were, half naked, club in fist, a roar in their mouths. They were savages, yes; but the savages of civilization.

They proclaimed right furiously; they were desirous, if only with fear and trembling, to force the human race to paradise. They seemed barbarians, and they were saviours. They demanded light with the mask of night.

Facing these men, who were ferocious, we admit, and terrifying, but ferocious and terrifying for good ends, there are other men, smiling, embroidered, gilded, beribboned, starred, in silk stockings, in white plumes, in yellow gloves, in varnished shoes, who, with their elbows on a velvet table, beside a marble chimney-piece, insist gently on demeanor and the preservation of the past, of the Middle Ages, of divine right, of fanaticism, of innocence, of slavery, of the death penalty, of war, glorifying in low tones and with politeness, the sword, the stake, and the scaffold. For our part, if we were forced to make a choice between the barbarians of civili-

zation and the civilized men of barbarism, we should choose the barbarians.

But, thank Heaven, still another choice is possible. No perpendicular fall is necessary, in front any more than in the rear.

Neither despotism nor terrorism. We desire progress with a gentle slope.

God takes care of that. God's whole policy consists in rendering slopes less steep.

CHAPTER VI

ENJOLRAS AND HIS LIEUTENANTS

IT was about this epoch that Enjolras, in view of a possible catastrophe, instituted a kind of mysterious census.

All were present at a secret meeting at the Café Musain.

Enjolras said, mixing his words with a few half-enigmatical but significant metaphors:—

“It is proper that we should know where we stand and on whom we may count. If combatants are required, they must be provided. It can do no harm to have something with which to strike. Passers-by always have more chance of being gored when there are bulls on the road than when there are none. Let us, therefore, reckon a little on the herd. How many of us are there? There is no question of postponing this task until to-morrow. Revolutionists should always be hurried: progress has no time to lose. Let us mistrust the unexpected. Let us not be caught unprepared. We must go over all the seams that we have made and see whether they hold fast. This business ought to be concluded to-day. Courfeyrac, you will see the polytechnic students. It is their day to go out. To-day is Wednesday. Feuilly, you will see those of the Glacière, will you not? Combeferre has promised me to go to Picpus. There is a perfect swarm and an excellent one there. Bahorel will visit the Estrapade. Prouvaire, the masons are growing

lukewarm; you will bring us news from the lodge of the Rue de Grenelle-Saint-Honoré. Joly will go to Dupuytren's clinical lecture, and feel the pulse of the medical school. Bossuet will take a little turn in the court and talk with the young law licentiates. I will take charge of the Cougourde myself."

"That arranges everything," said Courfeyrac.

"No."

"What else is there?"

"A very important thing."

"What is that?" asked Courfeyrac.

"The Barrière du Maine," replied Enjolras.

Enjolras remained for a moment as though absorbed in reflection, then he resumed:—

"At the Barrière du Maine there are marble-workers, painters, and journeymen in the studios of sculptors. They are an enthusiastic family, but liable to cool off. I don't know what has been the matter with them for some time past. They are thinking of something else. They are becoming extinguished. They pass their time playing dominoes. There is urgent need that some one should go and talk with them a little, but with firmness. They meet at Richefeu's. They are to be found there between twelve and one o'clock. Those ashes must be fanned into a glow. For that errand I had counted on that abstracted Marius, who is a good fellow on the whole, but he no longer comes to us. I need some one for the Barrière du Maine. I have no one."

"What about me?" said Grantaire. "Here am I."

"You?"

"I."

"You indoctrinate republicans! you warm up hearts that have grown cold in the name of principle!"

"Why not?"

"Are you good for anything?"

"I have a vague ambition in that direction," said Grantaire.

"You do not believe in everything."

"I believe in you."

"Grantaire, will you do me a service?"

"Anything. I'll black your boots."

"Well, don't meddle with our affairs. Sleep yourself sober from your absinthe."

"You are an ingrate, Enjolras."

"You the man to go to the Barrière du Maine! You capable of it!"

"I am capable of descending the Rue de Grès, of crossing the Place Saint-Michel, of sloping through the Rue Monsieur-le-Prince, of taking the Rue de Vaugirard, of passing the Carmelites, of turning into the Rue d'Assas, of reaching the Rue du Cherche-Midi, of leaving behind me the Conseil de Guerre, of pacing the Rue des Vieilles Tuileries, of striding across the boulevard, of following the Chaussée du Maine, of passing the barrier, and entering Richefeu's. I am capable of that. My shoes are capable of that."

"Do you know anything of those comrades who meet at Richefeu's?"

"Not much. We only address each other as *thou*."

"What will you say to them?"

"I will speak to them of Robespierre, pardi! Of Danton. Of principles."

"You?"

"I. But I don't receive justice. When I set about it, I am terrible. I have read Prudhomme, I know the Social Contract, I know my constitution of the year Two by heart. 'The liberty of one citizen ends where the liberty of another citizen begins.' Do you take me for a brute? I have an old bank-bill of the Republic in my drawer. The Rights of Man, the sovereignty of the people, sapristi! I am even a bit of a Hébertist. I can talk the most superb twaddle for six hours by the clock, watch in hand."

"Be serious," said Enjolras.

"I am wild," replied Grantaire.

Enjolras meditated for a few moments, and made the gesture of a man who has taken a resolution.

"Grantaire," he said gravely, "I consent to try you. You shall go to the Barrière du Maine."

Grantaire lived in furnished lodgings very near the Café Musain. He went out, and five minutes later he returned. He had gone home to put on a Robespierre waistcoat.

"Red," said he as he entered, and he looked intently at Enjolras. Then, with the palm of his energetic hand, he laid the two scarlet points of the waistcoat across his breast.

And stepping up to Enjolras, he whispered in his ear:—
"Be easy."

He jammed his hat on resolutely and departed.

A quarter of an hour later, the back room of the Café Musain was deserted. All the friends of the A B C were gone, each in his own direction, each to his own task. Enjolras, who had reserved the *Cougourde* of Aix for himself, was the last to leave.

Those members of the *Cougourde* of Aix who were in Paris then met on the plain of Issy, in one of the abandoned quarries which are so numerous in that side of Paris.

As Enjolras walked towards this place, he passed the whole situation in review in his own mind. The gravity of events was self-evident. When facts, the premonitory symptoms of latent social malady, move heavily, the slightest complication stops and entangles them. A phenomenon whence arises ruin and new births. Enjolras descried a luminous uplifting beneath the gloomy skirts of the future. Who knows? Perhaps the moment was at hand. The people were again taking possession of right, and what a fine spectacle! The revolution was again majestically taking possession of France and saying to the world: "The sequel to-morrow!" Enjolras was content. The furnace was being heated. He had at that moment a powder train of friends scattered all over Paris. He composed, in his own mind, with Combeferre's philosophical and penetrating eloquence, Feuilly's cosmopolitan enthusiasm, Courfeyrac's dash, Bahorel's smile, Jean Prouvaire's melancholy, Joly's science, Bossuet's sarcasms, a sort of electric spark which took fire nearly everywhere at once. All hands to work. Surely, the result would answer to the effort. This was well. This made him think of Grantaire.

"Hold," said he to himself, "the *Barrière du Maine* will not take me far out of my way. What if I were to go on as far as *Riehefeu's*? Let us have a look at what *Grantaire* is about, and see how he is getting on."

One o'clock was striking from the *Vaugirard* steeple when *Enjolras* reached the *Riehefeu* smoking-room.

He pushed open the door, entered, folded his arms, letting the door fall to and strike his shoulders, and gazed at that room filled with tables, men, and smoke.

A voice broke forth from the mist of smoke, interrupted by another voice. It was *Grantaire* holding a dialogue with an adversary.

Grantaire was sitting opposite another figure, at a marble *Saint-Anne* table, strewn with grains of bran and dotted with dominos. He was hammering the table with his fist, and this is what *Enjolras* heard:—

"Double-six."

"Fours."

"The pig! I have no more."

"You are dead. A two."

"Six."

"Three."

"One."

"It's my move."

"Four points."

"Not much."

"It's your turn."

"I have made an enormous mistake."

"You are doing well."

"Fifteen."

"Seven more."

"That makes me twenty-two." [Thoughtfully, "Twenty-two!"]

"You weren't expecting that double-six. If I had placed it at the beginning, the whole play would have been changed."

"A two again."

"One."

"One! Well, five."

"I haven't any."

"It was your play, I believe?"

"Yes."

"Blank."

"What luck he has! Ah! You are lucky! [Long revery.]
Two."

"One."

"Neither five nor one. That's bad for you."

"Domino."

"Plague take it!"

BOOK SECOND.—ÉPONINE

CHAPTER I

THE LARK'S MEADOW

MARIUS had witnessed the unexpected termination of the ambush upon whose track he had set Javert; but Javert had no sooner quitted the building, bearing off his prisoners in three hackney-coaches, than Marius also glided out of the house. It was only nine o'clock in the evening. Marius betook himself to Courfeyrae. Courfeyrae was no longer the imperturbable inhabitant of the Latin Quarter, he had gone to live in the Rue de la Verrerie "for political reasons"; this quarter was one where, at that epoch, insurrection liked to install itself. Marius said to Courfeyrae: "I have come to sleep with you." Courfeyrae dragged a mattress off his bed, which was furnished with two, spread it out on the floor, and said: "There."

At seven o'clock on the following morning, Marius returned to the hovel, paid the quarter's rent which he owed to Ma'am Bougon, had his books, his bed, his table, his commode, and his two chairs loaded on a hand-cart and went off without leaving his address, so that when Javert returned in the course of the morning, for the purpose of questioning Marius as to the events of the preceding evening, he found only Ma'am Bougon, who answered: "Moved away!"

Ma'am Bougon was convinced that Marius was to some extent an accomplice of the robbers who had been seized the night before. "Who would ever have said it?" she exclaimed to the portresses of the quarter, "a young man like that, who had the air of a girl!"

Marius had two reasons for this prompt change of residence. The first was, that he now had a horror of that house, where he had beheld, so close at hand, and in its most repulsive and most ferocious development, a social deformity which is, perhaps, even more terrible than the wicked rich man, the wicked poor man. The second was, that he did not wish to figure in the lawsuit which would insue in all probability, and be brought in to testify against Thénardier.

Javert thought that the young man, whose name he had forgotten, was afraid, and had fled, or perhaps, had not even returned home at the time of the ambush; he made some efforts to find him, however, but without success.

A month passed, then another. Marius was still with Courfeyrac. He had learned from a young licentiate in law, an habitual frequenter of the courts, that Thénardier was in close confinement. Every Monday, Marius had five francs handed in to the clerk's office of La Force for Thénardier.

As Marius had no longer any money, he borrowed the five francs from Courfeyrac. It was the first time in his life that he had ever borrowed money. These periodical five francs were a double riddle to Courfeyrac who lent and to Thénardier who received them. "To whom can they go?" thought Courfeyrac. "Whence can this come to me?" Thénardier asked himself.

Moreover, Marius was heart-broken. Everything had plunged through a trap-door once more. He no longer saw anything before him; his life was again buried in mystery where he wandered fumblingly. He had for a moment beheld very close at hand, in that obscurity, the young girl whom he loved, the old man who seemed to be her father, those unknown beings, who were his only interest and his only hope in this world; and, at the very moment when he thought himself on the point of grasping them, a gust had swept all these shadows away. Not a spark of certainty and truth had been emitted even in the most terrible of collisions. No conjecture was possible. He no longer knew even the name that he thought he knew. It certainly was not Ursule. And the Lark

was a nickname. And what was he to think of the old man? Was he actually in hiding from the police? The white-haired workman whom Marius had encountered in the vicinity of the Invalides recurred to his mind. It now seemed probable that that workingman and M. Leblanc were one and the same person. So he disguised himself? That man had his heroic and his equivocal sides. Why had he not called for help? Why had he fled? Was he, or was he not, the father of the young girl? Was he, in short, the man whom Thénardier thought that he recognized? Thénardier might have been mistaken. These formed so many insoluble problems. All this, it is true, detracted nothing from the angelic charms of the young girl of the Luxembourg. Heart-rending distress; Marius bore a passion in his heart, and night over his eyes. He was thrust onward, he was drawn, and he could not stir. All had vanished, save love. Of love itself he had lost the instincts and the sudden illuminations. Ordinarily, this flame which burns us lights us also a little, and casts some useful gleams without. But Marius no longer even heard these mute counsels of passion. He never said to himself: "What if I were to go to such a place? What if I were to try such and such a thing?" The girl whom he could no longer call Ursule was evidently somewhere; nothing warned Marius in what direction he should seek her. His whole life was now summed up in two words; absolute uncertainty within an impenetrable fog. To see her once again; he still aspired to this, but he no longer expected it.

To crown all, his poverty had returned. He felt that icy breath close to him, on his heels. In the midst of his torments, and long before this, he had discontinued his work, and nothing is more dangerous than discontinued work; it is a habit which vanishes. A habit which is easy to get rid of, and difficult to take up again.

A certain amount of dreaming is good, like a narcotic in discreet doses. It lulls to sleep the fevers of the mind at labor, which are sometimes severe, and produces in the spirit a soft and fresh vapor which corrects the over-harsh contours of

pure thought, fills in gaps here and there, binds together and rounds off the angles of the ideas. But too much dreaming sinks and drowns. Woe to the brain-worker who allows himself to fall entirely from thought into revery! He thinks that he can re-ascend with equal ease, and he tells himself that, after all, it is the same thing. Error!

Thought is the toil of the intelligence, revery its voluptuousness. To replace thought with revery is to confound a poison with a food.

Marius had begun in that way, as the reader will remember. Passion had supervened and had finished the work of precipitating him into chimæras without object or bottom. One no longer emerges from one's self except for the purpose of going off to dream. Idle production. Tumultuous and stagnant gulf. And, in proportion as labor diminishes, needs increase. This is a law. Man, in a state of revery, is generally prodigal and slack; the unstrung mind cannot hold life within close bounds.

There is, in that mode of life, good mingled with evil, for if enervation is baleful, generosity is good and healthful. But the poor man who is generous and noble, and who does not work, is lost. Resources are exhausted, needs crop up.

Fatal declivity down which the most honest and the firmest as well as the most feeble and most vicious are drawn, and which ends in one of two holds, suicide or crime.

By dint of going outdoors to think, the day comes when one goes out to throw one's self in the water.

Excess of revery breeds men like Escousse and Lebras.

Marius was descending this declivity at a slow pace, with his eyes fixed on the girl whom he no longer saw. What we have just written seems strange, and yet it is true. The memory of an absent being kindles in the darkness of the heart; the more it has disappeared, the more it beams; the gloomy and despairing soul sees this light on its horizon: the star of the inner night. She—that was Marius' whole thought. Pondered of nothing else; he was confusedly conscious that his old coat was becoming an impossible coat, and that his n

coat was growing old, that his shirts were wearing out, that his hat was wearing out, that his boots were giving out, and he said to himself: "If I could but see her once again before I die!"

One sweet idea alone was left to him, that she had loved him, that her glance had told him so, that she did not know his name, but that she did know his soul, and that, wherever she was, however mysterious the place, she still loved him, perhaps. Who knows whether she were not thinking of him as he was thinking of her? Sometimes, in those inexplicable hours such as are experienced by every heart that loves, though he had no reasons for anything but sadness and yet felt an obscure quiver of joy, he said to himself: "It is her thoughts that are coming to me!" Then he added: "Perhaps my thoughts reach her also."

This illusion, at which he shook his head a moment later, was sufficient, nevertheless, to throw beans, which at times resembled hope, into his soul. From time to time, especially at that evening hour which is the most depressing to even the dreamy, he allowed the purest, the most impersonal, the most ideal of the reveries which filled his brain, to fall upon a notebook which contained nothing else. He called this "writing to her."

It must not be supposed that his reason was deranged. Quite the contrary. He had lost the faculty of working and of moving firmly towards any fixed goal, but he was endowed with more clear-sightedness and rectitude than ever. Marius surveyed by a calm and real, although peculiar light, what passed before his eyes, even the most indifferent deeds and men; he pronounced a just criticism on everything with a sort of honest dejection and candid disinterestedness. His judgment, which was almost wholly disassociated from hope, held itself aloof and soared on high.

In this state of mind nothing escaped him, nothing deceived him, and every moment he was discovering the foundation of life, of humanity, and of destiny. Happy, even in the midst of anguish, is he to whom God has given a soul worthy

of love and of unhappiness! He who has not viewed the things of this world and the heart of man under this dull light has seen nothing and knows nothing of the true.

The soul which loves and suffers is in a state of sublimity.

However, day followed day, and nothing new presented itself. It merely seemed to him, that the sombre space which still remained to be traversed by him was growing shorter with every instant. He thought that he already distinctly perceived the brink of the bottomless abyss.

“What!” he repeated to himself, “shall I not see her again before then!”

When you have ascended the Rue Saint-Jacques, left the barrier on one side and followed the old inner boulevard for some distance, you reach the Rue de la Santé, then the Glacière, and, a little while before arriving at the little river of the Gobelins, you come to a sort of field which is the only spot in the long and monotonous chain of the boulevards of Paris where Ruysdeel would be tempted to sit down.

There is something indescribable there which exhales grace—a green meadow traversed by tightly stretched lines, from which flutter rags drying in the wind, and an old market-gardener’s house, built in the time of Louis XIII., with its green roof oddly pierced with dormer windows, dilapidated palisade, a little water amid poplar-trees, women, voices, laughter; on the horizon the Panthéon, the pole of the Deaf-Mutes, the Val-de-Grâce, black, squat, fantastic, amusing, magnificent, and in the background, the severe square crests of the towers of Notre Dame.

As the place is worth looking at, no one goes thither. Hardly one cart or wagoner passes in a quarter of an hour.

It chanced that Marius’ solitary strolls led him to this plot of ground, near the water. That day, there was a rarity on the boulevard, a passer-by. Marius, vaguely impressed with the almost savage beauty of the place, asked this passer-by:—“What is the name of this spot?”

The person replied: “It is the Lark’s meadow.”

And he added: "It was here that Ulbach killed the shepherdess of Ivry."

But after the word "Lark" Marius heard nothing more. These sudden congelments in the state of revery, which a single word suffices to evoke, do occur. The entire thought is abruptly condensed around an idea, and it is no longer capable of perceiving anything else.

The Lark was the appellation which had replaced Ursule in the depths of Marius' melancholy.—"Stop," said he with a sort of unreasoning stupor peculiar to these mysterious asides, "this is her meadow. I shall know where she lives now."

It was absurd, but irresistible.

And every day he returned to that meadow of the Lark.

CHAPTER II

EMBRYONIC FORMATION OF CRIMES IN THE INCUBATION OF PRISONS

JAVERT'S triumph in the Gorbeau hovel seemed complete, but had not been so.

In the first place, and this constituted the principal anxiety, Javert had not taken the prisoner prisoner. The assassinated man who flees is more suspicious than the assassin, and it is probable that this personage, who had been so precious a capture for the ruffians, would be no less fine a prize for the authorities.

And then, Montparnasse had escaped Javert.

Another opportunity of laying hands on that "devil's dandy" must be waited for. Montparnasse had, in fact, encountered Éponine as she stood on the watch under the trees of the boulevard, and had led her off, preferring to play Nemorin with the daughter rather than Schinderhannes with the father. It was well that he did so. He was free. As for Éponine, Javert had caused her to be seized; a mediocre consolation. Éponine had joined Azelma at Les Madelonnettes.

And finally, on the way from the Gorbeau house to La Force, one of the principal prisoners, Claquesous, had been lost. It was not known how this had been effected, the police agents and the sergeants "could not understand it at all." He had converted himself into vapor, he had slipped through the handcuffs, he had trickled through the crevices of the carriage, the fiacre was cracked, and he had fled; all that they were able to say was, that on arriving at the prison, there was no Claquesous. Either the fairies or the police had had a hand in it. Had Claquesous melted into the shadows like a snow-flake in water? Had there been unavowed connivance of the police agents? Did this man belong to the double enigma of order and disorder? Was he concentric with infraction and repression? Had this sphinx his fore paws in crime and his hind paws in authority? Javert did not accept such comminations, and would have bristled up against such compromises; but his squad included other inspectors besides himself, who were more initiated than he, perhaps, although they were his subordinates in the secrets of the Prefecture, and Claquesous had been such a villain that he might make a very good agent. It is an excellent thing for ruffianism and an admirable thing for the police to be on such intimate juggling terms with the night. These double-edged rascals do exist. However that may be, Claquesous had gone astray and was not found again. Javert appeared to be more irritated than amazed at this.

As for Marius, "that booby of a lawyer," who had probably become frightened, and whose name Javert had forgotten, Javert attached very little importance to him. Moreover, a lawyer can be hunted up at any time. But was he a lawyer after all?

The investigation had begun.

The magistrate had thought it advisable not to put one of these men of the band of Patron Minette in close confinement, in the hope that he would chatter. This man was Brujon, the long-haired man of the Rue du Petit-Banquier. He had been let loose in the Charlemagne courtyard, and the eyes of the watchers were fixed on him.

This name of Brujon is one of the souvenirs of La Force. In that hideous courtyard, called the court of the Bâtiment-Neuf (New Building), which the administration called the court Saint-Bernard, and which the robbers called the Fosse-aux-Lions (The Lion's Ditch), on that wall covered with scales and leprosy, which rose on the left to a level with the roofs, near an old door of rusty iron which led to the ancient chapel of the ducal residence of La Force, then turned in a dormitory for ruffians, there could still be seen, twelve years ago, a sort of fortress roughly carved in the stone with a nail, and beneath it this signature:—

BRUJON, 1811.

The Brujon of 1811 was the father of the Brujon of 1832.

The latter, of whom the reader caught but a glimpse at the Gorbeau house, was a very cunning and very adroit young spark, with a bewildered and plaintive air. It was in consequence of this plaintive air that the magistrate had released him, thinking him more useful in the Charlemagne yard than in close confinement.

Robbers do not interrupt their profession because they are in the hands of justice. They do not let themselves be put out by such a trifle as that. To be in prison for one crime is no reason for not beginning on another crime. They are artists, who have one picture in the salon, and who toil, none the less, on a new work in their studios.

Brujon seemed to be stupefied by prison. He could sometimes be seen standing by the hour together in front of the sutler's window in the Charlemagne yard, staring like an idiot at the sordid list of prices which began with: *garlic*, 62 *centimes*, and ended with: *cigar*, 5 *centimes*. Or he passed his time in trembling, chattering his teeth, saying that he had a fever, and inquiring whether one of the eight and twenty beds in the fever ward was vacant.

All at once, towards the end of February, 1832, it was discovered that Brujon, that somnolent fellow, had had three different commissions executed by the errand-men of the

establishment, not under his own name, but in the name of three of his comrades; and they had cost him in all fifty sous, an exorbitant outlay which attracted the attention of the prison corporal.

Inquiries were instituted, and on consulting the tariff of commissions posted in the convict's parlor, it was learned that the fifty sous could be analyzed as follows: three commissions: one to the Panthéon, ten sous; one to Val-de-Grâce, fifteen sous; and one to the Barrière de Grenelle, twenty-five sous. This last was the dearest of the whole tariff. Now, at the Panthéon, at the Val-de-Grâce, and at the Barrière de Grenelle were situated the domiciles of the three very redoubtable prowlers of the barriers, Kruideniers, alias Bizarro, Glorieux, an ex-convict, and Barre-Carosse, upon whom the attention of the police was directed by this incident. It was thought that these men were members of Patron Minette; two of those leaders, Babet and Gueulemer, had been captured. It was supposed that the messages, which had been addressed, not to houses, but to people who were waiting for them in the street, must have contained information with regard to some crime that had been plotted. They were in possession of other indications; they laid hand on the three prowlers, and supposed that they had circumvented some one or other of Brujon's machinations.

About a week after these measures had been taken, one night, as the superintendent of the watch, who had been inspecting the lower dormitory in the Bâtiment-Neuf, was about to drop his chestnut in the box—this was the means adopted to make sure that the watchmen performed their duties punctually; every hour a chestnut must be dropped into all the boxes nailed to the doors of the dormitories—a watchman looked through the peep-hole of the dormitory and beheld Brujon sitting on his bed and writing something by the light of the hall-lamp. The guardian entered, Brujon was put in a solitary cell for a month, but they were not able to seize what he had written. The police learned nothing further about it.

What is certain is, that on the following morning, a "postilion" was flung from the Charlemagne yard into the Lions' Ditch, over the five-story building which separated the two court-yards.

What prisoners call a "postilion" is a pallet of bread artistically moulded, which is sent *into Ireland*, that is to say, over the roofs of a prison, from one courtyard to another. Etymology: over England; from one land to another; *into Ireland*. This little pellet falls in the yard. The man who picks it up opens it and finds in it a note addressed to some prisoner in that yard. If it is a prisoner who finds the treasure, he forwards the note to its destination; if it is a keeper, or one of the prisoners secretly sold who are called *sheep* in prisons and *foxes* in the galleys, the note is taken to the office and handed over to the police.

On this occasion, the postilion reached its address, although the person to whom it was addressed was, at that moment, in solitary confinement. This person was no other than Babet, one of the four heads of Patron Minette.

The postilion contained a roll of paper on which only these two lines were written:—

"Babet. There is an affair in the Rue Plumet. A gate on a garden."

This is what Brujon had written the night before.

In spite of male and female searchers, Babet managed to pass the note on from La Force to the Salpêtrière, to a "good friend" whom he had and who was shut up there. This woman in turn transmitted the note to another woman of her acquaintance, a certain Magnon, who was strongly suspected by the police, though not yet arrested. This Magnon, whose name the reader has already seen, had relations with the Thénardier, which will be described in detail later on, and she could, by going to see Éponine, serve as a bridge between the Salpêtrière and Les Madelonnettes.

It happened, that at precisely that moment, as proofs were wanting in the investigation directed against Thénardier in the matter of his daughters, Éponine and Azelma were re-

leased. When Éponine came out, Magnon, who was watching the gate of the Madelonettes, handed her Brujon's note to Babet, charging her to look into the matter.

Éponine went to the Rue Plumet, recognized the gate and the garden, observed the house, spied, lurked. and, a few days later, brought to Magnon, who delivers in the Rue Cloche-perce, a biscuit, which Magnon transmitted to Babet's mistress in the Salpêtrière. A biscuit, in the shady symbolism of prisons, signifies: Nothing to be done.

So that in less than a week from that time, as Brujon and Babet met in the circle of La Force, the one on his way to the examination, the other on his way from it:—

“Well?” asked Brujon, “the Rue P.?”

“Biscuit,” replied Babet. Thus did the fœtus of crime engendered by Brujon in La Force miscarry.

This miscarriage had its consequences, however, which were perfectly distinct from Brujon's programme. The reader will see what they were.

Often when we think we are knotting one thread, we are tying quite another.

CHAPTER III

APPARITION TO FATHER MABEUF

MARIUS no longer went to see any one, but he sometimes encountered Father Mabeuf by chance.

While Marius was slowly descending those melancholy steps which may be called the cellar stairs, and which lead to places without light, where the happy can be heard walking overhead, M. Mabeuf was descending on his side.

The *Flora of Caunteretz* no longer sold at all. The experiments on indigo had not been successful in the little garden of Austerlitz, which had a bad exposure. M. Mabeuf could cultivate there only a few plants which love shade and dampness. Nevertheless, he did not become discouraged. He had

obtained a corner in the Jardin des Plantes, with a good exposure, to make his trials with indigo "at his own expense." For this purpose he had pawned his copperplates of the *Flora*. He had reduced his breakfast to two eggs, and he left one of these for his old servant, to whom he had paid no wages for the last fifteen months. And often his breakfast was his only meal. He no longer smiled with his infantile smile, he had grown morose and no longer received visitors. Marius did well not to dream of going thither. Sometimes, at the hour when M. Mabeuf was on his way to the Jardin des Plantes, the old man and the young man passed each other on the Boulevard de l'Hôpital. They did not speak, and only exchanged a melancholy sign of the head. A heart-breaking thing it is that there comes a moment when misery looses bonds! Two men who have been friends become two chance passers-by.

Royal the bookseller was dead. M. Mabeuf no longer knew his books, his garden, or his indigo: these were the three forms which happiness, pleasure, and hope had assumed for him. This sufficed him for his living. He said to himself: "When I shall have made my balls of blueing, I shall be rich, I will withdraw my copperplates from the pawn-shop, I will put my *Flora* in vogue again with trickery, plenty of money, and advertisements in the newspapers and I will buy, I know well where, a copy of Pierre de Médine's *Art de Naviguer*, with wood-cuts, edition of 1655." In the meantime, he toiled all day over his plot of indigo, and at night he returned home to water his garden, and to read his books. At that epoch, M. Mabeuf was nearly eighty years of age.

One evening he had a singular apparition.

He had returned home while it was still broad daylight. Mother Plutarque, whose health was declining, was ill and in bed. He had dined on a bone, on which a little meat lingered, and a bit of bread that he had found on the kitchen table, and had seated himself on an overturned stone post, which took the place of a bench in his garden.

Near this bench there rose, after the fashion in orchard-

gardens, a sort of large chest, of beams and planks, much dilapidated, a rabbit-hutch on the ground floor, a fruit-closet on the first. There was nothing in the hutch, but there were a few apples in the fruit-closet,—the remains of the winter's provision.

M. Mabeuf had set himself to turning over and reading, with the aid of his glasses, two books of which he was passionately fond and in which, a serious thing at his age, he was interested. His natural timidity rendered him accessible to the acceptance of superstitions in a certain degree. The first of these books was the famous treatise of President Delanere, *De l'Inconstance des Démons*; the other was a quarto by Mutor de la Rubaudière, *Sur les Diables de Vauvert et les Gobelins de la Bièvre*. This last-mentioned old volume interested him all the more, because his garden had been one of the spots haunted by goblins in former times. The twilight had begun to whiten what was on high and to blacken all below. As he read, over the top of the book which he held in his hand, Father Mabeuf was surveying his plants, and among others a magnificent rhododendron which was one of his consolations: four days of heat, wind, and sun without a drop of rain, had passed; the stalks were bending, the buds drooping, the leaves falling; all this needed water, the rhododendron was particularly sad. Father Mabeuf was one of those persons for whom plants have souls. The old man had toiled all day over his indigo plot, he was worn out with fatigue, but he rose, laid his books on the bench, and walked, all bent over and with tottering footsteps, to the well, but when he had grasped the chain, he could not even draw it sufficiently to unhook it. Then he turned round and cast a glance of anguish toward heaven which was becoming studded with stars.

The evening had that serenity which overwhelms the troubles of man beneath an indescribably mournful and eternal joy. The night promised to be as arid as the day had been.

"Stars everywhere!" thought the old man; "not the tiniest cloud! Not a drop of water!"



THE SOUND OF THE WATERING-POT ON THE LEAVES FILLED FATHER MABEU'S SOUL WITH ECSTASY.

And his head, which had been upraised for a moment, fell back upon his breast.

He raised it again, and once more looked at the sky, murmuring:—

“A tear of dew! A little pity!”

He tried again to unhook the chain of the well, and could not.

At that moment, he heard a voice saying:—

“Father Mabeuf, would you like to have me water your garden for you?”

At the same time, a noise as of a wild animal passing became audible in the hedge, and he beheld emerging from the shrubbery a sort of tall, slender girl, who drew herself up in front of him and stared boldly at him. She had less the air of a human being than of a form which had just blossomed forth from the twilight.

Before Father Mabeuf, who was easily terrified, and who was, as we have said, quick to take alarm, was able to reply by a single syllable, this being, whose movements had a sort of odd abruptness in the darkness, had unhooked the chain, plunged in and withdrawn the bucket, and filled the watering-pot, and the goodman beheld this apparition, which had bare feet and a tattered petticoat, running about among the flowerbeds distributing life around her. The sound of the watering-pot on the leaves filled Father Mabeuf's soul with ecstacy. It seemed to him that the rhododendron was happy now.

The first bucketful emptied, the girl drew a second, then a third. She watered the whole garden.

There was something about her, as she thus ran about among paths, where her outline appeared perfectly black, waving her angular arms, and with her fielu all in rags, that resembled a bat.

When she had finished, Father Mabeuf approached her with tears in his eyes, and laid his hand on her brow.

“God will bless you,” said he, “you are an angel since you take care of the flowers.”

"No," she replied. "I am the devil, but that's all the same to me."

The old man exclaimed, without either waiting for or hearing her response:—

"What a pity that I am so unhappy and so poor, and that I can do nothing for you!"

"You can do something," said she.

"What?"

"Tell me where M. Marius lives."

The old man did not understand. "What Monsieur Marius?"

He raised his glassy eyes and seemed to be seeking something that had vanished.

"A young man who used to come here."

In the meantime, M. Mabeuf had searched his memory.

"Ah! yes—" he exclaimed. "I know what you mean. Wait! Monsieur Marius—the Baron Marius Pontmercy, parbleu! He lives,—or rather, he no longer lives,—ah well, I don't know."

As he spoke, he had bent over to train a branch of rhododendron, and he continued:—

"Hold, I know now. He very often passes along the boulevard, and goes in the direction of the Glacière, Rue Croulebarbe. The meadow of the Lark. Go there. It is not hard to meet him."

When M. Mabeuf straightened himself up, there was no longer any one there; the girl had disappeared.

He was decidedly terrified.

"Really," he thought, "if my garden had not been watered, I should think that she was a spirit."

An hour later, when he was in bed, it came back to him, and as he fell asleep, at that confused moment when thought, like that fabulous bird which changes itself into a fish in order to cross the sea, little by little assumes the form of a dream in order to traverse slumber, he said to himself in a bewildered way:—

"In sooth, that greatly resembles what Rubaudière narrates of the goblins. Could it have been a goblin?"

CHAPTER IV

AN APPARITION TO MARIUS

SOME days after this visit of a "spirit" to Farmer Mabeuf, one morning,—it was on a Monday, the day when Marius borrowed the hundred-sou piece from Courfeyrac for Thénardier—Marius had put this coin in his pocket, and before carrying it to the clerk's office, he had gone "to take a little stroll," in the hope that this would make him work on his return. It was always thus, however. As soon as he rose, he seated himself before a book and a sheet of paper in order to scribble some translation; his task at that epoch consisted in turning into French a celebrated quarrel between Germans, the Gans and Savigny controversy; he took Savigny, he took Gans, read four lines, tried to write one, could not, saw a star between him and his paper, and rose from his chair, saying: "I shall go out. That will put me in spirits."

And off he went to the Lark's meadow.

There he beheld more than ever the star, and less than ever Savigny and Gans.

He returned home, tried to take up his work again, and did not succeed; there was no means of re-knotting a single one of the threads which were broken in his brain; then he said to himself: "I will not go out to-morrow. It prevents my working." And he went out every day.

He lived in the Lark's meadow more than in Courfeyrac's lodgings. That was his real address: Boulevard de la Santé, at the seventh tree from the Rue Croulebarbe.

That morning he had quitted the seventh tree and had seated himself on the parapet of the River des Gobelins. A cheerful sunlight penetrated the freshly unfolded and luminous leaves.

He was dreaming of "Her." And his meditation turning to a reproach, fell back upon himself; he reflected dolefully on his idleness, his paralysis of soul, which was gaining on him,

and of that night which was growing more dense every moment before him, to such a point that he no longer even saw the sun.

Nevertheless, athwart this painful extrication of indistinct ideas which was not even a monologue, so feeble had action become in him, and he had no longer the force to care to despair, athwart this melancholy absorption, sensations from without did reach him. He heard behind him, beneath him, on both banks of the river, the laundresses of the Gobelins beating their linen, and above his head, the birds chattering and singing in the elm-trees. On the one hand, the sound of liberty, the careless happiness of the leisure which has wings; on the other, the sound of toil. What caused him to meditate deeply, and almost reflect, were two cheerful sounds.

All at once, in the midst of his dejected ecstacy, he heard a familiar voice saying:—

“Come! Here he is!”

He raised his eyes, and recognized that wretched child who had come to him one morning, the elder of the Thénardier daughters, Éponine; he knew her name now. Strange to say, she had grown poorer and prettier, two steps which it had not seemed within her power to take. She had accomplished a double progress, towards the light and towards distress. She was barefooted and in rags, as on the day when she had so resolutely entered his chamber, only her rags were two months older now, the holes were larger, the tatters more sordid. It was the same harsh voice, the same brow dimmed and wrinkled with tan, the same free, wild, and vacillating glance. She had besides, more than formerly, in her face that indescribably terrified and lamentable something which sojourn in a prison adds to wretchedness.

She had bits of straw and hay in her hair, not like Ophelia through having gone mad from the contagion of Hamlet's madness, but because she had slept in the loft of some stable.

And in spite of it all, she was beautiful. What a star art thou, O youth!

In the meantime, she had halted in front of Marius with a trace of joy in her livid countenance, and something which resembled a smile.

She stood for several moments as though incapable of speech.

"So I have met you at last!" she said at length. "Father Mabeuf was right, it was on this boulevard! How I have hunted for you! If you only knew! Do you know? I have been in the jug. A fortnight! They let me out! seeing that there was nothing against me, and that, moreover, I had not reached years of discretion. I lack two months of it. Oh! how I have hunted for you! These six weeks! So you don't live down there any more?"

"No," said Marius.

"Ah! I understand. Because of that affair. Those take-downs are disagreeable. You cleared out. Come now! Why do you wear old hats like this! A young man like you ought to have fine clothes. Do you know, Monsieur Marius, Father Mabeuf calls you Baron Marius, I don't know what. It isn't true that you are a baron? Barons are old fellows, they go to the Luxembourg, in front of the chateau, where there is the most sun, and they read the *Quotidienne* for a sou. I once carried a letter to a baron of that sort. He was over a hundred years old. Say, where do you live now?"

Marius made no reply.

"Ah!" she went on, "you have a hole in your shirt. I must sew it up for you."

She resumed with an expression which gradually clouded over:—

"You don't seem glad to see me."

Marius held his peace; she remained silent for a moment, then exclaimed:—

"But if I choose, nevertheless, I could force you to look glad!"

"What?" demanded Marius. "What do you mean?"

"Ah! you used to call me *thou*," she retorted.

"Well, then, what dost thou mean?"

She bit her lips; she seemed to hesitate, as though a prey to some sort of inward conflict. At last she appeared to come to a decision.

“So much the worse, I don’t care. You have a melancholy air, I want you to be pleased. Only promise me that you will smile. I want to see you smile and hear you say: ‘Ah, well, that’s good.’ Poor Mr. Marius! you know? You promised me that you would give me anything I liked—”

“Yes! Only speak!”

She looked Marius full in the eye, and said:—

“I have the address.”

Marius turned pale. All the blood flowed back to his heart.

“What address?”

“The address that you asked me to get!”

She added, as though with an effort:—

“The address—you know very well!”

“Yes!” stammered Marius.

“Of that young lady.”

This word uttered, she sighed deeply.

Marius sprang from the parapet on which he had been sitting and seized her hand distractedly.

“Oh! Well! lead me thither! Tell me! Ask of me anything you wish! Where is it?”

“Come with me,” she responded. “I don’t know the street or number very well; it is in quite the other direction from here, but I know the house well, I will take you to it.”

She withdrew her hand and went on, in a tone which could have rent the heart of an observer, but which did not even graze Marius in his intoxicated and ecstatic state:—

“Oh! how glad you are!”

A cloud swept across Marius’ brow. He seized Éponine by the arm:—

“Swear one thing to me!”

“Swear!” said she, “what does that mean? Come! You want me to swear?”

And she laughed.

"Your father! promise me, Éponine! Swear to me that you will not give this address to your father!"

She turned to him with a stupefied air.

"Éponine! How do you know that my name is Éponine?"

"Promise what I tell you!"

But she did not seem to hear him.

"That's nice! You have called me Éponine!"

Marius grasped both her arms at once.

"But answer me, in the name of Heaven! pay attention to what I am saying to you, swear to me that you will not tell your father this address that you know!"

"My father!" said she. "Ah yes, my father! Be at ease. He's in close confinement. Besides, what do I care for my father!"

"But you do not promise me!" exclaimed Marius.

"Let go of me!" she said, bursting into a laugh, "how you do shake me! Yes! Yes! I promise that! I swear that to you! What is that to me? I will not tell my father the address. There! Is that right? Is that it?"

"Nor to any one?" said Marius.

"Nor to any one."

"Now," resumed Marius, "take me there."

"Immediately?"

"Immediately."

"Come along. Ah! how pleased he is!" said she.

After a few steps she halted.

"You are following me too closely, Monsieur Marius. Let me go on ahead, and follow me so, without seeming to do it. A nice young man like you must not be seen with a woman like me."

No tongue can express all that lay in that word, *woman*, thus pronounced by that child.

She proceeded a dozen paces and then halted once more; Marius joined her. She addressed him sideways, and without turning towards him:—

"By the way, you know that you promised me something?"

Marius fumbled in his pocket. All that he owned in the world was the five francs intended for Thénardier the father. He took them and laid them in Éponine's hand.

She opened her fingers and let the coin fall to the ground, and gazed at him with a gloomy air.

"I don't want your money," said she.

BOOK THIRD.—THE HOUSE IN THE RUE PLUMET

CHAPTER I

THE HOUSE WITH A SECRET

ABOUT the middle of the last century, a chief justice in the Parliament of Paris having a mistress and concealing the fact, for at that period the grand seignors displayed their mistresses, and the bourgeois concealed them, had “a little house” built in the Faubourg Saint-Germain, in the deserted Rue Blomet, which is now called Rue Plumet, not far from the spot which was then designated as *Combat des Animaux*.

This house was composed of a single-storied pavilion; two rooms on the ground floor, two chambers on the first floor, a kitchen down stairs, a boudoir up stairs, an attie under the roof, the whole preceded by a garden with a large gate opening on the street. This garden was about an acre and a half in extent. This was all that could be seen by passers-by; but behind the pavilion there was a narrow courtyard, and at the end of the courtyard a low building consisting of two rooms and a cellar, a sort of preparation destined to conceal a child and nurse in ease of need. This building communicated in the rear by a masked door which opened by a secret spring, with a long, narrow, paved winding corridor, open to the sky, hemmed in with two lofty walls, which, hidden with wonderful art, and lost as it were between garden enclosures and cultivated land, all of whose angles and detours it followed, ended in another door, also with a secret lock which opened a quarter of a league away, almost in another quarter, at the solitary extremity of the Rue du Babylone.

Through this the chief justice entered, so that even those

who were spying on him and following him would merely have observed that the justice betook himself every day in a mysterious way somewhere, and would never have suspected that to go to the Rue de Babylone was to go to the Rue Blomet. Thanks to clever purchasers of land, the magistrate had been able to make a secret, sewer-like passage on his own property, and consequently, without interference. Later on, he had sold in little parcels, for gardens and market gardens, the lots of ground adjoining the corridor, and the proprietors of these lots on both sides thought they had a party wall before their eyes, and did not even suspect the long, paved ribbon winding between two walls amid their flower-beds and their orchards. Only the birds beheld this curiosity. It is probable that the linnets and tomtits of the last century gossiped a great deal about the chief justice.

The pavilion, built of stone in the taste of Mansard, wainscoted and furnished in the Watteau style, rocaille on the inside, old-fashioned on the outside, walled in with a triple hedge of flowers, had something discreet, coquettish, and solemn about it, as befits a caprice of love and magistracy.

This house and corridor, which have now disappeared, were in existence fifteen years ago. In '93 a coppersmith had purchased the house with the idea of demolishing it, but had not been able to pay the price; the nation made him bankrupt. So that it was the house which demolished the coppersmith. After that, the house remained uninhabited, and fell slowly to ruin, as does every dwelling to which the presence of man does not communicate life. It had remained fitted with its old furniture, was always for sale or to let, and the ten or a dozen people who passed through the Rue Plumet were warned of the fact by a yellow and illegible bit of writing which had hung on the garden wall since 1819.

Towards the end of the Restoration, these same passers-by might have noticed that the bill had disappeared, and even that the shutters on the first floor were open. The house was occupied, in fact. The windows had short curtains, a sign that there was a woman about.

In the month of October, 1829, a man of a certain age had presented himself and had hired the house just as it stood, including, of course, the back building and the lane which ended in the Rue de Babylone. He had had the secret openings of the two doors to this passage repaired. The house, as we have just mentioned, was still very nearly furnished with the justice's old fitting; the new tenant had ordered some repairs, had added what was lacking here and there, had replaced the paving-stones in the yard, bricks in the floors, steps in the stairs, missing bits in the inlaid floors and the glass in the lattice windows, and had finally installed himself there with a young girl and an elderly maid-servant, without commotion, rather like a person who is slipping in than like a man who is entering his own house. The neighbors did not gossip about him, for the reason that there were no neighbors.

This unobtrusive tenant was Jean Valjean, the young girl was Cosette. The servant was a woman named Toussaint, whom Jean Valjean had saved from the hospital and from wretchedness, and who was elderly, a stammerer, and from the provinces, three qualities which had decided Jean Valjean to take her with him. He had hired the house under the name of M. Fauchelevent, independent gentleman. In all that has been related heretofore, the reader has, doubtless, been no less prompt than Thénardier to recognize Jean Valjean.

Why had Jean Valjean quitted the convent of the Petit-Piepus? What had happened?

Nothing had happened.

It will be remembered that Jean Valjean was happy in the convent, so happy that his conscience finally took the alarm. He saw Cosette every day, he felt paternity spring up and develop within him more and more, he brooded over the soul of that child, he said to himself that she was his, that nothing could take her from him, that this would last indefinitely, that she would certainly become a nun, being thereto gently incited every day, that thus the convent was henceforth the universe for her as it was for him, that he should grow old there, and

that she would grow up there, that she would grow old there, and that he should die there; that, in short, delightful hope, no separation was possible. On reflecting upon this, he fell into perplexity. He interrogated himself. He asked himself if all that happiness were really his, if it were not composed of the happiness of another, of the happiness of that child which he, an old man, was confiscating and stealing; if that were not theft? He said to himself, that this child had a right to know life before renouncing it, that to deprive her in advance, and in some sort without consulting her, of all joys, under the pretext of saving her from all trials, to take advantage of her ignorance of her isolation, in order to make an artificial vocation germinate in her, was to rob a human creature of its nature and to lie to God. And who knows if, when she came to be aware of all this some day, and found herself a nun to her sorrow, Cosette would not come to hate him? A last, almost selfish thought, and less heroic than the rest, but which was intolerable to him. He resolved to quit the convent.

He resolved on this; he recognized with anguish, the fact that it was necessary. As for objections, there were none. Five years' sojourn between these four walls and of disappearance had necessarily destroyed or dispersed the elements of fear. He could return tranquilly among men. He had grown old, and all had undergone a change. Who would recognize him now? And then, to face the worst, there was danger only for himself, and he had no right to condemn Cosette to the cloister for the reason that he had been condemned to the galleys. Besides, what is danger in comparison with the right? Finally, nothing prevented his being prudent and taking his precautions.

As for Cosette's education, it was almost finished and complete.

His determination once taken, he awaited an opportunity. It was not long in presenting itself. Old Fauchelevent died.

Jean Valjean demanded an audience with the revered prioress and told her that, having come into a little inheritance

at the death of his brother, which permitted him henceforth to live without working, he should leave the service of the convent and take his daughter with him; but that, as it was not just that Cosette, since she had not taken the vows, should have received her education gratuitously, he humbly begged the Reverend Prioress to see fit that he should offer to the community, as indemnity, for the five years which Cosette had spent there, the sum of five thousand francs.

It was thus that Jean Valjean quitted the convent of the Perpetual Adoration.

On leaving the convent, he took in his own arms the little valise the key to which he still wore on his person, and would permit no porter to touch it. This puzzled Cosette, because of the odor of embalming which proceeded from it.

Let us state at once, that this trunk never quitted him more. He always had it in his chamber. It was the first and only thing sometimes, that he carried off in his moving when he moved about. Cosette laughed at it, and called this valise *his inseparable*, saying: "I am jealous of it."

Nevertheless, Jean Valjean did not reappear in the open air without profound anxiety.

He discovered the house in the Rue Plumet, and hid himself from sight there. Henceforth he was in the possession of the name:—Ultime Fauchelevant.

At the same time, he hired two other apartments in Paris, in order that he might attract less attention than if he were to remain always in the same quarter, and so that he could, at need, take himself off at the slightest disquietude which should assail him, and in short, so that he might not again be caught unprovided as on the night when he had so miraculously escaped from Javert. These two apartments were very pitiable, poor in appearance, and in two quarters which were far remote from each other, the one in the Rue de l'Ouest, the other in the Rue de l'Homme Armé.

He went from time to time, now to the Rue de l'Homme Armé, now to the Rue de l'Ouest, to pass a month or six weeks, without taking Toussaint. He had himself served by the

porters, and gave himself out as a gentleman from the suburbs, living on his funds, and having a little temporary resting-place in town. This lofty virtue had three domiciles in Paris for the sake of escaping from the police.

CHAPTER II

JEAN VALJEAN AS A NATIONAL GUARD

HOWEVER, properly speaking, he lived in the Rue Plumet, and he had arranged his existence there in the following fashion:—

Cosette and the servant occupied the pavilion; she had the big sleeping-room with the painted pier-glasses, the boudoir with the gilded fillets, the justice's drawing-room furnished with tapestries and vast arm-chairs; she had the garden. Jean Valjean had a canopied bed of antique damask in three colors and a beautiful Persian rug purchased in the Rue du Figuier-Saint-Paul at Mother Gaucher's, put into Cosette's chamber, and, in order to redeem the severity of these magnificent old things, he had amalgamated with this brie-à-brac all the gay and graceful little pieces of furniture suitable to young girls, an étagère, a bookcase filled with gilt-edged books, an ink-stand, a blotting-book, paper, a work-table incrustated with mother of pearl, a silver-gilt dressing-case, a toilet service in Japanese porcelain. Long damask curtains with a red foundation and three colors, like those on the bed, hung at the windows of the first floor. On the ground floor, the curtains were of tapestry. All winter long, Cosette's little house was heated from top to bottom. Jean Valjean inhabited the sort of porter's lodge which was situated at the end of the back courtyard, with a mattress on a folding-bed, a white wood table, two straw chairs, an earthenware water-jug, a few old volumes on a shelf, his beloved valise in one corner, and never any fire. He dined with Cosette, and he had a loaf of black bread on the table for his own use.

When Toussaint came, he had said to her: "It is the young lady who is the mistress of this house."—"And you, monsieur?" Toussaint replied in amazement.—"I am a much better thing than the master, I am the father."

Cosette had been taught housekeeping in the convent, and she regulated their expenditure, which was very modest. Every day, Jean Valjean put his arm through Cosette's and took her for a walk. He led her to the Luxembourg, to the least frequented walk, and every Sunday he took her to mass at Saint-Jacques-du-Haut-Pas, because that was a long way off. As it was a very poor quarter, he bestowed alms largely there, and the poor people surrounded him in church, which had drawn down upon him Thénardier's epistle: "To the benevolent gentleman of the church of Saint-Jacques-du-Haut-Pas." He was fond of taking Cosette to visit the poor and the sick. No stranger ever entered the house in the Rue Plumet. Toussaint brought their provisions, and Jean Valjean went himself for water to a fountain near by on the boulevard. Their wood and wine were put into a half-subterranean hollow lined with rock-work which lay near the Rue de Babylone and which had formerly served the chief-justice as a grotto; for at the epoch of follies and "Little Houses" no love was without a grotto.

In the door opening on the Rue de Babylone, there was a box destined for the reception of letters and papers; only, as the three inhabitants of the pavilion in the Rue Plumet received neither papers nor letters, the entire usefulness of that box, formerly the go-between of a love affair, and the confidant of a love-lorn lawyer, was now limited to the tax-collector's notices, and the summons of the guard. For M. Fauchelevent, independent gentleman, belonged to the national guard; he had not been able to escape through the fine meshes of the census of 1831. The municipal information collected at that time had even reached the convent of the Petit-Piepus, a sort of impenetrable and holy cloud, whence Jean Valjean had emerged in venerable guise, and, conse-

quently, worthy of mounting guard in the eyes of the town-hall.

Three or four times a year, Jean Valjean donned his uniform and mounted guard; he did this willingly, however; it was a correct disguise which mixed him with every one, and yet left him solitary. Jean Valjean had just attained his sixtieth birthday, the age of legal exemption; but he did not appear to be over fifty; moreover, he had no desire to escape his sergeant-major nor to quibble with Comte de Lobau; he possessed no civil status, he was concealing his name, he was concealing his identity, so he concealed his age, he concealed everything; and, as we have just said, he willingly did his duty as a national guard; the sum of his ambition lay in resembling any other man who paid his taxes. This man had for his ideal, within, the angel, without, the bourgeois.

Let us note one detail, however; when Jean Valjean went out with Cosette, he dressed as the reader has already seen, and had the air of a retired officer. When he went out alone, which was generally at night, he was always dressed in a workman's trousers and blouse, and wore a cap which concealed his face. Was this precaution or humility? Both. Cosette was accustomed to the enigmatical side of her destiny, and hardly noticed her father's peculiarities. As for Toussaint, she venerated Jean Valjean, and thought everything he did right.

One day, her butcher, who had caught a glimpse of Jean Valjean, said to her: "That's a queer fish." She replied: "He's a saint."

Neither Jean Valjean nor Cosette nor Toussaint ever entered or emerged except by the door on the Rue de Babylon. Unless seen through the garden gate it would have been difficult to guess that they lived in the Rue Plumet. That gate was always closed. Jean Valjean had left the garden uncultivated, in order not to attract attention.

In this, possibly, he made a mistake.

CHAPTER III

FOLIIS AC FRONDIBUS

THE garden thus left to itself for more than half a century had become extraordinary and charming. The passers-by of forty years ago halted to gaze at it, without a suspicion of the secrets which it hid in its fresh and verdant depths. More than one dreamer of that epoch often allowed his thoughts and his eyes to penetrate indiscreetly between the bars of that ancient, padlocked gate, twisted, tottering, fastened to two green and moss-covered pillars, and oddly crowned with a pediment of undecipherable arabesque.

There was a stone bench in one corner, one or two mouldy statues, several lattices which had lost their nails with time, were rotting on the wall, and there were no walks nor turf; but there was enough grass everywhere. Gardening had taken its departure, and nature had returned. Weeds abounded, which was a great piece of luck for a poor corner of land. The festival of gilliflowers was something splendid. Nothing in this garden obstructed the sacred effort of things towards life; venerable growth reigned there among them. The trees had bent over towards the nettles, the plant had sprung upward, the branch had inlined, that which crawls on the earth had gone in search of that which expands in the air, that which floats on the wind had bent over towards that which trails in the moss; trunks, boughs, leaves, fibres, clusters, tendrils, shoots, spines, thorns, had mingled, crossed, married, confounded themselves in each other; vegetation in a deep and close embrace, had celebrated and accomplished there, under the well-pleased eye of the Creator, in that enclosure three hundred feet square, the holy mystery of fraternity, symbol of the human fraternity. This garden was no longer a garden, it was a colossal thicket, that is to say, something as impenetrable as a forest, as peopled as a city, quivering

like a nest, sombre like a cathedral, fragrant like a bouquet, solitary as a tomb, living as a throng.

In Floréal¹ this enormous thicket, free behind its gate and within its four walls, entered upon the secret labor of germination, quivered in the rising sun, almost like an animal which drinks in the breaths of cosmic love, and which feels the sap of April rising and boiling in its veins, and shakes to the wind its enormous wonderful green locks, sprinkled on the damp earth, on the defaced statues, on the crumbling steps of the pavilion, and even on the pavement of the deserted street, flowers like stars, dew like pearls, fecundity, beauty, life, joy, perfumes. At midday, a thousand white butterflies took refuge there, and it was a divine spectacle to see that living summer snow whirling about there in flakes amid the shade. There, in those gay shadows of verdure, a throng of innocent voices spoke sweetly to the soul, and what the twittering forgot to say the humming completed. In the evening, a dreamy vapor exhaled from the garden and enveloped it; a shroud of mist, a calm and celestial sadness covered it; the intoxicating perfume of the honeysuckles and convolvulus poured out from every part of it, like an exquisite and subtle poison; the last appeals of the woodpeckers and the wagtails were audible as they dozed among the branches; one felt the sacred intimacy of the birds and the trees; by day the wings rejoice the leaves, by night the leaves protect the wings.

In winter the thicket was black, dripping, bristling, shivering, and allowed some glimpse of the house. Instead of flowers on the branches and dew in the flowers, the long silvery tracks of the snails were visible on the cold, thick carpet of yellow leaves; but in any fashion, under any aspect, at all seasons, spring, winter, summer, autumn, this tiny enclosure breathed forth melancholy, contemplation, solitude, liberty, the absence of man, the presence of God; and the rusty old gate had the air of saying: "This garden belongs to me."

It was of no avail that the pavements of Paris were there on every side, the classic and splendid hotels of the Rue de

¹From April 19 to May 20.

Varennés a couple of paces away, the dome of the Invalides close at hand, the Chamber of Deputies not far off; the carriages of the Rue de Bourgogne and of the Rue Saint-Dominique rumbled luxuriously, in vain, in the vicinity, in vain did the yellow, brown, white, and red omnibuses cross each other's course at the neighboring cross-roads; the Rue Plumet was the desert; and the death of the former proprietors, the revolution which had passed over it, the crumbling away of ancient fortunes, absence, forgetfulness, forty years of abandonment and widowhood, had sufficed to restore to this privileged spot ferns, mulleins, hemlock, yarrow, tall weeds, great crimped plants, with large leaves of pale green cloth, lizards, beetles, uneasy and rapid insects; to cause to spring forth from the depths of the earth and to reappear between those four walls a certain indescribable and savage grandeur; and for nature, which disconcerts the petty arrangements of man, and which sheds herself always thoroughly where she diffuses herself at all, in the ant as well as in the eagle, to blossom out in a petty little Parisian garden with as much rude force and majesty as in a virgin forest of the New World.

Nothing is small, in fact; any one who is subject to the profound and penetrating influence of nature knows this. Although no absolute satisfaction is given to philosophy, either to circumscribe the cause or to limit the effect, the contemplator falls into those unfathomable ecstasies caused by these decompositions of force terminating in unity. Everything toils at everything.

Algebra is applied to the clouds; the radiation of the star profits the rose; no thinker would venture to affirm that the perfume of the hawthorn is useless to the constellations. Who, then, can calculate the course of a molecule? How do we know that the creation of worlds is not determined by the fall of grains of sand? Who knows the reciprocal ebb and flow of the infinitely great and the infinitely little, the reverberations of causes in the precipices of being, and the avalanches of creation? The tiniest worm is of importance; the great is little, the little is great; everything is balanced in necessity;

alarming vision for the mind. There are marvellous relations between beings and things; in that inexhaustible whole, from the sun to the grub, nothing despises the other; all have need of each other. The light does not bear away terrestrial perfumes into the azure depths, without knowing what it is doing; the night distributes stellar essences to the sleeping flowers. All birds that fly have round their leg the thread of the infinite. Germination is complicated with the bursting forth of a meteor and with the peek of a swallow cracking its egg, and it places on one level the birth of an earthworm and the advent of Socrates. Where the telescope ends, the microscope begins. Which of the two possesses the larger field of vision? Choose. A bit of mould is a pleiad of flowers; a nebula is an ant-hill of stars. The same promiseousness, and yet more unprecedented, exists between the things of the intelligence and the facts of substance. Elements and principles mingle, combine, wed, multiply with each other, to such a point that the material and the moral world are brought eventually to the same clearness. The phenomenon is perpetually returning upon itself. In the vast cosmic exchanges the universal life goes and comes in unknown quantities, rolling entirely in the invisible mystery of effluvia, employing everything, not losing a single dream, not a single slumber, sowing an animaleule here, crumbling to bits a planet there, oscillating and winding, making of light a force and of thought an element, disseminated and invisible, dissolving all, except that geometrical point, the *I*; bringing everything back to the soul-atom; expanding everything in God, entangling all activity, from summit to base, in the obscurity of a dizzy mechanism, attaching the flight of an insect to the movement of the earth, subordinating, who knows? Were it only by the identity of the law, the evolution of the comet in the firmament to the whirling of the infusoria in the drop of water. A machine made of mind. Enormous gearing, the prime motor of which is the gnat, and whose final wheel is the zodiac.

CHAPTER IV

CHANGE OF GATE

IT seemed that this garden, created in olden days to conceal wanton mysteries, had been transformed and become fitted to shelter chaste mysteries. There were no longer either arbors, or bowling greens, or tunnels, or grottos; there was a magnificent, dishevelled obscurity falling like a veil over all. Paphos had been made over into Eden. It is impossible to say what element of repentance had rendered this retreat wholesome. This flower-girl now offered her blossom to the soul. This coquettish garden, formerly decidedly compromised, had returned to virginity and modesty. A justice assisted by a gardener, a goodman who thought that he was a continuation of Lamoignon, and another goodman who thought that he was a continuation of Lenôtre, had turned it about, cut, ruffled, decked, moulded it to gallantry; nature had taken possession of it once more, had filled it with shade, and had arranged it for love.

There was, also, in this solitude, a heart which was quite ready. Love had only to show himself; he had here a temple composed of verdure, grass, moss, the sight of birds, tender shadows, agitated branches, and a soul made of sweetness, of faith, of candor, of hope, of aspiration, and of illusion.

Cosette had left the convent when she was still almost a child; she was a little more than fourteen, and she was at the "ungrateful age"; we have already said, that with the exception of her eyes, she was homely rather than pretty; she had no ungraceful feature, but she was awkward, thin, timid and bold at once, a grown-up little girl, in short.

Her education was finished, that is to say, she has been taught religion, and even and above all, devotion; then "history," that is to say the thing that bears that name in convents, geography, grammar, the participles, the kings of France, a little music, a little drawing, etc.; but in all other

respects she was utterly ignorant, which is a great charm and a great peril. The soul of a young girl should not be left in the dark; later on, mirages that are too abrupt and too lively are formed there, as in a dark chamber. She should be gently and discreetly enlightened, rather with the reflection of realities than with their harsh and direct light. A useful and graciously austere half-light which dissipates puerile fears and obviates falls. There is nothing but the maternal instinct, that admirable intuition composed of the memories of the virgin and the experience of the woman, which knows how this half-light is to be created and of what it should consist.

Nothing supplies the place of this instinct. All the nuns in the world are not worth as much as one mother in the formation of a young girl's soul.

Cosette had had no mother. She had only had many mothers, in the plural.

As for Jean Valjean, he was, indeed, all tenderness, all solicitude; but he was only an old man and he knew nothing at all.

Now, in this work of education, in this grave matter of preparing a woman for life, what science is required to combat that vast ignorance which is called innocence!

Nothing prepares a young girl for passions like the convent. The convent turns the thoughts in the direction of the unknown. The heart, thus thrown back upon itself, works downward within itself, since it cannot overflow, and grows deep, since it cannot expand. Hence visions, suppositions, conjectures, outlines of romances, a desire for adventures, fantastic constructions, edifices built wholly in the inner obscurity of the mind, sombre and secret abodes where the passions immediately find a lodgement as soon as the open gate permits them to enter. The convent is a compression which, in order to triumph over the human heart, should last during the whole life.

On quitting the convent, Cosette could have found nothing more sweet and more dangerous than the house in the Rue Plumet. It was the continuation of solitude with the begin-

ning of liberty; a garden that was closed, but a nature that was acrid, rich, voluptuous, and fragrant; the same dreams as in the convent, but with glimpses of young men; a grating, but one that opened on the street.

Still, when she arrived there, we repeat, she was only a child. Jean Valjean gave this neglected garden over to her. "Do what you like with it," he said to her. This amused Cosette; she turned over all the clumps and all the stones, she hunted for "beasts"; she played in it, while awaiting the time when she would dream in it; she loved this garden for the insects that she found beneath her feet amid the grass, while awaiting the day when she would love it for the stars that she would see through the boughs above her head.

And then, she loved her father, that is to say, Jean Valjean, with all her soul, with an innocent filial passion which made the goodman a beloved and charming companion to her. It will be remembered that M. Madeleine had been in the habit of reading a great deal. Jean Valjean had continued this practice; he had come to converse well; he possessed the secret riches and the eloquence of a true and humble mind which has spontaneously cultivated itself. He retained just enough sharpness to season his kindness; his mind was rough and his heart was soft. During their conversations in the Luxembourg, he gave her explanations of everything, drawing on what he had read, and also on what he had suffered. As she listened to him, Cosette's eyes wandered vaguely about.

This simple man sufficed for Cosette's thought, the same as the wild garden sufficed for her eyes. When she had had a good chase after the butterflies, she came panting up to him and said: "Ah! How I have run!" He kissed her brow.

Cosette adored the goodman. She was always at his heels. Where Jean Valjean was, there happiness was. Jean Valjean lived neither in the pavilion nor the garden; she took greater pleasure in the paved back courtyard, than in the enclosure filled with flowers, and in his little lodge furnished with straw-seated chairs than in the great drawing-room hung

with tapestry, against which stood tufted easy-chairs. Jean Valjean sometimes said to her, smiling at his happiness in being importuned: "Do go to your own quarters! Leave me alone a little!"

She gave him those charming and tender scoldings which are so graceful when they come from a daughter to her father.

"Father, I am very cold in your rooms; why don't you have a carpet here and a stove?"

"Dear child, there are so many people who are better than I and who have not even a roof over their heads."

"Then why is there a fire in my rooms, and everything that is needed?"

"Because you are a woman and a child."

"Bah! must men be cold and feel uncomfortable?"

"Certain men."

"That is good, I shall come here so often that you will be obliged to have a fire."

And again she said to him:—

"Father, why do you eat horrible bread like that?"

"Because, my daughter."

"Well, if you eat it, I will eat it too."

Then, in order to prevent Cosette eating black bread, Jean Valjean ate white bread.

Cosette had but a confused recollection of her childhood. She prayed morning and evening for her mother whom she had never known. The Thénardiens had remained with her as two hideous figures in a dream. She remembered that she had gone "one day, at night," to fetch water in a forest. She thought that it had been very far from Paris. It seemed to her that she had begun to live in an abyss, and that it was Jean Valjean who had rescued her from it. Her childhood produced upon her the effect of a time when there had been nothing around her but millepedes, spiders, and serpents. When she meditated in the evening, before falling asleep, as she had not a very clear idea that she was Jean Valjean's daughter, and that he was her father, she fancied that the soul of her

mother had passed into that good man and had come to dwell near her.

When he was seated, she leaned her cheek against his white hair, and dropped a silent tear, saying to herself: "Perhaps this man is my mother."

Cosette, although this is a strange statement to make, in the profound ignorance of a girl brought up in a convent,—maternity being also absolutely unintelligible to virginity,—had ended by fancying that she had had as little mother as possible. She did not even know her mother's name. Whenever she asked Jean Valjean, Jean Valjean remained silent. If she repeated her question, he responded with a smile. Once she insisted; the smile ended in a tear.

This silence on the part of Jean Valjean covered Fantine with darkness.

Was it prudence? Was it respect? Was it a fear that he should deliver this name to the hazards of another memory than his own?

So long as Cosette had been small, Jean Valjean had been willing to talk to her of her mother; when she became a young girl, it was impossible for him to do so. It seemed to him that he no longer dared. Was it because of Cosette? Was it because of Fantine? He felt a certain religious horror at letting that shadow enter Cosette's thought; and of placing a third in their destiny. The more sacred this shade was to him, the more did it seem that it was to be feared. He thought of Fantine, and felt himself overwhelmed with silence.

Through the darkness, he vaguely perceived something which appeared to have its finger on its lips. Had all the modesty which had been in Fantine, and which had violently quitted her during her lifetime, returned to rest upon her after her death, to watch in indignation over the peace of that dead woman, and in its shyness, to keep her in her grave? Was Jean Valjean unconsciously submitting to the pressure? We who believe in death, are not among the number who will reject this mysterious explanation.

Hence the impossibility of uttering, even for Cosette, that name of Fantine.

One day Cosette said to him:—

“Father, I saw my mother in a dream last night. She had two big wings. My mother must have been almost a saint during her life.”

“Through martyrdom,” replied Jean Valjean.

However, Jean Valjean was happy.

When Cosette went out with him, she leaned on his arm, proud and happy, in the plenitude of her heart. Jean Valjean felt his heart melt within him with delight, at all these sparks of a tenderness so exclusive, so wholly satisfied with himself alone. The poor man trembled, inundated with angelic joy; he declared to himself ecstatically that this would last all their lives; he told himself that he really had not suffered sufficiently to merit so radiant a bliss, and he thanked God, in the depths of his soul, for having permitted him to be loved thus, he, a wretch, by that innocent being.

CHAPTER V

THE ROSE PERCEIVES THAT IT IS AN ENGINE OF WAR

ONE day, Cosette chanced to look at herself in her mirror, and she said to herself: “Really!” It seemed to her almost that she was pretty. This threw her in a singularly troubled state of mind. Up to that moment she had never thought of her face. She saw herself in her mirror, but she did not look at herself. And then, she had so often been told that she was homely; Jean Valjean alone said gently: “No indeed! no indeed!” At all events, Cosette had always thought herself homely, and had grown up in that belief with the easy resignation of childhood. And here, all at once, was her mirror saying to her, as Jean Valjean had said: “No indeed!” That night, she did not sleep. “What if I were pretty!” she thought. “How odd it would be if I were pretty!” And she recalled those of her companions whose beauty had produced

a sensation in the convent, and she said to herself: "What! Am I to be like Mademoiselle So-and-So?"

The next morning she looked at herself again, not by accident this time, and she was assailed with doubts: "Where did I get such an idea?" said she; "no. I am ugly." She had not slept well, that was all, her eyes were sunken and she was pale. She had not felt very joyous on the preceding evening in the belief that she was beautiful, but it made her very sad not to be able to believe in it any longer. She did not look at herself again, and for more than a fortnight she tried to dress her hair with her back turned to the mirror.

In the evening, after dinner, she generally embroidered in wool or did some convent needlework in the drawing-room, and Jean Valjean read beside her. Once she raised her eyes from her work, and was rendered quite uneasy by the manner in which her father was gazing at her.

On another occasion, she was passing along the street, and it seemed to her that some one behind her, whom she did not see, said: "A pretty woman! but badly dressed." "Bah!" she thought, "he does not mean me. I am well dressed and ugly." She was then wearing a plush hat and her merino gown.

At last, one day when she was in the garden, she heard poor old Toussaint saying: "Do you notice how pretty Cosette is growing, sir?" Cosette did not hear her father's reply, but Toussaint's words caused a sort of commotion within her. She fled from the garden, ran up to her room, flew to the looking-glass,—it was three months since she had looked at herself,—and gave vent to a cry. She had just dazzled herself.

She was beautiful and lovely; she could not help agreeing with Toussaint and her mirror. Her figure was formed, her skin had grown white, her hair was lustrous, an unaccustomed splendor had been lighted in her blue eyes. The consciousness of her beauty burst upon her in an instant, like the sudden advent of daylight; other people noticed it also. Toussaint had said so, it was evidently she of whom the passer-by had spoken, there could no longer be any doubt of that; she

descended to the garden again, thinking herself a queen, imagining that she heard the birds singing, though it was winter, seeing the sky gilded, the sun among the trees, flowers in the thickets, distracted, wild, in inexpressible delight.

Jean Valjean, on his side, experienced a deep and undefinable oppression at heart.

In fact, he had, for some time past, been contemplating with terror that beauty which seemed to grow more radiant every day on Cosette's sweet face. The dawn that was smiling for all was gloomy for him.

Cosette had been beautiful for a tolerably long time before she became aware of it herself. But, from the very first day, that unexpected light which was rising slowly and enveloping the whole of the young girl's person, wounded Jean Valjean's sombre eye. He felt that it was a change in a happy life, a life so happy that he did not dare to move for fear of disarranging something. This man, who had passed through all manner of distresses, who was still all bleeding from the bruises of fate, who had been almost wicked and who had become almost a saint, who, after having dragged the chain of the galleys, was now dragging the invisible but heavy chain of indefinite misery, this man whom the law had not released from its grasp and who could be seized at any moment and brought back from the obscurity of his virtue to the broad daylight of public opprobrium, this man accepted all, excused all, pardoned all, and merely asked of Providence, of man, of the law, of society, of nature, of the world, one thing, that Cosette might love him!

That Cosette might continue to love him! That God would not prevent the heart of the child from coming to him, and from remaining with him! Beloved by Cosette, he felt that he was healed, rested, appeased, loaded with benefits, recompensed, crowned. Beloved by Cosette, it was well with him! He asked nothing more! Had any one said to him: "Do you want anything better?" he would have answered: "No." God might have said to him: "Do you desire heaven?" and he would have replied: "I should lose by it."

Everything which could affect this situation, if only on the surface, made him shudder like the beginning of something new. He had never known very distinctly himself what the beauty of a woman means; but he understood, instinctively, that it was something terrible.

He gazed with terror on this beauty, which was blossoming out ever more triumphant and superb beside him, beneath his very eyes, on the innocent and formidable brow of that child, from the depths of her homeliness, of his old age, of his misery, of his reprobation.

He said to himself: "How beautiful she is! What is to become of me?"

There, moreover, lay the difference between his tenderness and the tenderness of a mother. What he beheld with anguish, a mother would have gazed upon with joy.

The first symptoms were not long in making their appearance.

On the very morrow of the day on which she had said to herself: "Decidedly I am beautiful!" Cosette began to pay attention to her toilet. She recalled the remark of that passer-by: "Pretty, but badly dressed." the breath of an oracle which had passed beside her and had vanished, after depositing in her heart one of the two germs which are destined, later on, to fill the whole life of woman, coquetry. Love is the other.

With faith in her beauty, the whole feminine soul expanded within her. She conceived a horror for her merinos, and shame for her plush hat. Her father had never refused her anything. She at once acquired the whole science of the bonnet, the gown, the mantle, the boot, the cuff, the stuff which is in fashion, the color which is becoming, that science which makes of the Parisian woman something so charming, so deep, and so dangerous. The words *heady woman* were invented for the Parisienne.

In less than a month, little Cosette, in that Thebaid of the Rue de Babylone, was not only one of the prettiest, but one of the "best dressed" women in Paris, which means a great deal more.

She would have liked to encounter her "passer-by," to see what he would say, and to "teach him a lesson!" The truth is, that she was ravishing in every respect, and that she distinguished the difference between a bonnet from Gérard and one from Herbaut in the most marvellous way.

Jean Valjean watched these ravages with anxiety. He who felt that he could never do anything but crawl, walk at the most, beheld wings sprouting on Cosette.

Moreover, from the mere inspection of Cosette's toilet, a woman would have recognized the fact that she had no mother. Certain little proprieties, certain special conventionalities, were not observed by Cosette. A mother, for instance, would have told her that a young girl does not dress in damask.

The first day that Cosette went out in her black damask gown and mantle, and her white crape bonnet, she took Jean Valjean's arm, gay, radiant, rosy, proud, dazzling. "Father," she said, "how do you like me in this guise?" Jean Valjean replied in a voice which resembled the bitter voice of an envious man: "Charming!" He was the same as usual during their walk. On their return home, he asked Cosette:—

"Won't you put on that other gown and bonnet again,—you know the ones I mean?"

This took place in Cosette's chamber. Cosette turned towards the wardrobe where her cast-off schoolgirl's clothes were hanging.

"That disguise!" said she. "Father, what do you want me to do with it? Oh no, the idea! I shall never put on those horrors again. With that machine on my head, I have the air of Madame Mad-dog."

Jean Valjean heaved a deep sigh.

From that moment forth, he noticed that Cosette, who had always heretofore asked to remain at home, saying: "Father, I enjoy myself more here with you," now was always asking to go out. In fact, what is the use of having a handsome face and a delicious costume if one does not display them?

He also noticed that Cosette had no longer the same taste for the back garden. Now she preferred the garden, and did

not dislike to promenade back and forth in front of the railed fence. Jean Valjean, who was shy, never set foot in the garden. He kept to his back yard, like a dog.

Cosette, in gaining the knowledge that she was beautiful, lost the grace of ignoring it. An exquisite grace, for beauty enhanced by ingenuousness is ineffable, and nothing is so adorable as a dazzling and innocent creature who walks along, holding in her hand the key to paradise without being conscious of it. But what she had lost in ingenuous grace, she gained in pensive and serious charm. Her whole person, permeated with the joy of youth, of innocence, and of beauty, breathed forth a splendid melancholy.

It was at this epoch that Marius, after the lapse of six months, saw her once more at the Luxembourg.

CHAPTER VI

THE BATTLE BEGUN

COSETTE in her shadow, like Marius in his, was all ready to take fire. Destiny, with its mysterious and fatal patience, slowly drew together these two beings, all charged and all languishing with the stormy electricity of passion, these two souls which were laden with love as two clouds are laden with lightning, and which were bound to overflow and mingle in a look like the clouds in a flash of fire.

The glance has been so much abused in love romances that it has finally fallen into disrepute. One hardly dares to say, nowadays, that two beings fell in love because they looked at each other. That is the way people do fall in love, nevertheless, and the only way. The rest is nothing, but the rest comes afterwards. Nothing is more real than these great shocks which two souls convey to each other by the exchange of that spark.

At that particular hour when Cosette unconsciously darted that glance which troubled Marius, Marius had no suspicion that he had also launched a look which disturbed Cosette.

He caused her the same good and the same evil.

She had been in the habit of seeing him for a long time, and she had scrutinized him as girls scrutinize and see, while looking elsewhere. Marius still considered Cosette ugly, when she had already begun to think Marius handsome. But as he paid no attention to her, the young man was nothing to her.

Still, she could not refrain from saying to herself that he had beautiful hair, beautiful eyes, handsome teeth, a charming tone of voice when she heard him conversing with his comrades, that he held himself badly when he walked, if you like, but with a grace that was all his own, that he did not appear to be at all stupid, that his whole person was noble, gentle, simple, proud, and that, in short, though he seemed to be poor, yet his air was fine.

On the day when their eyes met at last, and said to each other those first, obscure, and ineffable things which the glance lips, Cosette did not immediately understand. She returned thoughtfully to the house in the Rue de l'Ouest, where Jean Valjean, according to his custom, had come to spend six weeks. The next morning, on waking, she thought of that strange young man, so long indifferent and icy, who now seemed to pay attention to her, and it did not appear to her that this attention was the least in the world agreeable to her. She was, on the contrary, somewhat incensed at this handsome and disdainful individual. A substratum of war stirred within her. It struck her, and the idea caused her a wholly childish joy, that she was going to take her revenge at last.

Knowing that she was beautiful, she was thoroughly conscious, though in an indistinct fashion, that she possessed a weapon. Women play with their beauty as children do with a knife. They wound themselves.

The reader will recall Marius' hesitations, his palpitations, his terrors. He remained on his bench and did not approach. This vexed Cosette. One day, she said to Jean Valjean: "Father, let us stroll about a little in that direction." Seeing that Marius did not come to her, she went to him. In such

eases, all women resemble Mahomet. And then, strange to say, the first symptom of true love in a young man is timidity; in a young girl it is boldness. This is surprising, and yet nothing is more simple. It is the two sexes tending to approach each other and assuming, each the other's qualities.

That day, Cosette's glance drove Marius beside himself, and Marius' glance set Cosette to trembling. Marius went away confident, and Cosette uneasy. From that day forth, they adored each other.

The first thing that Cosette felt was a confused and profound melancholy. It seemed to her that her soul had become black since the day before. She no longer recognized it. The whiteness of soul in young girls, which is composed of coldness and gayety, resembles snow. It melts in love, which is its sun.

Cosette did not know what love was. She had never heard the word uttered in its terrestrial sense. On the books of profane music which entered the convent, *amour* (love) was replaced by *tambour* (drum) or *pandour*. This created enigmas which exercised the imaginations of the *big girls*, such as: *Ah, how delightful is the drum!* or, *Pity is not a pandour*. But Cosette had left the convent too early to have occupied herself much with the "drum." Therefore, she did not know what name to give to what she now felt. Is any one the less ill because one does not know the name of one's malady?

She loved with all the more passion because she loved ignorantly. She did not know whether it was a good thing or a bad thing, useful or dangerous, eternal or temporary, allowable or prohibited; she loved. She would have been greatly astonished, had any one said to her: "You do not sleep? But that is forbidden! You do not eat? Why, that is very bad! You have oppressions and palpitations of the heart? That must not be! You blush and turn pale, when a certain being clad in black appears at the end of a certain green walk? But that is abominable!" She would not have understood, and she would have replied: "What fault is there of mine in a matter in which I have no power and of which I know nothing?"

It turned out that the love which presented itself was exactly suited to the state of her soul. It was a sort of admiration at a distance, a mute contemplation, the deification of a stranger. It was the apparition of youth to youth, the dream of nights become a reality yet remaining a dream, the longed-for phantom realized and made flesh at last, but having as yet, neither name, nor fault, nor spot, nor exigence, nor defect; in a word, the distant lover who lingered in the ideal, a chimæra with a form. Any nearer and more palpable meeting would have alarmed Cosette at this first stage, when she was still half immersed in the exaggerated mists of the cloister. She had all the fears of children and all the fears of nuns combined. The spirit of the convent, with which she had been permeated for the space of five years, was still in the process of slow evaporation from her person, and made everything tremble around her. In this situation he was not a lover, he was not even an admirer, he was a vision. She set herself to adoring Marius as something charming, luminous, and impossible.

As extreme innocence borders on extreme coquetry, she smiled at him with all frankness.

Every day, she looked forward to the hour for their walk with impatience, she found Marius there, she felt herself unspeakably happy, and thought in all sincerity that she was expressing her whole thought when she said to Jean Valjean:—

“What a delicious garden that Luxembourg is!”

Marius and Cosette were in the dark as to one another. They did not address each other, they did not salute each other, they did not know each other; they saw each other; and like stars of heaven which are separated by millions of leagues, they lived by gazing at each other.

It was thus that Cosette gradually became a woman and developed, beautiful and loving, with a consciousness of her beauty, and in ignorance of her love. She was a coquette to boot through her ignorance.

CHAPTER VII

TO ONE SADNESS OPPOSE A SADNESS AND A HALF

ALL situations have their instincts. Old and eternal Mother Nature warned Jean Valjean in a dim way of the presence of Marius. Jean Valjean shuddered to the very bottom of his soul. Jean Valjean saw nothing, knew nothing, and yet he scanned with obstinate attention, the darkness in which he walked, as though he felt on one side of him something in process of construction, and on the other, something which was crumbling away. Marius, also warned, and, in accordance with the deep law of God, by that same Mother Nature, did all he could to keep out of sight of "the father." Nevertheless, it came to pass that Jean Valjean sometimes espied him. Marius' manners were no longer in the least natural. He exhibited ambiguous prudence and awkward daring. He no longer came quite close to them as formerly. He seated himself at a distance and pretended to be reading; why did he pretend that? Formerly he had come in his old coat, now he wore his new one every day; Jean Valjean was not sure that he did not have his hair curled, his eyes were very queer, he wore gloves; in short, Jean Valjean cordially detested this young man.

Cosette allowed nothing to be divined. Without knowing just what was the matter with her she was convinced that there was something in it, and that it must be concealed.

There was a coincidence between the taste for the toilet which had recently come to Cosette, and the habit of new clothes developed by that stranger which was very repugnant to Jean Valjean. It might be accidental, no doubt, certainly, but it was a menacing accident.

He never opened his mouth to Cosette about this stranger. One day, however, he could not refrain from so doing, and, with that vague despair which suddenly casts the lead into the depths of its despair, he said to her: "What a very pedantic air that young man has!"

Cosette, but a year before only an indifferent little girl, would have replied: "Why, no, he is charming." Ten years later, with the love of Marius in her heart, she would have answered: "A pedant, and insufferable to the sight! You are right!"—At the moment in life and the heart which she had then attained, she contented herself with replying, with supreme calmness: "That young man!"

As though she now beheld him for the first time in her life. "How stupid I am!" thought Jean Valjean. "She had not noticed him. It is I who have pointed him out to her."

Oh, simplicity of the old! oh, the depth of children!

It is one of the laws of those fresh years of suffering and trouble, of those vivacious conflicts between a first love and the first obstacles, that the young girl does not allow herself to be caught in any trap whatever, and that the young man falls into every one. Jean Valjean had instituted an undeclared war against Marius, which Marius, with the sublime stupidity of his passion and his age, did not divine. Jean Valjean laid a host of ambushes for him; he changed his hour, he changed his bench, he forgot his handkerchief, he came alone to the Luxembourg: Marius dashed headlong into all these snares; and to all the interrogation marks planted by Jean Valjean in his pathway, he ingenuously answered "yes." But Cosette remained immured in her apparent unconcern and in her imperturbable tranquillity, so that Jean Valjean arrived at the following conclusion: "That ninny is madly in love with Cosette, but Cosette does not even know that he exists."

None the less did he bear in his heart a mournful tremor. The minute when Cosette would love might strike at any moment. Does not everything begin with indifference?

Only once did Cosette make a mistake and alarm him. He rose from his seat to depart, after a stay of three hours, and she said: "What, already?"

Jean Valjean had not discontinued his trips to the Luxembourg, as he did not wish to do anything out of the way, and as, above all things, he feared to arouse Cosette; but during the hours which were so sweet to the lovers, while Cosette was

sending her smile to the intoxicated Marius, who perceived nothing else now, and who now saw nothing in all the world but an adored and radiant face, Jean Valjean was fixing on Marius flashing and terrible eyes. He, who had finally come to believe himself incapable of a malevolent feeling, experienced moments when Marius was present, in which he thought he was becoming savage and ferocious once more, and he felt the old depths of his soul, which had formerly contained so much wrath, opening once more and rising up against that young man. It almost seemed to him that unknown craters were forming in his bosom.

What! he was there, that creature! What was he there for? He came creeping about, smelling out, examining, trying! He came, saying: "Hey! Why not?" He came to prowl about his, Jean Valjean's, life! to prowl about his happiness, with the purpose of seizing it and bearing it away!

Jean Valjean added: "Yes, that's it! What is he in search of? An adventure! What does he want? A love affair! A love affair! And I? What! I have been first, the most wretched of men, and then the most unhappy, and I have traversed sixty years of life on my knees, I have suffered everything that man can suffer, I have grown old without having been young, I have lived without a family, without relatives, without friends, without life, without children, I have left my blood on every stone, on every bramble, on every mile-post, along every wall, I have been gentle, though others have been hard to me, and kind, although others have been malicious, I have become an honest man once more, in spite of everything, I have repented of the evil that I have done and have forgiven the evil that has been done to me, and at the moment when I receive my recompense, at the moment when it is all over, at the moment when I am just touching the goal, at the moment when I have what I desire, it is well, it is good, I have paid, I have earned it, all this is to take flight, all this will vanish, and I shall lose Cosette, and I shall lose my life, my joy, my soul, because it has pleased a great booby to come and lounge at the Luxembourg."

Then his eyes were filled with a sad and extraordinary gleam.

It was no longer a man gazing at a man; it was no longer an enemy surveying an enemy. It was a dog scanning a thief.

The reader knows the rest. Marius pursued his senseless course. One day he followed Cosette to the Rue de l'Ouest. Another day he spoke to the porter. The porter, on his side, spoke, and said to Jean Valjean: "Monsieur, who is that curious young man who is asking for you?" On the morrow Jean Valjean bestowed on Marius that glance which Marius at last perceived. A week later, Jean Valjean had taken his departure. He swore to himself that he would never again set foot either in the Luxembourg or in the Rue de l'Ouest. He returned to the Rue Plumet.

Cosette did not complain, she said nothing, she asked no questions, she did not seek to learn his reasons; she had already reached the point where she was afraid of being divined, and of betraying herself. Jean Valjean had no experience of these miseries, the only miseries which are charming and the only ones with which he was not acquainted; the consequence was that he did not understand the grave significance of Cosette's silence.

He merely noticed that she had grown sad, and he grew gloomy. On his side and on hers, inexperience had joined issue.

Once he made a trial. He asked Cosette:—

"Would you like to come to the Luxembourg?"

A ray illuminated Cosette's pale face.

"Yes," said she.

They went thither. Three months had elapsed. Marius no longer went there. Marius was not there.

On the following day, Jean Valjean asked Cosette again:—

"Would you like to come to the Luxembourg?"

She replied, sadly and gently:—

"No."

Jean Valjean was hurt by this sadness, and heart-broken at this gentleness.

What was going on in that mind which was so young and yet already so impenetrable? What was on its way there within? What was taking place in Cosette's soul? Sometimes, instead of going to bed, Jean Valjean remained seated on his pallet, with his head in his hands, and he passed whole nights asking himself: "What has Cosette in her mind?" and in thinking of the things that she might be thinking about.

Oh! at such moments, what mournful glances did he cast towards that cloister, that chaste peak, that abode of angels, that inaccessible glacier of virtue! How he contemplated, with despairing ecstasy, that convent garden, full of ignored flowers and cloistered virgins, where all perfumes and all souls mount straight to heaven! How he adored that Eden forever closed against him, whence he had voluntarily and madly emerged! How he regretted his abnegation and his folly in having brought Cosette back into the world, poor hero of sacrifice, seized and hurled to the earth by his very self-devotion! How he said to himself, "What have I done?"

However, nothing of all this was perceptible to Cosette. No ill-temper, no harshness. His face was always serene and kind. Jean Valjean's manners were more tender and more paternal than ever. If anything could have betrayed his lack of joy, it was his increased suavity.

On her side, Cosette languished. She suffered from the absence of Marius as she had rejoiced in his presence, peculiarly, without exactly being conscious of it. When Jean Valjean ceased to take her on their customary strolls, a feminine instinct murmured confusedly, at the bottom of her heart, that she must not seem to set store on the Luxembourg garden, and that if this proved to be a matter of indifference to her, her father would take her thither once more. But days, weeks, months, elapsed. Jean Valjean had tacitly accepted Cosette's tacit consent. She regretted it. It was too late. So Marius had disappeared; all was over. The day on which she returned to the Luxembourg, Marius was no longer there. What was to be done? Should she ever find him again? She felt an anguish at her heart, which nothing relieved, and which aug-

mented every day; she no longer knew whether it was winter or summer, whether it was raining or shining, whether the birds were singing, whether it was the season for dahlias or daisies, whether the Luxembourg was more charming than the Tuileries, whether the linen which the laundress brought home was starched too much or not enough, whether Toussaint had done "her marketing" well or ill; and she remained dejected, absorbed, attentive to but a single thought, her eyes vague and staring as when one gazes by night at a black and fathomless spot where an apparition has vanished.

However, she did not allow Jean Valjean to perceive anything of this, except her pallor.

She still wore her sweet face for him.

This pallor sufficed but too thoroughly to trouble Jean Valjean. Sometimes he asked her:—

"What is the matter with you?"

She replied: "There is nothing the matter with me."

And after a silence, when she divined that he was sad also, she would add:—

"And you, father—is there anything wrong with you?"

"With me? Nothing," said he.

These two beings who had loved each other so exclusively, and with so touching an affection, and who had lived so long for each other, now suffered side by side, each on the other's account; without acknowledging it to each other, without anger towards each other, and with a smile.

CHAPTER VIII

THE CHAIN-GANG

JEAN VALJEAN was the more unhappy of the two. Youth, even in its sorrows, always possesses its own peculiar radiance.

At times, Jean Valjean suffered so greatly that he became puerile. It is the property of grief to cause the childish side of man to reappear. He had an unconquerable conviction that

Cosette was escaping from him. He would have liked to resist, to retain her, to arouse her enthusiasm by some external and brilliant matter. These ideas, puerile, as we have just said, and at the same time senile, conveyed to him, by their very childishness, a tolerably just notion of the influence of gold lace on the imaginations of young girls. He once chanced to see a general on horseback, in full uniform, pass along the street, Comte Coutard, the commandant of Paris. He envied that gilded man; what happiness it would be, he said to himself, if he could put on that suit which was an incontestable thing; and if Cosette could behold him thus, she would be dazzled, and when he had Cosette on his arm and passed the gates of the Tuileries, the guard would present arms to him, and that would suffice for Cosette, and would dispel her idea of looking at young men.

An unforeseen shock was added to these sad reflections.

In the isolated life which they led, and since they had come to dwell in the Rue Plumet, they had contracted one habit. They sometimes took a pleasure trip to see the sun rise, a mild species of enjoyment which befits those who are entering life and those who are quitting it.

For those who love solitude, a walk in the early morning is equivalent to a stroll by night, with the cheerfulness of nature added. The streets are deserted and the birds are singing. Cosette, a bird herself, liked to rise early. These matutinal excursions were planned on the preceding evening. He proposed, and she agreed. It was arranged like a plot, they set out before daybreak, and these trips were so many small delights for Cosette. These innocent eccentricities please young people.

Jean Valjean's inclination led him, as we have seen, to the least frequented spots, to solitary nooks, to forgotten places. There then existed, in the vicinity of the barriers of Paris, a sort of poor meadows, which were almost confounded with the city, where grew in summer sickly grain, and which, in autumn, after the harvest had been gathered, presented the appearance, not of having been reaped, but peeled. Jean Valjean

loved to haunt these fields. Cosette was not bored there. It meant solitude to him and liberty to her. There, she became a little girl once more, she could run and almost play; she took off her hat, laid it on Jean Valjean's knees, and gathered bunches of flowers. She gazed at the butterflies on the flowers, but did not catch them; gentleness and tenderness are born with love, and the young girl who cherishes within her breast a trembling and fragile ideal has mercy on the wing of a butterfly. She wove garlands of poppies, which she placed on her head, and which, crossed and penetrated with sunlight, glowing until they flamed, formed for her rosy face a crown of burning embers.

Even after their life had grown sad, they kept up their custom of early strolls.

One morning in October, therefore, tempted by the serene perfection of the autumn of 1831, they set out, and found themselves at break of day near the *Barrière du Maine*. It was not dawn, it was daybreak; a delightful and stern moment. A few constellations here and there in the deep, pale azure, the earth all black, the heavens all white, a quiver amid the blades of grass, everywhere the mysterious chill of twilight. A lark, which seemed mingled with the stars, was carolling at a prodigious height, and one would have declared that that hymn of pettiness calmed immensity. In the East, the *Val-de-Grâce* projected its dark mass on the clear horizon with the sharpness of steel; Venus dazzlingly brilliant was rising behind that dome and had the air of a soul making its escape from a gloomy edifice.

All was peace and silence; there was no one on the road; a few stray laborers, of whom they caught barely a glimpse, were on their way to their work along the side-paths.

Jean Valjean was sitting in a cross-walk on some planks deposited at the gate of a timber-yard. His face was turned towards the highway, his back towards the light; he had forgotten the sun which was on the point of rising; he had sunk into one of those profound absorptions in which the mind becomes concentrated, which imprison even the eye, and which are

equivalent to four walls. There are meditations which may be called vertical; when one is at the bottom of them, time is required to return to earth. Jean Valjean had plunged into one of these reveries. He was thinking of Cosette, of the happiness that was possible if nothing came between him and her, of the light with which she filled his life, a light which was but the emanation of her soul. He was almost happy in his reverie. Cosette, who was standing beside him, was gazing at the clouds as they turned rosy.

All at once Cosette exclaimed: "Father, I should think some one was coming yonder." Jean Valjean raised his eyes.

Cosette was right. The causeway which leads to the ancient *Barrière du Maine* is a prolongation, as the reader knows, of the *Rue de Sèvres*, and is cut at right angles by the inner boulevard. At the elbow of the causeway and the boulevard, at the spot where it branches, they heard a noise which it was difficult to account for at that hour, and a sort of confused pile made its appearance. Some shapeless thing which was coming from the boulevard was turning into the road.

It grew larger, it seemed to move in an orderly manner, though it was bristling and quivering; it seemed to be a vehicle, but its load could not be distinctly made out. There were horses, wheels, shouts; whips were cracking. By degrees the outlines became fixed, although bathed in shadows. It was a vehicle, in fact, which had just turned from the boulevard into the highway, and which was directing its course towards the barrier near which sat Jean Valjean: a second, of the same aspect, followed, then a third, then a fourth; seven chariots made their appearance in succession, the heads of the horses touching the rear of the wagon in front. Figures were moving on these vehicles, flashes were visible through the dusk as though there were naked swords there, a clanking became audible which resembled the rattling of chains, and as this something advanced, the sound of voices waxed louder, and it turned into a terrible thing such as emerges from the cave of dreams.

As it drew nearer, it assumed a form, and was outlined be-

hind the trees with the pallid hue of an apparition; the mass grew white; the day, which was slowly dawning, cast a wan light on this swarming heap which was at once both sepulchral and living, the heads of the figures turned into the faces of corpses, and this is what it proved to be:—

Seven wagons were driving in a file along the road. The first six were singularly constructed. They resembled coopers' drays; they consisted of long ladders placed on two wheels and forming barrows at their rear extremities. Each dray, or rather let us say, each ladder, was attached to four horses harnessed tandem. On these ladders strange clusters of men were being drawn. In the faint light, these men were to be divined rather than seen. Twenty-four on each vehicle, twelve on a side, back to back, facing the passers-by, their legs dangling in the air,—this was the manner in which these men were travelling, and behind their backs they had something which clanked, and which was a chain, and on their necks something which shone, and which was an iron collar. Each man had his collar, but the chain was for all; so that if these four and twenty men had occasion to alight from the dray and walk, they were seized with a sort of inexorable unity, and were obliged to wind over the ground with the chain for a backbone, somewhat after the fashion of millepeds. In the back and front of each vehicle, two men armed with muskets stood erect, each holding one end of the chain under his foot. The iron necklets were square. The seventh vehicle, a huge rack-sided baggage wagon, without a hood, had four wheels and six horses, and carried a sonorous pile of iron boilers, cast-iron pots, braziers, and chains, among which were mingled several men who were pinioned and stretched at full length, and who seemed to be ill. This wagon, all lattice-work, was garnished with dilapidated hurdles which appeared to have served for former punishments. These vehicles kept to the middle of the road. On each side marched a double hedge of guards of infamous aspect, wearing three-cornered hats, like the soldiers under the Directory, shabby, covered with spots and holes, muffled in uniforms of veterans and the trousers of under-

takers' men, half gray, half blue, which were almost hanging in rags, with red epaulets, yellow shoulder belts, short sabres, muskets, and cudgels; they were a species of soldier-blackguards. These myrmidons seemed composed of the abjectness of the beggar and the authority of the executioner. The one who appeared to be their chief held a postilion's whip in his hand. All these details, blurred by the dimness of dawn, became more and more clearly outlined as the light increased. At the head and in the rear of the convoy rode mounted gendarmes, serious and with sword in fist.

This procession was so long that when the first vehicle reached the barrier, the last was barely debouching from the boulevard. A throng, sprung, it is impossible to say whence, and formed in a twinkling, as is frequently the case in Paris, pressed forward from both sides of the road and looked on. In the neighboring lanes the shouts of people calling to each other and the wooden shoes of market-gardeners hastening up to gaze were audible.

The men massed upon the drays allowed themselves to be jolted along in silence. They were livid with the chill of morning. They all wore linen trousers, and their bare feet were thrust into wooden shoes. The rest of their costume was a fantasy of wretchedness. Their accoutrements were horribly incongruous; nothing is more funereal than the harlequin in rags. Battered felt hats, tarpaulin caps, hideous woollen nightcaps, and, side by side with a short blouse, a black coat broken at the elbow; many wore women's headgear, others had baskets on their heads; hairy breasts were visible, and through the rent in their garments tattooed designs could be descried; temples of Love, flaming hearts, Cupids; eruptions and unhealthy red blotches could also be seen. Two or three had a straw rope attached to the cross-bar of the dray, and suspended under them like a stirrup, which supported their feet. One of them held in his hand and raised to his mouth something which had the appearance of a black stone and which he seemed to be gnawing; it was bread which he was eating. There were no eyes there which were not either dry, dulled, or

flaming with an evil light. The escort troop cursed, the men in chains did not utter a syllable; from time to time the sound of a blow became audible as the cudgels descended on shoulder-blades or skulls; some of these men were yawning; their rags were terrible; their feet hung down, their shoulders oscillated, their heads clashed together, their fetters clanked, their eyes glared ferociously, their fists clenched or fell open inertly like the hands of corpses; in the rear of the convoy ran a band of children screaming with laughter.

This file of vehicles, whatever its nature was, was mournful. It was evident that to-morrow, that an hour hence, a pouring rain might descend, that it might be followed by another and another, and that their dilapidated garments would be drenched, that once soaked, these men would not get dry again, that once chilled, they would not again get warm, that their linen trousers would be glued to their bones by the downpour, that the water would fill their shoes, that no lashes from the whips would be able to prevent their jaws from chattering, that the chain would continue to bind them by the neck, that their legs would continue to dangle, and it was impossible not to shudder at the sight of these human beings thus bound and passive beneath the cold clouds of autumn, and delivered over to the rain, to the blast, to all the furies of the air, like trees and stones.

Blows from the cudgel were not omitted even in the case of the sick men, who lay there knotted with ropes and motionless on the seventh wagon, and who appeared to have been tossed there like sacks filled with misery.

Suddenly, the sun made its appearance; the immense light of the Orient burst forth, and one would have said that it had set fire to all those ferocious heads. Their tongues were unloosed; a conflagration of grins, oaths, and songs exploded. The broad horizontal sheet of light severed the file in two parts, illuminating heads and bodies, leaving feet and wheels in the obscurity. Thoughts made their appearance on these faces; it was a terrible moment; visible demons with their masks removed, fierce souls laid bare. Though lighted up, this

wild throng remained in gloom. Some, who were gay, had in their mouths quills through which they blew vermin over the crowd, picking out the women; the dawn accentuated these lamentable profiles with the blackness of its shadows; there was not one of these creatures who was not deformed by reason of wretchedness; and the whole was so monstrous that one would have said that the sun's brilliancy had been changed into the glare of the lightning. The wagon-load which headed the line had struck up a song, and were shouting at the top of their voices with a haggard joviality, a pot-pourri by Desaugiers, then famous, called *The Vestal*; the trees shivered mournfully; in the cross-lanes, countenances of bourgeois listened in an idiotic delight to these coarse strains droned by spectres.

All sorts of distress met in this procession as in chaos: here were to be found the facial angles of every sort of beast, old men, youths, bald heads, gray beards, cynical monstrosities, sour resignation, savage grins, senseless attitudes, snouts surmounted by caps, heads like those of young girls with cork-screw curls on the temples, infantile visages, and by reason of that, horrible thin skeleton faces, to which death alone was lacking. On the first cart was a negro, who had been a slave, in all probability, and who could make a comparison of his chains. The frightful leveller from below, shame, had passed over these brows; at that degree of abasement, the last transformations were suffered by all in their extremest depths, and ignorance, converted into dulness, was the equal of intelligence converted into despair. There was no choice possible between these men who appeared to the eye as the flower of the mud. It was evident that the person who had had the ordering of that unclean procession had not classified them. These beings had been fettered and coupled pell-mell, in alphabetical disorder, probably, and loaded hap-hazard on those carts. Nevertheless, horrors, when grouped together, always end by evolving a result; all additions of wretched men gave a sum total, each chain exhaled a common soul, and each dray-load had its own physiognomy. By the side of the one where they were

singing, there was one where they were howling; a third where they were begging; one could be seen in which they were gnashing their teeth; another load menaced the spectators, another blasphemed God: the last was as silent as the tomb. Dante would have thought that he beheld his seven circles of hell on the march. The march of the damned to their tortures, performed in sinister wise, not on the formidable and flaming chariot of the Apocalypse, but, what was more mournful than that, on the gibbet cart.

One of the guards, who had a hook on the end of his cudgel, made a pretence from time to time, of stirring up this mass of human filth. An old woman in the crowd pointed them out to her little boy five years old, and said to him: "Rascal, let that be a warning to you!"

As the songs and blasphemies increased, the man who appeared to be the captain of the escort cracked his whip, and at that signal a fearful dull and blind flogging, which produced the sound of hail, fell upon the seven dray-loads; many roared and foamed at the mouth; which redoubled the delight of the street urchins who had hastened up, a swarm of flies on these wounds.

Jean Valjean's eyes had assumed a frightful expression. They were no longer eyes; they were those deep and glassy objects which replace the glance in the case of certain wretched men, which seem unconscious of reality, and in which flames the reflection of terrors and of catastrophes. He was not looking at a spectacle, he was seeing a vision. He tried to rise, to flee, to make his escape; he could not move his feet. Sometimes, the things that you see seize upon you and hold you fast. He remained nailed to the spot, petrified, stupid, asking himself, athwart confused and inexpressible anguish, what this sepulchral persecution signified, and whence had come that pandemonium which was pursuing him. All at once, he raised his hand to his brow, a gesture habitual to those whose memory suddenly returns; he remembered that this was, in fact, the usual itinerary, that it was customary to make this detour in order to avoid all possibility of encountering royalty on

the road to Fontainebleau, and that, five and thirty years before, he had himself passed through that barrier.

Cosette was no less terrified, but in a different way. She did not understand; what she beheld did not seem to her to be possible; at length she cried:—

“Father! What are those men in those carts?”

Jean Valjean replied: “Convicts.”

“Whither are they going?”

“To the galleys.”

At that moment, the eudgelling, multiplied by a hundred hands, became zealous, blows with the flat of the sword were mingled with it, it was a perfect storm of whips and clubs; the convicts bent before it, a hideous obedience was evoked by the torture, and all held their peace, darting glances like chained wolves.

Cosette trembled in every limb; she resumed:—

“Father, are they still men?”

“Sometimes,” answered the unhappy man.

It was the chain-gang, in fact, which had set out before daybreak from Bicêtre, and had taken the road to Mans in order to avoid Fontainebleau, where the King then was. This caused the horrible journey to last three or four days longer; but torture may surely be prolonged with the object of sparing the royal personage a sight of it.

Jean Valjean returned home utterly overwhelmed. Such encounters are shocks, and the memory that they leave behind them resembles a thorough shaking up.

Nevertheless, Jean Valjean did not observe that, on his way back to the Rue de Babylone with Cosette, the latter was plying him with other questions on the subject of what they had just seen; perhaps he was too much absorbed in his own dejection to notice her words and reply to them. But when Cosette was leaving him in the evening, to betake herself to bed, he heard her say in a low voice, and as though talking to herself: “It seems to me, that if I were to find one of those men in my pathway, oh, my God, I should die merely from the sight of him close at hand.”

Fortunately, chance ordained that on the morrow of that tragic day, there was some official solemnity apropos of I know not what,—fêtes in Paris, a review in the Champ de Mars, jousts on the Seine, theatrical performances in the Champs-Élysées, fireworks at the Arc de l'Étoile, illuminations everywhere. Jean Valjean did violence to his habits, and took Cosette to see these rejoicings, for the purpose of diverting her from the memory of the day before, and of effacing, beneath the smiling tumult of all Paris, the abominable thing which had passed before her. The review with which the festival was spiced made the presence of uniforms perfectly natural; Jean Valjean donned his uniform of a national guard with the vague inward feeling of a man who is betaking himself to shelter. However, this trip seemed to attain its object. Cosette, who made it her law to please her father, and to whom, moreover, all spectacles were a novelty, accepted this diversion with the light and easy good grace of youth, and did not pout too disdainfully at that flutter of enjoyment called a public fête; so that Jean Valjean was able to believe that he had succeeded, and that no trace of that hideous vision remained.

Some days later, one morning, when the sun was shining brightly, and they were both on the steps leading to the garden, another infraction of the rules which Jean Valjean seemed to have imposed upon himself, and to the custom of remaining in her chamber which melancholy had caused Cosette to adopt, Cosette, in a wrapper, was standing erect in that negligent attire of early morning which envelops young girls in an adorable way and which produces the effect of a cloud drawn over a star; and, with her head bathed in light, rosy after a good sleep, submitting to the gentle glances of the tender old man, she was picking a daisy to pieces. Cosette did not know the delightful legend, *I love a little, passionately, etc.*—who was there who could have taught her? She was handling the flower instinctively, innocently, without a suspicion that to pluck a daisy apart is to do the same by a heart. If there were a fourth, and smiling Grace called Melancholy, she would have worn the air of that Grace. Jean Valjean



COSETTE WAS PICKING A DAISY PIECES.

was fascinated by the contemplation of those tiny fingers on that flower, and forgetful of everything in the radiance emitted by that child. A red-breast was warbling in the thicket, on one side. White cloudlets floated across the sky, so gayly, that one would have said that they had just been set at liberty. Cosette went on attentively tearing the leaves from her flower; she seemed to be thinking about something; but whatever it was, it must be something charming; all at once she turned her head over her shoulder with the delicate languor of a swan, and said to Jean Valjean: "Father, what are the galleys like?"

BOOK FOURTH.—SUCCOR FROM BELOW MAY TURN
OUT TO BE SUCCOR FROM ON HIGH

CHAPTER I

A WOUND WITHOUT, HEALING WITHIN

THUS their life clouded over by degrees.

But one diversion, which had formerly been a happiness, remained to them, which was to carry bread to those who were hungry, and clothing to those who were cold. Cosette often accompanied Jean Valjean on these visits to the poor, on which they recovered some remnants of their former free intercourse; and sometimes, when the day had been a good one, and they had assisted many in distress, and cheered and warmed many little children, Cosette was rather merry in the evening. It was at this epoch that they paid their visit to the Jondrette den.

On the day following that visit, Jean Valjean made his appearance in the pavilion in the morning, calm as was his wont, but with a large wound on his left arm which was much inflamed, and very angry, which resembled a burn, and which he explained in some way or other. This wound resulted in his being detained in the house for a month with fever. He would not call in a doctor. When Cosette urged him, "Call the dog-doctor," said he.

Cosette dressed the wound morning and evening with so divine an air and such angelic happiness at being of use to him, that Jean Valjean felt all his former joy returning, his fears and anxieties dissipating, and he gazed at Cosette, saying: "Oh! what a kindly wound! Oh! what a good misfortune!"

Cosette on perceiving that her father was ill, had deserted the pavilion and again taken a fancy to the little lodging and the back courtyard. She passed nearly all her days beside Jean Valjean and read to him the books which he desired. Generally they were books of travel. Jean Valjean was undergoing a new birth; his happiness was reviving in these ineffable rays; the Luxembourg, the prowling young stranger, Cosette's coldness,—all these clouds upon his soul were growing dim. He had reached the point where he said to himself: "I imagined all that. I am an old fool."

His happiness was so great that the horrible discovery of the Thénardiens made in the Jondrette hovel, unexpected as it was, had, after a fashion, glided over him unnoticed. He had succeeded in making his escape; all trace of him was lost—what more did he care for! he only thought of those wretched beings to pity them. "Here they are in prison, and henceforth they will be incapacitated for doing any harm," he thought, "but what a lamentable family in distress!"

As for the hideous vision of the Barrière du Maine, Cosette had not referred to it again.

Sister Sainte-Meehtilde had taught Cosette music in the convent; Cosette had the voice of a linnet with a soul, and sometimes, in the evening, in the wounded man's humble abode, she warbled melancholy songs which delighted Jean Valjean.

Spring came; the garden was so delightful at that season of the year, that Jean Valjean said to Cosette:—

"You never go there; I want you to stroll in it."

"As you like, father," said Cosette.

And for the sake of obeying her father, she resumed her walks in the garden, generally alone, for, as we have mentioned, Jean Valjean, who was probably afraid of being seen through the fence, hardly ever went there.

Jean Valjean's wound had created a diversion.

When Cosette saw that her father was suffering less, that he was convalescing, and that he appeared to be happy, she experienced a contentment which she did not even perceive.

so gently and naturally had it come. Then, it was in the month of March. the days were growing longer. the winter was departing, the winter always bears away with it a portion of our sadness; then came April, that daybreak of summer, fresh as dawn always is, gay like every childhood; a little inclined to weep at times like the new-born being that it is. In that month, nature has charming gleams which pass from the sky, from the trees, from the meadows and the flowers into the heart of man.

Cosette was still too young to escape the penetrating influence of that April joy which bore so strong a resemblance to herself. Insensibly, and without her suspecting the fact, the blackness departed from her spirit. In spring, sad souls grow light, as light falls into cellars at midday. Cosette was no longer sad. However, though this was so, she did not account for it to herself. In the morning, about ten o'clock, after breakfast, when she had succeeded in enticing her father into the garden for a quarter of an hour, and when she was paeing up and down in the sunlight in front of the steps, supporting his left arm for him, she did not perceive that she laughed every moment and that she was happy.

Jean Valjean, intoxicated, beheld her growing fresh and rosy once more.

“Oh! What a good wound!” he repeated in a whisper.

And he felt grateful to the Thénardiens.

His wound once healed, he resumed his solitary twilight strolls.

It is a mistake to suppose that a person can stroll alone in that fashion in the uninhabited regions of Paris without meeting with some adventure.

CHAPTER II

MOTHER PLUTARQUE FINDS NO DIFFICULTY IN EXPLAINING A PHENOMENON

ONE evening, little Gavroche had had nothing to eat; he remembered that he had not dined on the preceding day either; this was becoming tiresome. He resolved to make an effort to secure some supper. He strolled out beyond the Salpêtrière into deserted regions; that is where windfalls are to be found; where there is no one, one always finds something. He reached a settlement which appeared to him to be the village of Austerlitz.

In one of his preceding lounges he had noticed there an old garden haunted by an old man and an old woman, and in that garden, a passable apple-tree. Beside the apple-tree stood a sort of fruit-house, which was not securely fastened, and where one might contrive to get an apple. One apple is a supper; one apple is life. That which was Adam's ruin might prove Gavroche's salvation. The garden abutted on a solitary, unpaved lane, bordered with brushwood while awaiting the arrival of houses; the garden was separated from it by a hedge.

Gavroche directed his steps towards this garden; he found the lane, he recognized the apple-tree, he verified the fruit-house, he examined the hedge; a hedge means merely one stride. The day was declining, there was not even a cat in the lane, the hour was propitious. Gavroche began the operation of scaling the hedge, then suddenly paused. Some one was talking in the garden. Gavroche peeped through one of the breaks in the hedge.

A couple of paces distant, at the foot of the hedge on the other side, exactly at the point where the gap which he was meditating would have been made, there was a sort of recumbent stone which formed a bench, and on this bench was seated the old man of the garden, while the old woman was standing

in front of him. The old woman was grumbling. Gavroche, who was not very discreet, listened.

“Monsieur Mabeuf!” said the old woman.

“Mabeuf!” thought Gavroche, “that name is a perfect farce.”

The old man who was thus addressed, did not stir. The old woman repeated:—

“Monsieur Mabeuf!”

The old man, without raising his eyes from the ground, made up his mind to answer:—

“What is it, Mother Plutarque?”

“Mother Plutarque!” thought Gavroche, “another farcical name.”

Mother Plutarque began again, and the old man was forced to accept the conversation:—

“The landlord is not pleased.”

“Why?”

“We owe three quarters rent.”

“In three months, we shall owe him for four quarters.”

“He says that he will turn you out to sleep.”

“I will go.”

“The green-grocer insists on being paid. She will no longer leave her fagots. What will you warm yourself with this winter? We shall have no wood.”

“There is the sun.”

“The butcher refuses to give credit; he will not let us have any more meat.”

“That is quite right. I do not digest meat well. It is too heavy.”

“What shall we have for dinner?”

“Bread.”

“The baker demands a settlement, and says, ‘no money, no bread.’”

“That is well.”

“What will you eat?”

“We have apples in the apple-room.”

“But, Monsieur, we can’t live like that without money.”

"I have none."

The old woman went away, the old man remained alone. He fell into thought. Gavroche became thoughtful also. It was almost dark.

The first result of Gavroche's meditation was, that instead of scaling the hedge, he crouched down under it. The branches stood apart a little at the foot of the thicket.

"Come," exclaimed Gavroche mentally, "here's a nook!" and he curled up in it. His back was almost in contact with Father Mabeuf's bench. He could hear the octogenarian breathe.

Then, by way of dinner, he tried to sleep.

It was a cat-nap, with one eye open. While he dozed, Gavroche kept on the watch.

The twilight pallor of the sky blanched the earth, and the lane formed a livid line between two rows of dark bushes.

All at once, in this whitish band, two figures made their appearance. One was in front, the other some distance in the rear.

"There come two creatures," muttered Gavroche.

The first form seemed to be some elderly bourgeois, who was bent and thoughtful, dressed more than plainly, and who was walking slowly because of his age, and strolling about in the open evening air.

The second was straight, firm, slender. It regulated its pace by that of the first; but in the voluntary slowness of its gait, suppleness and agility were discernible. This figure had also something fierce and disquieting about it, the whole shape was that of what was then called *an elegant*; the hat was of good shape, the coat black, well cut, probably of fine cloth, and well fitted in at the waist. The head was held erect with a sort of robust grace, and beneath the hat the pale profile of a young man could be made out in the dim light. The profile had a rose in its mouth. This second form was well known to Gavroche; it was Montparnasse.

He could have told nothing about the other, except that he was a respectable old man.

Gavroche immediately began to take observations.

One of these two pedestrians evidently had a project connected with the other. Gavroche was well placed to watch the course of events. The bedroom had turned into a hiding-place at a very opportune moment.

Montparnasse on the hunt at such an hour, in such a place, betokened something threatening. Gavroche felt his gamin's heart moved with compassion for the old man.

What was he to do? Interfere? One weakness coming to the aid of another! It would be merely a laughing matter for Montparnasse. Gavroche did not shut his eyes to the fact that the old man, in the first place, and the child in the second, would make but two mouthfuls for that redoubtable ruffian eighteen years of age.

While Gavroche was deliberating, the attack took place, abruptly and hideously. The attack of the tiger on the wild ass, the attack of the spider on the fly. Montparnasse suddenly tossed away his rose, bounded upon the old man, seized him by the collar, grasped and elung to him, and Gavroche with difficulty restrained a scream. A moment later one of these men was underneath the other, groaning, struggling, with a knee of marble upon his breast. Only, it was not just what Gavroche had expected. The one who lay on the earth was Montparnasse; the one who was on top was the old man. All this took place a few paces distant from Gavroche.

The old man had received the shock, had returned it, and that in such a terrible fashion, that in a twinkling, the assailant and the assailed had exchanged rôles.

"Here's a hearty veteran!" thought Gavroche.

He could not refrain from clapping his hands. But it was applause wasted. It did not reach the combatants, absorbed and deafened as they were, each by the other, as their breath mingled in the struggle.

Silence ensued. Montparnasse ceased his struggles. Gavroche indulged in this aside: "Can he be dead!"

The goodman had not uttered a word, nor given vent to a

cry. He rose to his feet, and Gavroche heard him say to Montparnasse:—

“Get up.”

Montparnasse rose, but the goodman held him fast. Montparnasse’s attitude was the humiliated and furious attitude of the wolf who has been caught by a sheep.

Gavroche looked on and listened, making an effort to reinforce his eyes with his ears. He was enjoying himself immensely.

He was repaid for his conscientious anxiety in the character of a spectator. He was able to catch on the wing a dialogue which borrowed from the darkness an indescribably tragic accent. The goodman questioned, Montparnasse replied.

“How old are you?”

“Nineteen.”

“You are strong and healthy. Why do you not work?”

“It bores me.”

“What is your trade?”

“An idler.”

“Speak seriously. Can anything be done for you? What would you like to be?”

“A thief.”

A pause ensued. The old man seemed absorbed in profound thought. He stood motionless, and did not relax his hold on Montparnasse.

Every moment the vigorous and agile young ruffian indulged in the twitchings of a wild beast caught in a snare. He gave a jerk, tried a crook of the knee, twisted his limbs desperately, and made efforts to escape.

The old man did not appear to notice it, and held both his arms with one hand, with the sovereign indifference of absolute force.

The old man’s reverie lasted for some time, then, looking steadily at Montparnasse, he addressed to him in a gentle voice, in the midst of the darkness where they stood, a solemn harangue, of which Gavroche did not lose a single syllable:—

“My child, you are entering, through indolence, on one

of the most laborious of lives. Ah! You declare yourself to be an idler! prepare to toil. There is a certain formidable machine, have you seen it? It is the rolling-mill. You must be on your guard against it, it is crafty and ferocious; if it catches hold of the skirt of your coat, you will be drawn in bodily. That machine is laziness. Stop while there is yet time, and save yourself! Otherwise, it is all over with you; in a short time you will be among the gearing. Once entangled, hope for nothing more. Toil, lazybones! there is no more repose for you! The iron hand of implacable toil has seized you. You do not wish to earn your living, to have a task, to fulfil a duty! It bores you to be like other men? Well! You will be different. Labor is the law; he who rejects it will find ennui his torment. You do not wish to be a workingman, you will be a slave. Toil lets go of you on one side only to grasp you again on the other. You do not desire to be its friend, you shall be its negro slave. Ah! You would have none of the honest weariness of men, you shall have the sweat of the damned. Where others sing, you will rattle in your throat. You will see afar off, from below, other men at work; it will seem to you that they are resting. The laborer, the harvester, the sailor, the blacksmith, will appear to you in glory like the blessed spirits in paradise. What radiance surrounds the forge! To guide the plough, to bind the sheaves, is joy. The bark at liberty in the wind, what delight! Do you, lazy idler, delve, drag on, roll, march! Drag your halter. You are a beast of burden in the team of hell! Ah! To do nothing is your object. Well, not a week, not a day, not an hour shall you have free from oppression. You will be able to lift nothing without anguish. Every minute that passes will make your muscles crack. What is a feather to others will be a rock to you. The simplest things will become steep activities. Life will become monstrous all about you. To go, to come, to breathe, will be just so many terrible labors. Your lungs will produce on you the effect of weighing a hundred pounds. Whether you shall walk here rather than there, will become a problem that must be solved. Any one who wants to go out

simply gives his door a push, and there he is in the open air. If you wish to go out, you will be obliged to pierce your wall. What does every one who wants to step into the street do? He goes down stairs; you will tear up your sheets, little by little you will make of them a rope, then you will climb out of your window, and you will suspend yourself by that thread over an abyss, and it will be night, amid storm, rain, and the hurricane, and if the rope is too short, but one way of descending will remain to you, to fall. To drop hap-hazard into the gulf, from an unknown height, on what? On what is beneath, on the unknown. Or you will crawl up a chimney-flue, at the risk of burning; or you will creep through a sewer-pipe, at the risk of drowning; I do not speak of the holes that you will be obliged to mask, of the stones which you will have to take up and replace twenty times a day, of the plaster that you will have to hide in your straw pallet. A lock presents itself; the bourgeois has in his pocket a key made by a locksmith. If you wish to pass out, you will be condemned to execute a terrible work of art; you will take a large sou, you will cut it in two plates; with what tools? You will have to invent them. That is your business. Then you will hollow out the interior of these plates, taking great care of the outside, and you will make on the edges a thread, so that they can be adjusted one upon the other like a box and its cover. The top and bottom thus screwed together, nothing will be suspected. To the overseers it will be only a sou; to you it will be a box. What will you put in this box? A small bit of steel. A watch-spring, in which you will have cut teeth, and which will form a saw. With this saw, as long as a pin, and concealed in a sou, you will cut the bolt of the lock, you will sever bolts, the padlock of your chain, and the bar at your window, and the fetter on your leg. This masterpiece finished, this prodigy accomplished, all these miracles of art, address, skill, and patience executed, what will be your recompense if it becomes known that you are the author? The dungeon. There is your future. What precipices are idleness and pleasure! Do you know that to do nothing is a melan-

choly resolution? To live in idleness on the property of society! to be useless, that is to say, pernicious! This leads straight to the depth of wretchedness. Woe to the man who desires to be a parasite! He will become vermin! Ah! So it does not please you to work? Ah! You have but one thought, to drink well, to eat well, to sleep well. You will drink water, you will eat black bread, you will sleep on a plank with a fetter whose cold touch you will feel on your flesh all night long, riveted to your limbs. You will break those fetters, you will flee. That is well. You will crawl on your belly through the brushwood, and you will eat grass like the beasts of the forest. And you will be recaptured. And then you will pass years in a dungeon, riveted to a wall, groping for your jug that you may drink. gnawing at a horrible loaf of darkness which dogs would not touch, eating beans that the worms have eaten before you. You will be a wood-louse in a cellar. Ah! Have pity on yourself, you miserable young child, who were sucking at nurse less than twenty years ago, and who have, no doubt, a mother still alive! I conjure you, listen to me, I entreat you. You desire fine black cloth, varnished shoes, to have your hair curled and sweet-smelling oils on your locks, to please low women. to be handsome. You will be shaven clean, and you will wear a red blouse and wooden shoes. You want rings on your fingers, you will have an iron necklet on your neck. If you glance at a woman, you will receive a blow. And you will enter there at the age of twenty. And you will come out at fifty! You will enter young, rosy, fresh, with brilliant eyes, and all your white teeth, and your handsome, youthful hair; you will come out broken, bent, wrinkled, toothless, horrible, with white locks! Ah! my poor child, you are on the wrong road; idleness is counselling you badly; the hardest of all work is thieving. Believe me, do not undertake that painful profession of an idle man. It is not comfortable to become a rascal. It is less disagreeable to be an honest man. Now go, and ponder on what I have said to you. By the way, what did you want of me? My purse? Here it is."

And the old man, releasing Montparnasse, put his purse in the latter's hand; Montparnasse weighed it for a moment, after which he allowed it to slide gently into the back pocket of his coat, with the same mechanical precaution as though he had stolen it.

All this having been said and done, the goodman turned his back and tranquilly resumed his stroll.

"The blockhead!" muttered Montparnasse.

Who was this goodman? The reader has, no doubt, already divined.

Montparnasse watched him with amazement, as he disappeared in the dusk. This contemplation was fatal to him.

While the old man was walking away, Gavroche drew near.

Gavroche had assured himself, with a sidelong glance, that Father Mabeuf was still sitting on his bench, probably sound asleep. Then the gamin emerged from his thicket, and began to crawl after Montparnasse in the dark, as the latter stood there motionless. In this manner he came up to Montparnasse without being seen or heard, gently insinuated his hand into the back pocket of that frock-coat of fine black cloth, seized the purse, withdrew his hand, and having recourse once more to his crawling, he slipped away like an adder through the shadows. Montparnasse, who had no reason to be on his guard, and who was engaged in thought for the first time in his life, perceived nothing. When Gavroche had once more attained the point where Father Mabeuf was, he flung the purse over the hedge, and fled as fast as his legs would carry him.

The purse fell on Father Mabeuf's foot. This commotion roused him.

He bent over and picked up the purse.

He did not understand in the least, and opened it.

The purse had two compartments; in one of them there was some small change; in the other lay six napoleons.

M. Mabeuf, in great alarm, referred the matter to his house-keeper.

"That has fallen from heaven," said Mother Plutarque.

BOOK FIFTH.—THE END OF WHICH DOES NOT
RESEMBLE THE BEGINNING

CHAPTER I

SOLITUDE AND THE BARRACKS COMBINED

COSETTE'S grief, which had been so poignant and lively four or five months previously, had, without her being conscious of the fact, entered upon its convalescence. Nature, spring, youth, love for her father, the gayety of the birds and flowers, caused something almost resembling forgetfulness to filter gradually, drop by drop, into that soul, which was so virgin and so young. Was the fire wholly extinct there? Or was it merely that layers of ashes had formed? The truth is, that she hardly felt the painful and burning spot any longer.

One day she suddenly thought of Marius: "Why!" said she, "I no longer think of him."

That same week, she noticed a very handsome officer of lancers, with a wasp-like waist, a delicious uniform, the cheeks of a young girl, a sword under his arm, waxed mustaches, and a glazed schapka, passing the gate. Moreover, he had light hair, prominent blue eyes, a round face, was vain, insolent and good-looking; quite the reverse of Marius. He had a cigar in his mouth. Cosette thought that this officer doubtless belonged to the regiment in barracks in the Rue de Babylone.

On the following day, she saw him pass again. She took note of the hour.

From that time forth, was it chance? she saw him pass nearly every day.

The officer's comrades perceived that there was, in that

“badly kept” garden, behind that malicious rococo fence, a very pretty creature, who was almost always there when the handsome lieutenant,—who is not unknown to the reader, and whose name was Théodule Gillenormand,—passed by.

“See here!” they said to him, “there’s a little creature there who is making eyes at you, look.”

“Have I the time,” replied the lancer, “to look at all the girls who look at me?”

This was at the precise moment when Marius was descending heavily towards agony, and was saying: “If I could but see her before I die!”—Had his wish been realized, had he beheld Cosette at that moment gazing at the lancer, he would not have been able to utter a word, and he would have expired with grief.

Whose fault was it? No one’s.

Marius possessed one of those temperaments which bury themselves in sorrow and there abide; Cosette was one of those persons who plunge into sorrow and emerge from it again.

Cosette was, moreover, passing through that dangerous period, the fatal phase of feminine revery abandoned to itself, in which the isolated heart of a young girl resembles the tendrils of the vine which cling, as chance directs, to the capital of a marble column or to the post of a wine-shop: A rapid and decisive moment, critical for every orphan, be she rich or poor, for wealth does not prevent a bad choice; misalliances are made in very high circles, real misalliance is that of souls; and as many an unknown young man, without name, without birth, without fortune, is a marble column which bears up a temple of grand sentiments and grand ideas, so such and such a man of the world satisfied and opulent, who has polished boots and varnished words, if looked at not outside, but inside, a thing which is reserved for his wife, is nothing more than a block obscurely haunted by violent, unclean, and vinous passions; the post of a drinking-shop.

What did Cosette’s soul contain? Passion calmed or lulled to sleep; something limpid, brilliant, troubled to a certain

depth, and gloomy lower down. The image of the handsome officer was reflected in the surface. Did a souvenir linger in the depths?—Quite at the bottom?—Possibly. Cosette did not know.

A singular incident supervened.

CHAPTER II

COSETTE'S APPREHENSIONS

DURING the first fortnight in April, Jean Valjean took a journey. This, as the reader knows, happened from time to time, at very long intervals. He remained absent a day or two days at the utmost. Where did he go? No one knew, not even Cosette. Once only, on the occasion of one of these departures, she had accompanied him in a hackney-coach as far as a little blind-alley at the corner of which she read: *Impasse de la Planchette*. There he alighted, and the coach took Cosette back to the Rue de Babylone. It was usually when money was lacking in the house that Jean Valjean took these little trips.

So Jean Valjean was absent. He had said: "I shall return in three days."

That evening, Cosette was alone in the drawing-room. In order to get rid of her ennui, she had opened her piano-organ, and had begun to sing, accompanying herself the while, the chorus from *Euryanthe*: "Hunters astray in the wood!" which is probably the most beautiful thing in all the sphere of music. When she had finished, she remained wrapped in thought.

All at once, it seemed to her that she heard the sound of footsteps in the garden.

It could not be her father, he was absent; it could not be Toussaint, she was in bed, and it was ten o'clock at night.

She stepped to the shutter of the drawing-room, which was closed, and laid her ear against it.

It seemed to her that it was the tread of a man, and that he was walking very softly.

She mounted rapidly to the first floor, to her own chamber, opened a small wicket in her shutter, and peeped into the garden. The moon was at the full. Everything could be seen as plainly as by day.

There was no one there.

She opened the window. The garden was absolutely calm, and all that was visible was that the street was deserted as usual.

Cosette thought that she had been mistaken. She thought that she had heard a noise. It was a hallucination produced by the melancholy and magnificent chorus of Weber, which lays open before the mind terrified depths, which trembles before the gaze like a dizzy forest, and in which one hears the crackling of dead branches beneath the uneasy tread of the huntsmen of whom one catches a glimpse through the twilight.

She thought no more about it.

Moreover, Cosette was not very timid by nature. There flowed in her veins some of the blood of the bohemian and the adventuress who runs barefoot. It will be remembered that she was more of a lark than a dove. There was a foundation of wildness and bravery in her.

On the following day, at an earlier hour, towards nightfall, she was strolling in the garden. In the midst of the confused thoughts which occupied her, she fancied that she caught for an instant a sound similar to that of the preceding evening, as though some one were walking beneath the trees in the dusk, and not very far from her; but she told herself that nothing so closely resembles a step on the grass as the friction of two branches which have moved from side to side, and she paid no heed to it. Besides, she could see nothing.

She emerged from "the thicket"; she had still to cross a small lawn to regain the steps.

The moon, which had just risen behind her, cast Cosette's shadow in front of her upon this lawn, as she came out from the shrubbery.

Cosette halted in alarm.

Beside her shadow, the moon outlined distinctly upon the turf another shadow, which was particularly startling and terrible, a shadow which had a round hat.

It was the shadow of a man, who must have been standing on the border of the clump of shrubbery, a few paces in the rear of Cosette.

She stood for a moment without the power to speak, or cry, or call, or stir, or turn her head.

Then she summoned up all her courage, and turned round resolutely.

There was no one there.

She glanced on the ground. The figure had disappeared.

She re-entered the thicket, searched the corners boldly, went as far as the gate, and found nothing.

She felt herself absolutely chilled with terror. Was this another hallucination? What! Two days in succession! One hallucination might pass, but two hallucinations? The disquieting point about it was, that the shadow had assuredly not been a phantom. Phantoms do not wear round hats.

On the following day Jean Valjean returned. Cosette told him what she thought she had heard and seen. She wanted to be reassured and to see her father shrug his shoulders and say to her: "You are a little goose."

Jean Valjean grew anxious.

"It cannot be anything," said he.

He left her under some pretext, and went into the garden, and she saw him examining the gate with great attention.

During the night she woke up; this time she was sure, and she distinctly heard some one walking close to the flight of steps beneath her window. She ran to her little wicket and opened it. In point of fact, there was a man in the garden, with a large club in his hand. Just as she was about to scream, the moon lighted up the man's profile. It was her father. She returned to her bed, saying to herself: "He is very uneasy!"

Jean Valjean passed that night and the two succeeding

nights in the garden. Cosette saw him through the hole in her shutter.

On the third night, the moon was on the wane, and had begun to rise later; at one o'clock in the morning, possibly, she heard a loud burst of laughter and her father's voice calling her:—

“Cosette!”

She jumped out of bed, threw on her dressing-gown, and opened her window.

Her father was standing on the grass-plot below.

“I have waked you for the purpose of reassuring you,” said he; “look, there is your shadow with the round hat.”

And he pointed out to her on the turf a shadow east by the moon, and which did, indeed, bear considerable resemblance to the spectre of a man wearing a round hat. It was the shadow produced by a chimney-pipe of sheet iron, with a hood, which rose above a neighboring roof.

Cosette joined in his laughter, all her lugubrious suppositions were allayed, and the next morning, as she was at breakfast with her father, she made merry over the sinister garden haunted by the shadows of iron chimney-pots.

Jean Valjean became quite tranquil once more; as for Cosette, she did not pay much attention to the question whether the chimney-pot was really in the direction of the shadow which she had seen, or thought she had seen, and whether the moon had been in the same spot in the sky.

She did not question herself as to the peculiarity of a chimney-pot which is afraid of being caught in the act, and which retires when some one looks at its shadow, for the shadow had taken the alarm when Cosette had turned round, and Cosette had thought herself very sure of this. Cosette's serenity was fully restored. The proof appeared to her to be complete, and it quite vanished from her mind, whether there could possibly be any one walking in the garden during the evening or at night.

A few days later, however, a fresh incident occurred.

CHAPTER III

ENRICHED WITH COMMENTARIES BY TOUSSAINT .

IN the garden, near the railing on the street, there was a stone bench, screened from the eyes of the curious by a plantation of yoke-elms, but which could, in case of necessity, be reached by an arm from the outside, past the trees and the gate.

One evening during that same month of April, Jean Valjean had gone out; Cosette had seated herself on this bench after sundown. The breeze was blowing briskly in the trees. Cosette was meditating; an objectless sadness was taking possession of her little by little, that invincible sadness evoked by the evening, and which arises, perhaps, who knows, from the mystery of the tomb which is ajar at that hour.

Perhaps Fantine was within that shadow.

Cosette rose, slowly made the tour of the garden, walking on the grass drenched in dew, and saying to herself, through the species of melancholy somnambulism in which she was plunged: "Really, one needs wooden shoes for the garden at this hour. One takes cold."

She returned to the bench.

As she was about to resume her seat there, she observed on the spot which she had quitted, a tolerably large stone which had, evidently, not been there a moment before.

Cosette gazed at the stone, asking herself what it meant. All at once the idea occurred to her that the stone had not reached the bench all by itself, that some one had placed it there, that an arm had been thrust through the railing, and this idea appeared to alarm her. This time, the fear was genuine; the stone was there. No doubt was possible; she did not touch it, fled without glancing behind her, took refuge in the house, and immediately closed with shutter, bolt, and bar the door-like window opening on the flight of steps. She inquired of Toussaint:—

"Has my father returned yet?"

"Not yet, Mademoiselle."

[We have already noted once for all the fact that Toussaint stuttered. May we be permitted to dispense with it for the future. The musical notation of an infirmity is repugnant to us.]

Jean Valjean, a thoughtful man, and given to nocturnal strolls, often returned quite late at night.

"Toussaint," went on Cosette, "are you careful to thoroughly barricade the shutters opening on the garden, at least with bars, in the evening, and to put the little iron things in the little rings that close them?"

"Oh! be easy on that score, Miss."

Toussaint did not fail in her duty, and Cosette was well aware of the fact. but she could not refrain from adding:—

"It is so solitary here."

"So far as that is concerned," said Toussaint, "it is true. We might be assassinated before we had time to say *ouf!* And Monsieur does not sleep in the house, to boot. But fear nothing, Miss, I fasten the shutters up like prisons. Lone women! That is enough to make one shudder, I believe you! Just imagine, what if you were to see men enter your chamber at night and say: 'Hold your tongue!' and begin to cut your throat. It's not the dying so much; you die, for one must die, and that's all right; it's the abomination of feeling those people touch you. And then, their knives; they can't be able to cut well with them! Ah, good gracious!"

"Be quiet," said Cosette. "Fasten everything thoroughly."

Cosette, terrified by the melodrama improvised by Toussaint, and possibly, also, by the recollection of the apparitions of the past week, which recurred to her memory, dared not even say to her: "Go and look at the stone which has been placed on the bench!" for fear of opening the garden gate and allowing "the men" to enter. She saw that all the doors and windows were carefully fastened, made Toussaint go all over the house from garret to cellar, locked herself up in her own chamber, bolted her door, looked under her couch, went

to bed and slept badly. All night long she saw that big stone, as large as a mountain and full of caverns.

At sunrise,—the property of the rising sun is to make us laugh at all our terrors of the past night, and our laughter is in direct proportion to our terror which they have caused,—at sunrise Cosette, when she woke, viewed her fright as a nightmare, and said to herself: “What have I been thinking of? It is like the footsteps that I thought I heard a week or two ago in the garden at night! It is like the shadow of the chimney-pot! Am I becoming a coward?” The sun, which was glowing through the crevices in her shutters, and turning the damask curtains crimson, reassured her to such an extent that everything vanished from her thoughts, even the stone.

“There was no more a stone on the bench than there was a man in a round hat in the garden; I dreamed about the stone, as I did all the rest.”

She dressed herself, descended to the garden, ran to the bench, and broke out in a cold perspiration. The stone was there.

But this lasted only for a moment. That which is terror by night is curiosity by day.

“Bah!” said she, “come, let us see what it is.”

She lifted the stone, which was tolerably large. Beneath it was something which resembled a letter. It was a white envelope. Cosette seized it. There was no address on one side, no seal on the other. Yet the envelope, though unsealed, was not empty. Papers could be seen inside.

Cosette examined it. It was no longer alarm, it was no longer curiosity; it was a beginning of anxiety.

Cosette drew from the envelope its contents, a little notebook of paper, each page of which was numbered and bore a few lines in a very fine and rather pretty handwriting, as Cosette thought.

Cosette looked for a name; there was none. To whom was this addressed? To her, probably, since a hand had deposited the packet on her bench. From whom did it come? An irresistible fascination took possession of her; she tried to turn

away her eyes from the leaflets which were trembling in her hand, she gazed at the sky, the street, the acacias all bathed in light, the pigeons fluttering over a neighboring roof, and then her glance suddenly fell upon the manuscript, and she said to herself that she must know what it contained.

This is what she read.

CHAPTER IV

A HEART BENEATH A STONE

THE reduction of the universe to a single being, the expansion of a single being even to God, that is love.

Love is the salutation of the angels to the stars.

How sad is the soul, when it is sad through love!

What a void in the absence of the being who, by herself alone fills the world! Oh! how true it is that the beloved being becomes God. One could comprehend that God might be jealous of this had not God the Father of all evidently made creation for the soul, and the soul for love.

The glimpse of a smile beneath a white crape bonnet with a lilac curtain is sufficient to cause the soul to enter into the palace of dreams.

God is behind everything, but everything hides God. Things are black, creatures are opaque. To love a being is to render that being transparent.

Certain thoughts are prayers. There are moments when,

whatever the attitude of the body may be, the soul is on its knees.

Parted lovers beguile absence by a thousand chimerical devices, which possess, however, a reality of their own. They are prevented from seeing each other, they cannot write to each other; they discover a multitude of mysterious means to correspond. They send each other the song of the birds, the perfume of the flowers, the smiles of children, the light of the sun, the sighings of the breeze, the rays of stars, all creation. And why not? All the works of God are made to serve love. Love is sufficiently potent to charge all nature with its messages.

Oh Spring! Thou art a letter that I write to her.

The future belongs to hearts even more than it does to minds. Love, that is the only thing that can occupy and fill eternity. In the infinite, the inexhaustible is requisite.

Love participates of the soul itself. It is of the same nature. Like it, it is the divine spark: like it, it is incorruptible, indivisible, imperishable. It is a point of fire that exists within us, which is immortal and infinite, which nothing can confine, and which nothing can extinguish. We feel it burning even to the very marrow of our bones, and we see it beaming in the very depths of heaven.

Oh Love! Adorations! voluptuousness of two minds which understand each other, of two hearts which exchange with each other, of two glances which penetrate each other! You will come to me, will you not, bliss! strolls by twos in the solitudes! Blessed and radiant days! I have sometimes dreamed that from time to time hours detached themselves from the lives of the angels and came here below to traverse the destinies of men.

God can add nothing to the happiness of those who love, except to give them endless duration. After a life of love, an eternity of love is, in fact, an augmentation; but to increase in intensity even the ineffable felicity which love bestows on the soul even in this world, is impossible, even to God. God is the plenitude of heaven; love is the plenitude of man.

You look at a star for two reasons, because it is luminous, and because it is impenetrable. You have beside you a sweeter radiance and a greater mystery, woman.

All of us, whoever we may be, have our respirable beings. We lack air and we stifle. Then we die. To die for lack of love is horrible. Suffocation of the soul.

When love has fused and mingled two beings in a sacred and angelic unity, the secret of life has been discovered so far as they are concerned; they are no longer anything more than the two boundaries of the same destiny; they are no longer anything but the two wings of the same spirit. Love, soar.

On the day when a woman as she passes before you emits light as she walks, you are lost, you love. But one thing remains for you to do: to think of her so intently that she is constrained to think of you.

What love commences can be finished by God alone.

True love is in despair and is enchanted over a glove lost or a handkerchief found, and eternity is required for its devotion and its hopes. It is composed both of the infinitely great and the infinitely little.

If you are a stone, be adamant; if you are a plant, be the sensitive plant; if you are a man, be love.

Nothing suffices for love. We have happiness, we desire paradise; we possess paradise, we desire heaven.

Oh ye who love each other, all this is contained in love. Understand how to find it there. Love has contemplation as well as heaven, and more than heaven, it has voluptuousness.

“Does she still come to the Luxembourg?” “No, sir.”
“This is the church where she attends mass, is it not?” “She no longer comes here.” “Does she still live in this house?”
“She has moved away.” “Where has she gone to dwell?”
“She did not say.”

What a melancholy thing not to know the address of one’s soul!

Love has its childishness, other passions have their pettinesses. Shame on the passions which belittle man! Honor to the one which makes a child of him!

There is one strange thing, do you know it? I dwell in the night. There is a being who carried off my sky when she went away.

Oh! would that we were lying side by side in the same grave, hand in hand, and from time to time, in the darkness, gently caressing a finger,—that would suffice for my eternity!

Ye who suffer because ye love, love yet more. To die of love, is to live in it.

Love. A sombre and starry transfiguration is mingled with this torture. There is ecstasy in agony.

Oh joy of the birds! It is because they have nests that they sing.

Love is a celestial respiration of the air of paradise.

Deep hearts, sage minds, take life as God has made it; it is a long trial, an incomprehensible preparation for an unknown destiny. This destiny, the true one, begins for a man with the first step inside the tomb. Then something appears to him, and he begins to distinguish the definitive. The definitive, meditate upon that word. The living perceive the infinite; the definitive permits itself to be seen only by the dead. In the meanwhile, love and suffer, hope and contemplate. Woe, alas! to him who shall have loved only bodies, forms, appearances! Death will deprive him of all. Try to love souls, you will find them again.

I encountered in the street, a very poor young man who was in love. His hat was old, his coat was worn, his elbows were in holes; water trickled through his shoes, and the stars through his soul.

What a grand thing it is to be loved! What a far grander thing it is to love! The heart becomes heroic, by dint of passion. It is no longer composed of anything but what is pure; it no longer rests on anything that is not elevated and great. An unworthy thought can no more germinate in it, than a nettle on a glacier. The serene and lofty soul, inaccessible to vulgar passions and emotions, dominating the clouds and the shades of this world, its follies, its lies, its hatreds, its vanities, its miseries, inhabits the blue of heaven, and no longer feels anything but profound and subterranean shocks of destiny, as the crests of mountains feel the shocks of earthquake.

If there did not exist some one who loved, the sun would become extinct.

CHAPTER V

COSETTE AFTER THE LETTER

As Cosette read, she gradually fell into thought. At the very moment when she raised her eyes from the last line of the note-book, the handsome officer passed triumphantly in front of the gate,—it was his hour; Cosette thought him hideous.

She resumed her contemplation of the book. It was written in the most charming of ehirography, thought Cosette; in the same hand, but with divers inks, sometimes very black, again whitish, as when ink has been added to the inkstand, and consequently on different days. It was, then, a mind which had unfolded itself there, sigh by sigh, irregularly, without order, without choice, without object, hap-hazard. Cosette had never read anything like it. This manuscript, in which she already perceived more light than obscurity, produced upon her the effect of a half-open sanctuary. Each one of these mysterious lines shone before her eyes and inundated her heart with a strange radiance. The education which she had received had always talked to her of the soul, and never of love, very much as one might talk of the firebrand and not of the flame. This manuscript of fifteen pages suddenly and sweetly revealed to her all of love, sorrow, destiny, life, eternity, the beginning, the end. It was as if a hand had opened and suddenly flung upon her a handful of rays of light. In these few lines she felt a passionate, ardent, generous, honest nature, a sacred will, an immense sorrow, and an immense despair, a suffering heart, an ecstasy fully expanded. What was this manuscript? A letter. A letter without name, without address, without date, without signature, pressing and disinterested, an enigma composed of truths, a message of love made to be brought by an angel and read by a virgin, an appointment made beyond the bounds of earth, the love-letter of a phantom to a shade. It was an absent one, tranquil and dejected, who seemed ready

to take refuge in death and who sent to the absent love, his lady, the secret of fate, the key of life, love. This had been written with one foot in the grave and one finger in heaven. These lines, which had fallen one by one on the paper, were what might be called drops of soul.

Now, from whom could these pages come? Who could have penned them?

Cosette did not hesitate a moment. One man only.

He!

Day had dawned once more in her spirit; all had reappeared. She felt an unheard-of joy, and a profound anguish. It was he! he who had written! he was there! it was he whose arm had been thrust through that railing! While she was forgetful of him, he had found her again! But had she forgotten him? No, never! She was foolish to have thought so for a single moment. She had always loved him, always adored him. The fire had been smothered, and had smouldered for a time, but she saw all plainly now; it had but made headway, and now it had burst forth afresh, and had inflamed her whole being. This note-book was like a spark which had fallen from that other soul into hers. She felt the conflagration starting up once more.

She imbued herself thoroughly with every word of the manuscript: "Oh yes!" said she. "how perfectly I recognize all that! That is what I had already read in his eyes." As she was finishing it for the third time, Lieutenant Théodule passed the gate once more, and rattled his spurs upon the pavement. Cosette was forced to raise her eyes. She thought him insipid, silly, stupid, useless, foppish, displeasing, impertinent, and extremely ugly. The officer thought it his duty to smile at her.

She turned away as in shame and indignation. She would gladly have thrown something at his head.

She fled, re-entered the house, and shut herself up in her chamber to peruse the manuscript once more, to learn it by heart, and to dream. When she had thoroughly mastered it she kissed it and put it in her bosom.

All was over, Cosette had fallen back into deep, seraphic love. The abyss of Eden had yawned once more.

All day long, Cosette remained in a sort of bewilderment. She scarcely thought, her ideas were in the state of a tangled skein in her brain, she could not manage to conjecture anything, she hoped through a tremor, what? vague things. She dared make herself no promises, and she did not wish to refuse herself anything. Flashes of pallor passed over her countenance, and shivers ran through her frame. It seemed to her, at intervals, that she was entering the land of chimæras; she said to herself: "Is this reality?" Then she felt of the dear paper within her bosom under her gown, she pressed it to her heart, she felt its angles against her flesh; and if Jean Valjean had seen her at the moment, he would have shuddered in the presence of that luminous and unknown joy, which overflowed from beneath her eyelids.—"Oh yes!" she thought. "it is certainly he! This comes from him, and is for me!"

And she told herself that an intervention of the angels, a celestial chance, had given him back to her.

Oh transfiguration of love! Oh dreams! That celestial chance, that intervention of the angels, was a pellet of bread tossed by one thief to another thief, from the Charlemagne Courtyard to the Lion's Ditch, over the roofs of La Force.

CHAPTER VI

OLD PEOPLE ARE MADE TO GO OUT OPPORTUNELY

WHEN evening came, Jean Valjean went out; Cosette dressed herself. She arranged her hair in the most becoming manner, and she put on a dress whose bodice had received one snip of the scissors too much, and which, through this slope, permitted a view of the beginning of her throat, and was, as young girls say, "a trifle indecent." It was not in the least indecent, but it was prettier than usual. She made her toilet thus without knowing why she did so.

Did she mean to go out? No.

Was she expecting a visitor? No.

At dusk, she went down to the garden. Toussaint was busy in her kitchen, which opened on the back yard.

She began to stroll about under the trees, thrusting aside the branches from time to time with her hand, because there were some which hung very low.

In this manner she reached the bench.

The stone was still there.

She sat down, and gently laid her white hand on this stone as though she wished to caress and thank it.

All at once, she experienced that indefinable impression which one undergoes when there is some one standing behind one, even when she does not see the person.

She turned her head and rose to her feet.

It was he.

His head was bare. He appeared to have grown thin and pale. His black clothes were hardly discernible. The twilight threw a wan light on his fine brow, and covered his eyes in shadows. Beneath a veil of incomparable sweetness, he had something about him that suggested death and night. His face was illuminated by the light of the dying day, and by the thought of a soul that is taking flight.

He seemed to be not yet a ghost, and he was no longer a man.

He had flung away his hat in the thicket, a few paces distant.

Cosette, though ready to swoon, uttered no cry. She retreated slowly, for she felt herself attracted. He did not stir. By virtue of something ineffable and melancholy which enveloped him, she felt the look in his eyes which she could not see.

Cosette, in her retreat, encountered a tree and leaned against it. Had it not been for this tree, she would have fallen.

Then she heard his voice, that voice which she had really never heard, barely rising above the rustle of the leaves, and murmuring:—

“Pardon me, here I am. My heart is full. I could not live on as I was living, and I have come. Have you read what I placed there on the bench? Do you recognize me at all? Have no fear of me. It is a long time, you remember the day, since you looked at me at the Luxembourg, near the Gladiator. And the day when you passed before me? It was on the 16th of June and the 2d of July. It is nearly a year ago. I have not seen you for a long time. I inquired of the woman who let the chairs, and she told me that she no longer saw you. You lived in the Rue de l’Ouest, on the third floor, in the front apartments of a new house,—you see that I know! I followed you. What else was there for me to do? And then you disappeared. I thought I saw you pass once, while I was reading the newspapers under the arcade of the Odéon. I ran after you. But no. It was a person who had a bonnet like yours. At night I came hither. Do not be afraid, no one sees me. I come to gaze upon your windows near at hand. I walk very softly, so that you may not hear, for you might be alarmed. The other evening I was behind you, you turned round, I fled. Once, I heard you singing. I was happy. Did it affect you because I heard you singing through the shutters? That could not hurt you. No, it is not so? You see, you are my angel! Let me come sometimes; I think that I am going to die. If you only knew! I adore you. Forgive me, I speak to you, but I do not know what I am saying; I may have displeased you; have I displeased you?”

“Oh! my mother!” said she.

And she sank down as though on the point of death.

He grasped her, she fell, he took her in his arms, he pressed her close, without knowing what he was doing. He supported her, though he was tottering himself. It was as though his brain were full of smoke; lightnings darted between his lips; his ideas vanished; it seemed to him that he was accomplishing some religious act, and that he was committing a profanation. Moreover, he had not the least passion for this lovely woman whose force he felt against his breast. He was beside himself with love.

She took his hand and laid it on her heart. He felt the paper there, he stammered:—

“You love me, then?”

She replied in a voice so low that it was no longer anything more than a barely audible breath:—

“Hush! Thou knowest it!”

And she hid her blushing face on the breast of the superb and intoxicated young man.

He fell upon the bench, and she beside him. They had no words more. The stars were beginning to gleam. How did it come to pass that their lips met? How comes it to pass that the birds sing, that snow melts, that the rose unfolds, that May expands, that the dawn grows white behind the black trees on the shivering crest of the hills?

A kiss, and that was all.

Both started, and gazed into the darkness with sparkling eyes.

They felt neither the cool night, nor the cold stone, nor the damp earth, nor the wet grass; they looked at each other, and their hearts were full of thoughts. They had clasped hands unconsciously.

She did not ask him, she did not even wonder, how he had entered there, and how he had made his way into the garden. It seemed so simple to her that he should be there!

From time to time, Marius' knee touched Cosette's knee, and both shivered.

At intervals, Cosette stammered a word. Her soul fluttered on her lips like a drop of dew on a flower.

Little by little they began to talk to each other. Effusion followed silence, which is fulness. The night was serene and splendid overhead. These two beings, pure as spirits, told each other everything, their dreams, their intoxications, their ecstasies, their chimeras, their weaknesses, how they had adored each other from afar, how they had longed for each other, their despair when they had ceased to see each other. They confided to each other in an ideal intimacy, which nothing could augment, their most secret and most mysterious

thoughts. They related to each other, with candid faith in their illusions, all that love, youth, and the remains of childhood which still lingered about them, suggested to their minds. Their two hearts poured themselves out into each other in such wise, that at the expiration of a quarter of an hour, it was the young man who had the young girl's soul, and the young girl who had the young man's soul. Each became permeated with the other, they were enchanted with each other, they dazzled each other.

When they had finished, when they had told each other everything, she laid her head on his shoulder and asked him:—

“What is your name?”

“My name is Marius,” said he. “And yours?”

“My name is Cosette.”

BOOK SIXTH.—LITTLE GAVROCHE

CHAPTER I

THE MALICIOUS PLAYFULNESS OF THE WIND

SINCE 1823, when the tavern of Montfermeil was on the way to shipwreck and was being gradually engulfed, not in the abyss of a bankruptcy, but in the cesspool of petty debts, the Thénardier pair had had two other children; both males. That made five; two girls and three boys.

Madame Thénardier had got rid of the last two, while they were still young and very small, with remarkable luck.

Got rid of is the word. There was but a mere fragment of nature in that woman. A phenomenon, by the way, of which there is more than one example extant. Like the *Maréchale de La Mothe-Houdaneourt*, the Thénardier was a mother to her daughters only. There her maternity ended. Her hatred of the human race began with her own sons. In the direction of her sons her evil disposition was uncompromising, and her heart had a lugubrious wall in that quarter. As the reader has seen, she detested the eldest; she cursed the other two. Why? Because. The most terrible of motives, the most unanswerable of retorts—Because. “I have no need of a litter of squalling brats,” said this mother.

Let us explain how the Thénardiens had succeeded in getting rid of their last two children; and even in drawing profit from the operation.

The woman Magnon, who was mentioned a few pages further back, was the same one who had succeeded in making old Gillenormand support the two children which she had had. She lived on the *Quai des Célestins*, at the corner of this an-

cient street of the Petit-Musc which afforded her the opportunity of changing her evil repute into good odor. The reader will remember the great epidemic of croup which ravaged the river districts of the Seine in Paris thirty-five years ago, and of which science took advantage to make experiments on a grand scale as to the efficacy of inhalations of alum, so beneficially replaced at the present day by the external tincture of iodine. During this epidemic, the Magnon lost both her boys, who were still very young, one in the morning, the other in the evening of the same day. This was a blow. These children were precious to their mother; they represented eighty francs a month. These eighty francs were punctually paid in the name of M. Gillenormand, by collector of his rents, M. Barge, a retired tip-staff, in the Rue du Roi-de-Sicile. The children dead, the income was at an end. The Magnon sought an expedient. In that dark free-masonry of evil of which she formed a part, everything is known, all secrets are kept, and all lend mutual aid. Magnon needed two children; the Thénardiens had two. The same sex, the same age. A good arrangement for the one, a good investment for the other. The little Thénardiens became little Magnons. Magnon quitted the Quai des Célestins and went to live in the Rue Clocheperce. In Paris, the identity which binds an individual to himself is broken between one street and another.

The registry office being in no way warned, raised no objections, and the substitution was effected in the most simple manner in the world. Only, the Thénardier exacted for this loan of her children, ten francs a month, which Magnon promised to pay, and which she actually did pay. It is unnecessary to add that M. Gillenormand continued to perform his compact. He came to see the children every six months. He did not perceive the change. "Monsieur," Magnon said to him, "how much they resemble you!"

Thénardier, to whom avatars were easy, seized this occasion to become Jondrette. His two daughters and Gavroche had hardly had time to discover that they had two little brothers. When a certain degree of misery is reached, one is

overpowered with a sort of spectral indifference, and one regards human beings as though they were spectres. Your nearest relations are often no more for you than vague shadowy forms, barely outlined against a nebulous background of life and easily confounded again with the invisible.

On the evening of the day when she had handed over her two little ones to Magnon, with express intention of renouncing them forever, the Thénardier had felt, or had appeared to feel, a scruple. She said to her husband: "But this is abandoning our children!" Thénardier, masterful and phlegmatic, cauterized the scruple with this saying: "Jean Jacques Rousseau did even better!" From scruples, the mother proceeded to uneasiness: "But what if the police were to annoy us? Tell me, Monsieur Thénardier, is what we have done permissible?" Thénardier replied: "Everything is permissible. No one will see anything but true blue in it. Besides, no one has any interest in looking closely after children who have not a sou."

Magnon was a sort of fashionable woman in the sphere of crime. She was careful about her toilet. She shared her lodgings, which were furnished in an affected and wretched style, with a clever gallicized English thief. This English woman, who had become a naturalized Parisienne, recommended by very wealthy relations, intimately connected with the medals in the Library and Mademoiselle Mar's diamonds, became celebrated later on in judicial accounts. She was called *Mamselle Miss*.

The two little creatures who had fallen to Magnon had no reason to complain of their lot. Recommended by the eighty francs, they were well cared for, as is everything from which profit is derived; they were neither badly clothed, nor badly fed; they were treated almost like "little gentlemen."—better by their false mother than by their real one. Magnon played the lady, and talked no thieves' slang in their presence.

Thus passed several years. Thénardier augured well from the fact. One day, he chanced to say to Magnon as she handed

him his monthly stipend of ten francs: "The father must give them some education."

All at once, these two poor children, who had up to that time been protected tolerably well, even by their evil fate, were abruptly hurled into life and forced to begin it for themselves.

A wholesale arrest of malefactors, like that in the Jondrette garret, necessarily complicated by investigations and subsequent incarcerations, is a veritable disaster for that hideous and occult counter-society which pursues its existence beneath public society; an adventure of this description entails all sorts of catastrophes in that sombre world. The Thénardier catastrophe involved the catastrophe of Magnon.

One day, a short time after Magnon had handed to Éponine the note relating to the Rue Plumet, a sudden raid was made by the police in the Rue Clocheperce; Magnon was seized, as was also Mamselle Miss; and all the inhabitants of the house, which was of a suspicious character, were gathered into the net. While this was going on, the two little boys were playing in the back yard, and saw nothing of the raid. When they tried to enter the house again, they found the door fastened and the house empty. A cobbler opposite called them to him, and delivered to them a paper which "their mother" had left for them. On this paper there was an address: *M. Barge, collector of rents, Rue du Roi-de-Sicile, No. 8*. The proprietor of the stall said to them: "You cannot live here any longer. Go there. It is near by. The first street on the left. Ask your way from this paper."

The children set out, the elder leading the younger, and holding in his hand the paper which was to guide them. It was cold, and his benumbed little fingers could not close very firmly, and they did not keep a very good hold on the paper. At the corner of the Rue Clocheperce, a gust of wind tore it from him, and as night was falling, the child was not able to find it again.

They began to wander aimlessly through the streets.

CHAPTER II

IN WHICH LITTLE GAVROCHE EXTRACTS PROFIT FROM NAPOLEON THE GREAT

SPRING in Paris is often traversed by harsh and piercing breezes which do not precisely chill but freeze one; these north winds which sadden the most beautiful days produce exactly the effect of those puffs of cold air which enter a warm room through the cracks of a badly fitting door or window. It seems as though the gloomy door of winter had remained ajar, and as though the wind were pouring through it. In the spring of 1832, the epoch when the first great epidemic of this century broke out in Europe, these north gales were more harsh and piercing than ever. It was a door even more glacial than that of winter which was ajar. It was the door of the sepulchre. In these winds one felt the breath of the cholera.

From a meteorological point of view, these cold winds possessed this peculiarity, that they did not preclude a strong electric tension. Frequent storms, accompanied by thunder and lightning, burst forth at this epoch.

One evening, when these gales were blowing rudely, to such a degree that January seemed to have returned and that the bourgeois had resumed their cloaks, Little Gavroche, who was always shivering gayly under his rags, was standing as though in ecstasy before a wig-maker's shop in the vicinity of the Orme-Saint-Gervais. He was adorned with a woman's woollen shawl, picked up no one knows where, and which he had converted into a neck comforter. Little Gavroche appeared to be engaged in intent admiration of a wax bride, in a low-necked dress, and crowned with orange-flowers, who was revolving in the window, and displaying her smile to passers-by, between two argand lamps; but in reality, he was taking an observation of the shop, in order to discover whether he could not "prig" from the shop-front a cake of soap, which

he would then proceed to sell for a sou to a "hair-dresser" in the suburbs. He had often managed to breakfast off of such a roll. He called his species of work, for which he possessed special aptitude, "shaving barbers."

While contemplating the bride, and eyeing the cake of soap, he muttered between his teeth: "Tuesday. It was not Tuesday. Was it Tuesday? Perhaps it was Tuesday. Yes, it was Tuesday."

No one has ever discovered to what this monologue referred.

Yes, perchance, this monologue had some connection with the last occasion on which he had dined, three days before, for it was now Friday.

The barber in his shop, which was warmed by a good stove, was shaving a customer and casting a glance from time to time at the enemy, that freezing and impudent street urehin both of whose hands were in his pockets, but whose mind was evidently unsheathed.

While Gavroche was scrutinizing the shop-window and the cakes of windsor soap, two children of unequal stature, very neatly dressed, and still smaller than himself, one apparently about seven years of age, the other five, timidly turned the handle and entered the shop, with a request for something or other, alms possibly, in a plaintive murmur which resembled a groan rather than a prayer. They both spoke at once, and their words were unintelligible because sobs broke the voice of the younger, and the teeth of the elder were chattering with cold. The barber wheeled round with a furious look, and without abandoning his razor, thrust back the elder with his left hand and the younger with his knee, and slammed his door, saying: "The idea of coming in and freezing everybody for nothing!"

The two children resumed their march in tears. In the meantime, a cloud had risen; it had begun to rain.

Little Gavroche ran after them and accosted them:—

"What's the matter with you, brats?"

"We don't know where we are to sleep," replied the elder.

"Is that all?" said Gavroche. "A great matter, truly. The idea of bawling about that. They must be greenies!"

And adopting, in addition to his superiority, which was rather bantering, an accent of tender authority and gentle patronage:—

"Come along with me, young 'uns!"

"Yes, sir," said the elder.

And the two children followed him as they would have followed an archbishop. They had stopped crying.

Gavroche led them up the Rue Saint-Antoine in the direction of the Bastille.

As Gavroche walked along, he cast an indignant backward glance at the barber's shop.

"That fellow has no heart, the whiting,"¹ he muttered. "He's an Englishman."

A woman who caught sight of these three marching in a file, with Gavroche at their head, burst into noisy laughter. This laugh was wanting in respect towards the group.

"Good day, Mamselle Omnibus," said Gavroche to her.

An instant later, the wig-maker occurred to his mind once more, and he added:—

"I am making a mistake in the beast; he's not a whiting, he's a serpent. Barber, I'll go and fetch a locksmith, and I'll have a bell hung to your tail."

This wig-maker had rendered him aggressive. As he strode over a gutter, he apostrophized a bearded portress who was worthy to meet Faust on the Brocken, and who had a broom in her hand.

"Madam," said he, "so you are going out with your horse?"

And thereupon, he spattered the polished boots of a pedestrian.

"You scamp!" shouted the furious pedestrian.

Gavroche elevated his nose above his shawl.

"Is Monsieur complaining?"

"Of you!" ejaculated the man.

¹*Merlan*: a sobriquet given to hairdressers because they are white with powder.

"The office is closed," said Gavroche, "I do not receive any more complaints."

In the meanwhile, as he went on up the street, he perceived a beggar-girl, thirteen or fourteen years old, and clad in so short a gown that her knees were visible, lying thoroughly chilled under a *porte-cochère*. The little girl was getting to be too old for such a thing. Growth does play these tricks. The petticoat becomes short at the moment when nudity becomes indecent.

"Poor girl!" said Gavroche. "She hasn't even trousers. Hold on, take this."

And unwinding all the comfortable woollen which he had around his neck, he flung it on the thin and purple shoulders of the beggar-girl, where the scarf became a shawl once more.

The child stared at him in astonishment, and received the shawl in silence. When a certain stage of distress has been reached in his misery, the poor man no longer groans over evil, no longer returns thanks for good.

That done: "Brrr!" said Gavroche, who was shivering more than Saint Martin, for the latter retained one-half of his cloak.

At this *brrr!* the downpour of rain, redoubled in its spite, became furious. The wicked skies punish good deeds.

"Ah, come now!" exclaimed Gavroche, "what's the meaning of this? It's re-raining! Good Heavens, if it goes on like this, I shall stop my subscription."

And he set out on the march once more.

"It's all right," he resumed, casting a glance at the beggar-girl, as she coiled up under the shawl, "she's got a famous peel."

And looking up at the clouds he exclaimed:—

"Caught!"

The two children followed close on his heels.

As they were passing one of these heavy grated lattices, which indicate a baker's shop, for bread is put behind bars like gold, Gavroche turned round:—

"Ah, by the way, brats, have we dined?"

"Monsieur," replied the elder, "we have had nothing to eat since this morning."

"So you have neither father nor mother?" resumed Gavroche majestically.

"Excuse us, sir, we have a papa and a mamma, but we don't know where they are."

"Sometimes that's better than knowing where they are," said Gavroche, who was a thinker.

"We have been wandering about these two hours," continued the elder, "we have hunted for things at the corners of the streets, but we have found nothing."

"I know," ejaculated Gavroche, "it's the dogs who eat everything."

He went on, after a pause:—

"Ah! we have lost our authors. We don't know what we have done with them. This should not be, gamins. It's stupid to let old people stray off like that. Come now! we must have a snooze all the same."

However, he asked them no questions. What was more simple than that they should have no dwelling place!

The elder of the two children, who had almost entirely recovered the prompt heedlessness of childhood, uttered this exclamation:—

"It's queer, all the same. Mamma told us that she would take us to get a blessed spray on Palm Sunday."

"Bosh," said Gavroche.

"Mamma," resumed the elder, "is a lady who lives with Mamselle Miss."

"Tanflûte!" retorted Gavroche.

Meanwhile he had halted, and for the last two minutes he had been feeling and fumbling in all sorts of nooks which his rags contained.

At last he tossed his head with an air intended to be merely satisfied, but which was triumphant, in reality.

"Let us be calm, young 'uns. Here's supper for three."

And from one of his pockets he drew forth a sou.

Without allowing the two urehins time for amazement, he

pushed both of them before him into the baker's shop, and flung his sou on the counter, crying:—

“Boy! five eentimes' worth of bread.”

The baker, who was the proprietor in person, took up a loaf and a knife.

“In three pieces, my boy!” went on Gavroche.

And he added with dignity:—

“There are three of us.”

And seeing that the baker, after scrutinizing the three customers, had taken down a black loaf, he thrust his finger far up his nose with an inhalation as imperious as though he had had a pinch of the great Frederick's snuff on the tip of his thumb, and hurled this indignant apostrophe full in the baker's face:—

“Keksekça?”

Those of our readers who might be tempted to espy in this interpellation of Gavroche's to the baker a Russian or a Polish word, or one of those savage eries which the Yoways and the Botocudos hurl at each other from bank to bank of a river, athwart the solitudes, are warned that it is a word which they [our readers] utter every day, and which takes the place of the phrase: “Qu'est-ce que c'est que cela?” The baker understood perfectly, and replied:—

“Well! It's bread, and very good bread of the second quality.”

“You mean *larton brutal* [black bread]!” retorted Gavroche, calmly and coldly disdainful. “White bread, boy! white bread [*larton savonné*]! I'm standing treat.”

The baker could not repress a smile, and as he cut the white bread he surveyed them in a compassionate way which shocked Gavroche.

“Come, now, baker's boy!” said he, “what are you taking our measure like that for?”

All three of them placed end to end would have hardly made a measure.

When the bread was cut, the baker threw the sou into his drawer, and Gavroche said to the two children:—

"Grub away."

The little boys stared at him in surprise.

Gavroche began to laugh.

"Ah! hullo, that's so! they don't understand yet, they're too small."

And he repeated:—

"Eat away."

At the same time, he held out a piece of bread to each of them.

And thinking that the elder, who seemed to him the more worthy of his conversation, deserved some special encouragement and ought to be relieved from all hesitation to satisfy his appetite, he added, as he handed him the largest share:—

"Ram that into your muzzle."

One piece was smaller than the others; he kept this for himself.

The poor children, including Gavroche, were famished. As they tore their bread apart in big mouthfuls, they blocked up the shop of the baker, who, now that they had paid their money, looked angrily at them.

"Let's go into the street again," said Gavroche.

They set off once more in the direction of the Bastille.

From time to time, as they passed the lighted shop-windows, the smallest halted to look at the time on a leaden watch which was suspended from his neck by a cord.

"Well, he is a very green 'un," said Gavroche.

Then, becoming thoughtful, he muttered between his teeth:—

"All the same, if I had charge of the babes I'd look 'em up better than that."

Just as they were finishing their morsel of bread, and had reached the angle of that gloomy Rue des Ballets, at the other end of which the low and threatening wicket of La Force was visible:—

"Hullo, is that you, Gavroche?" said some one.

"Hullo, is that you, Montparnasse?" said Gavroche.

A man had just accosted the street urchin, and the man was

no other than Montparnasse in disguise, with blue spectacles, but recognizable to Gavroche.

"The bow-wows!" went on Gavroche, "you've got a hide the color of a linseed plaster, and blue specs like a doctor. You're putting on style, 'pon my word!"

"Hush!" ejaculated Montparnasse, "not so loud."

And he drew Gavroche hastily out of range of the lighted shops.

The two little ones followed mechanically, holding each other by the hand.

When they were ensconced under the arch of a portecochère, sheltered from the rain and from all eyes:—

"Do you know where I'm going?" demanded Montparnasse

"To the Abbey of Ascend-with-Regret,"¹ replied Gavroche.

"Joker!"

And Montparnasse went on:—

"I'm going to find Babet."

"Ah!" exclaimed Gavroche, "so her name is Babet."

Montparnasse lowered his voice:—

"Not she, he."

"Ah! Babet."

"Yes, Babet."

"I thought he was buckled."

"He has undone the buckle," replied Montparnasse.

And he rapidly related to the gamin how, on the morning of that very day, Babet, having been transferred to La Conciergerie, had made his escape, by turning to the left instead of to the right in "the police office."

Gavroche expressed his admiration for this skill.

"What a dentist!" he cried.

Montparnasse added a few details as to Babet's flight, and ended with:—

"Oh! That's not all."

Gavroche, as he listened, had seized a cane that Montparnasse held in his hand, and mechanically pulled at the upper part, and the blade of a dagger made its appearance.

¹The scaffold.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, pushing the dagger back in haste, "you have brought along your gendarme disguised as a bourgeois."

Montparnasse winked.

"The deuce!" resumed Gavroche, "so you're going to have a bout with the bobbies?"

"You can't tell," replied Montparnasse with an indifferent air. "It's always a good thing to have a pin about one."

Gavroche persisted:—

"What are you up to to-night?"

Again Montparnasse took a grave tone, and said, mouthing every syllable: "Things."

And abruptly changing the conversation:—

"By the way!"

"What?"

"Something happened t'other day. Fancy. I meet a bourgeois. He makes me a present of a sermon and his purse. I put it in my pocket. A minute later, I feel in my pocket. There's nothing there."

"Except the sermon," said Gavroche.

"But you," went on Montparnasse, "where are you bound for now?"

Gavroche pointed to his two protégés, and said:—

"I'm going to put these infants to bed."

"Whereabouts is the bed?"

"At my house."

"Where's your house?"

"At my house."

"So you have a lodging?"

"Yes, I have."

"And where is your lodging?"

"In the elephant," said Gavroche.

Montparnasse, though not naturally inclined to astonishment, could not restrain an exclamation.

"In the elephant!"

"Well, yes, in the elephant!" retorted Gavroche. "Kek-gaa?"

This is another word of the language which no one writes, and which every one speaks.

Kekçaa signifies: *Qu'est que c'est que cela a?* [What's the matter with that?]

The urchin's profound remark recalled Montparnasse to calmness and good sense. He appeared to return to better sentiments with regard to Gavroche's lodging.

"Of course," said he, "yes, the elephant. Is it comfortable there?"

"Very," said Gavroche. "It's really bully there. There ain't any draughts, as there are under the bridges."

"How do you get in?"

"Oh, I get in."

"So there is a hole?" demanded Montparnasse.

"Parbleu! I should say so. But you mustn't tell. It's between the fore legs. The bobbies haven't seen it."

"And you climb up? Yes, I understand."

"A turn of the hand, cric, crac, and it's all over, no one there."

After a pause, Gavroche added:—

"I shall have a ladder for these children."

Montparnasse burst out laughing:—

"Where the devil did you pick up those young 'uns?"

Gavroche replied with great simplicity:—

"They are some brats that a wig-maker made me a present of."

Meanwhile, Montparnasse had fallen to thinking:—

"You recognized me very readily," he muttered.

He took from his pocket two small objects which were nothing more than two quills wrapped in cotton, and thrust one up each of his nostrils. This gave him a different nose.

"That changes you," remarked Gavroche, "you are less homely so, you ought to keep them on all the time."

Montparnasse was a handsome fellow, but Gavroche was a tease.

"Seriously," demanded Montparnasse, "how do you like me so?"

The sound of his voice was different also. In a twinkling, Montparnasse had become unrecognizable.

"Oh! Do play *Porriehinelle* for us!" exclaimed Gavroche.

The two children, who had not been listening up to this point, being occupied themselves in thrusting their fingers up their noses, drew near at this name, and stared at Montparnasse with dawning joy and admiration.

Unfortunately, Montparnasse was troubled.

He laid his hand on Gavroche's shoulder, and said to him, emphasizing his words: "Listen to what I tell you, boy! if I were on the square with my dog, my knife, and my wife, and if you were to squander ten sous on me, I wouldn't refuse to work, but this isn't Shrove Tuesday."

This odd phrase produced a singular effect on the gamin. He wheeled round hastily, darted his little sparkling eyes about him with profound attention, and perceived a police sergeant standing with his back to them a few paces off. Gavroche allowed an: "Ah! good!" to escape him, but immediately suppressed it, and shaking Montparnasse's hand:—

"Well, good evening," said he, "I'm going off to my elephant with my brats. Supposing that you should need me some night, you can come and hunt me up there. I lodge on the entresol. There is no porter. You will inquire for Monsieur Gavroche."

"Very good," said Montparnasse.

And they parted, Montparnasse betaking himself in the direction of the Grève, and Gavroche towards the Bastille. The little one of five, dragged along by his brother who was dragged by Gavroche, turned his head back several times to watch "*Porriehinelle*" as he went.

The ambiguous phrase by means of which Montparnasse had warned Gavroche of the presence of the policeman, contained no other talisman than the assonance *dig* repeated five or six times in different forms. This syllable, *dig*, uttered alone or artistically mingled with the words of a phrase, means: "Take care, we can no longer talk freely." There was besides, in Montparnasse's sentence, a literary beauty which

was lost upon Gavroche, that is *mon dogue, ma dague et ma digue*, a slang expression of the Temple, which signifies my dog, my knife, and my wife, greatly in vogue among clowns and the red-tails in the great century when Molière wrote and Callot drew.

Twenty years ago, there was still to be seen in the south-west corner of the Place de la Bastille, near the basin of the canal, excavated in the ancient ditch of the fortress-prison, a singular monument, which has already been effaced from the memories of Parisians, and which deserved to leave some trace, for it was the idea of a "member of the Institute, the General-in-chief of the army of Egypt."

We say monument, although it was only a rough model. But this model itself, a marvellous sketch, the grandiose skeleton of an idea of Napoleon's, which successive gusts of wind have carried away and thrown, on each occasion, still further from us, had become historical and had acquired a certain definiteness which contrasted with its provisional aspect. It was an elephant forty feet high, constructed of timber and masonry, bearing on its back a tower which resembled a house, formerly painted green by some dauber, and now painted black by heaven, the wind, and time. In this deserted and unprotected corner of the place, the broad brow of the colossus, his trunk, his tusks, his tower, his enormous crupper, his four feet, like columns produced, at night, under the starry heavens, a surprising and terrible form. It was a sort of symbol of popular force. It was sombre, mysterious, and immense. It was some mighty, visible phantom, one knew not what, standing erect beside the invisible spectre of the Bastille.

Few strangers visited this edifice, no passer-by looked at it. It was falling into ruins; every season the plaster which detached itself from its sides formed hideous wounds upon it. "The *ædiles*," as the expression ran in elegant dialect, had forgotten it ever since 1814. There it stood in its corner, melancholy, sick, crumbling, surrounded by a rotten palisade, soiled continually by drunken coachmen; cracks meandered athwart its belly, a lath projected from its tail, tall grass

flourished between its legs; and, as the level of the place had been rising all around it for a space of thirty years, by that slow and continuous movement which insensibly elevates the soil of large towns, it stood in a hollow, and it looked as though the ground were giving way beneath it. It was unclean, despised, repulsive, and superb, ugly in the eyes of the bourgeois, melancholy in the eyes of the thinker. There was something about it of the dirt which is on the point of being swept out, and something of the majesty which is on the point of being decapitated. As we have said, at night, its aspect changed. Night is the real element of everything that is dark. As soon as twilight descended, the old elephant became transfigured; he assumed a tranquil and redoubtable appearance in the formidable serenity of the shadows. Being of the past, he belonged to night; and obscurity was in keeping with his grandeur.

This rough, squat, heavy, hard, austere, almost mis-shapen, but assuredly majestic monument, stamped with a sort of magnificent and savage gravity, has disappeared, and left to reign in peace, a sort of gigantic stove, ornamented with its pipe, which has replaced the sombre fortress with its nine towers, very much as the bourgeoisie replaces the feudal classes. It is quite natural that a stove should be the symbol of an epoch in which a pot contains power. This epoch will pass away, people have already begun to understand that, if there can be force in a boiler, there can be no force except in the brain; in other words, that which leads and drags on the world, is not locomotives, but ideas. Harness locomotives to ideas,—that is well done; but do not mistake the horse for the rider.

At all events, to return to the Place de la Bastille, the architect of this elephant succeeded in making a grand thing out of plaster; the architect of the stove has succeeded in making a pretty thing out of bronze.

This stove-pipe, which has been baptized by a sonorous name, and called the column of July, this monument of a revolution that miscarried, was still enveloped in 1832, in an

immense shirt of woodwork, which we regret, for our part, and by a vast plank enclosure, which completed the task of isolating the elephant.

It was towards this corner of the place, dimly lighted by the reflection of a distant street lamp, that the gamin guided his two "brats."

The reader must permit us to interrupt ourselves here and to remind him that we are dealing with simple reality, and that twenty years ago, the tribunals were called upon to judge, under the charge of vagabondage, and mutilation of a public monument, a child who had been caught asleep in this very elephant of the Bastille. This fact noted, we proceed.

On arriving in the vicinity of the colossus, Gavroche comprehended the effect which the infinitely great might produce on the infinitely small, and said:—

"Don't be scared, infants."

Then he entered through a gap in the fence into the elephant's enclosure and helped the young ones to clamber through the breach. The two children, somewhat frightened, followed Gavroche without uttering a word, and confided themselves to this little Providence in rags which had given them bread and had promised them a shelter.

There, extended along the fence, lay a ladder which by day served the laborers in the neighboring timber-yard. Gavroche raised it with remarkable vigor, and placed it against one of the elephant's forelegs. Near the point where the ladder ended, a sort of black hole in the belly of the colossus could be distinguished.

Gavroche pointed out the ladder and the hole to his guests, and said to them:—

"Climb up and go in."

The two little boys exchanged terrified glances.

"You're afraid, brats!" exclaimed Gavroche.

And he added:—

"You shall see!"

He clasped the rough leg of the elephant, and in a twinkling,

without deigning to make use of the ladder, he had reached the aperture. He entered it as an adder slips through a crevice, and disappeared within, and an instant later, the two children saw his head, which looked pale, appear vaguely, on the edge of the shadowy hole, like a wan and whitish spectre.

"Well!" he exclaimed, "climb up, young 'uns! You'll see how snug it is here! Come up, you!" he said to the elder, "I'll lend you a hand."

The little fellows nudged each other, the gamin frightened and inspired them with confidence at one and the same time, and then, it was raining very hard. The elder one undertook the risk. The younger, on seeing his brother climbing up, and himself left alone between the paws of this huge beast, felt greatly inclined to cry, but he did not dare.

The elder lad climbed, with uncertain steps, up the rungs of the ladder; Gavroche, in the meanwhile, encouraging him with exclamations like a fencing-master to his pupils, or a muleteer to his mules.

"Don't be afraid!—That's it!—Come on!—Put your feet there!—Give us your hand here!—Boldly!"

And when the child was within reach, he seized him suddenly and vigorously by the arm, and pulled him towards him.

"Nabbed!" said he.

The brat had passed through the crack.

"Now," said Gavroche, "wait for me. Be so good as to take a seat, Monsieur."

And making his way out of the hole as he had entered it, he slipped down the elephant's leg with the agility of a monkey, landed on his feet in the grass, grasped the child of five round the body, and planted him fairly in the middle of the ladder, then he began to climb up behind him, shouting to the elder:—

"I'm going to boost him, do you tug."

And in another instant, the small lad was pushed, dragged, pulled, thrust, stuffed into the hole, before he had time to recover himself, and Gavroche, entering behind him, and re-

pulsing the ladder with a kick which sent it flat on the grass, began to clap his hands and to cry:—

“Here we are! Long live General Lafayette!”

This explosion over, he added:—

“Now, young `uns, you are in my house.”

Gavroche was at home, in fact.

Oh, unforeseen utility of the useless! Charity of great things! Goodness of giants! This huge monument, which had embodied an idea of the Emperor's, had become the box of a street urchin. The brat had been accepted and sheltered by the colossus. The bourgeois-decked out in their Sunday finery who passed the elephant of the Bastille, were fond of saying as they scanned it disdainfully with their prominent eyes: “What's the good of that?” It served to save from the cold, the frost, the hail, and rain, to shelter from the winds of winter, to preserve from slumber in the mud which produces fever, and from slumber in the snow which produces death, a little being who had no father, no mother, no bread, no clothes, no refuge. It served to receive the innocent whom society repulsed. It served to diminish public crime. It was a lair open to one against whom all doors were shut. It seemed as though the miserable old mastodon, invaded by vermin and oblivion, covered with warts, with mould, and ulcers, tottering, worm-eaten, abandoned, condemned, a sort of mendicant colossus, asking alms in vain with a benevolent look in the midst of the cross-roads, had taken pity on that other mendicant, the poor pygmy, who roamed without shoes to his feet, without a roof over his head, blowing on his fingers, clad in rags, fed on rejected scraps. That was what the elephant of the Bastille was good for. This idea of Napoleon, disdained by men, had been taken back by God. That which had been merely illustrious, had become august. In order to realize his thought, the Emperor should have had porphyry, brass, iron, gold, marble; the old collection of planks, beams and plaster sufficed for God. The Emperor had had the dream of a genius; in that Titanic elephant, armed, prodigious, with trunk uplifted, bearing its tower and scattering on all sides its merry and

vivifying waters, he wished to incarnate the people. God had done a grander thing with it, he had lodged a child there.

The hole through which Gavroche had entered was a breach which was hardly visible from the outside, being concealed, as we have stated, beneath the elephant's belly, and so narrow that it was only cats and homeless children who could pass through it.

"Let's begin," said Gavroche, "by telling the porter that we are not at home."

And plunging into the darkness with the assurance of a person who is well acquainted with his apartments, he took a plank and stopped up the aperture.

Again Gavroche plunged into the obscurity. The children heard the crackling of the match thrust into the phosphoric bottle. The chemical match was not yet in existence; at that epoch the Fumade steel represented progress.

A sudden light made them blink; Gavroche had just managed to ignite one of those bits of cord dipped in resin which are called *cellar rats*. The *cellar rat*, which emitted more smoke than light, rendered the interior of the elephant confusedly visible.

Gavroche's two guests glanced about them, and the sensation which they experienced was something like that which one would feel if shut up in the great tun of Heidelberg, or, better still, like what Jonah must have felt in the biblical belly of the whale. An entire and gigantic skeleton appeared enveloping them. Above, a long brown beam, whence started at regular distances, massive, arching ribs, represented the vertebral column with its sides, stalactites of plaster depended from them like entrails, and vast spiders' webs stretching from side to side, formed dirty diaphragms. Here and there, in the corners, were visible large blackish spots which had the appearance of being alive, and which changed places rapidly with an abrupt and frightened movement.

Fragments which had fallen from the elephant's back into his belly had filled up the cavity, so that it was possible to walk upon it as on a floor.

The smaller child nestled up against his brother, and whispered to him:—

“It’s black.”

This remark drew an exclamation from Gavroche. The petrified air of the two brats rendered some shock necessary.

“What’s that you are gabbling about there?” he exclaimed. “Are you scoffing at me? Are you turning up your noses? Do you want the Tuileries? Are you brutes? Come, say! I warn you that I don’t belong to the regiment of simpletons. Ah, come now, are you brats from the Pope’s establishment?”

A little roughness is good in cases of fear. It is reassuring. The two children drew close to Gavroche.

Gavroche, paternally touched by this confidence, passed from grave to gentle, and addressing the smaller:—

“Stupid,” said he, accenting the insulting word, with a caressing intonation, “it’s outside that it is black. Outside it’s raining, here it does not rain; outside it’s cold, here there’s not an atom of wind; outside there are heaps of people, here there’s no one; outside there ain’t even the moon, here there’s my candle, confound it!”

The two children began to look upon the apartment with less terror; but Gavroche allowed them no more time for contemplation.

“Quick,” said he.

And he pushed them towards what we are very glad to be able to call the end of the room.

There stood his bed.

Gavroche’s bed was complete; that is to say, it had a mattress, a blanket, and an alcove with curtains.

The mattress was a straw mat, the blanket a rather large strip of gray woollen stuff, very warm and almost new. This is what the alcove consisted of:—

Three rather long poles, thrust into and consolidated, with the rubbish which formed the floor, that is to say, the belly of the elephant, two in front and one behind, and united by a rope at their summits, so as to form a pyramidal bundle. This cluster supported a trellis-work of brass wire which was

simply placed upon it, but artistically applied, and held by fastenings of iron wire, so that it enveloped all three holes. A row of very heavy stones kept this network down to the floor so that nothing could pass under it. This grating was nothing else than a piece of the brass screens with which aviaries are covered in menageries. Gavroche's bed stood as in a cage, behind this net. The whole resembled an Esquimaux tent.

This trellis-work took the place of curtains.

Gavroche moved aside the stones which fastened the net down in front, and the two folds of the net which lapped over each other fell apart.

"Down on all fours, brats!" said Gavroche.

He made his guests enter the cage with great precaution, then he crawled in after them, pulled the stones together, and closed the opening hermetically again.

All three had stretched out on the mat. Gavroche still had the *cellar rat* in his hand.

"Now," said he, "go to sleep! I'm going to suppress the candelabra."

"Monsieur," the elder of the brothers asked Gavroche, pointing to the netting, "what's that for?"

"That," answered Gavroche gravely, "is for the rats. Go to sleep!"

Nevertheless, he felt obliged to add a few words of instruction for the benefit of these young creatures, and he continued:—

"It's a thing from the Jardin des Plantes. It's used for fierce animals. There's a whole shopful of them there. All you've got to do is to climb over a wall, crawl through a window, and pass through a door. You can get as much as you want."

As he spoke, he wrapped the younger one up bodily in a fold of the blanket, and the little one murmured:—

"Oh! how good that is! It's warm!"

Gavroche cast a pleased eye on the blanket.

"That's from the Jardin des Plantes, too," said he. "I took that from the monkeys."

And, pointing out to the eldest the mat on which he was lying, a very thick and admirably made mat, he added:—

“That belonged to the giraffe.”

After a pause he went on:—

“The beasts had all these things. I took them away from them. It didn’t trouble them. I told them: ‘It’s for the elephant.’”

He paused, and then resumed:—

“You crawl over the walls and you don’t care a straw for the government. So there now!”

The two children gazed with timid and stupefied respect on this intrepid and ingenious being, a vagabond like themselves, isolated like themselves, frail like themselves, who had something admirable and all-powerful about him, who seemed supernatural to them, and whose physiognomy was composed of all the grimaces of an old mountebank, mingled with the most ingenuous and charming smiles.

“Monsieur,” ventured the elder timidly, “you are not afraid of the police, then?”

Gavroche contented himself with replying:—

“Brat! Nobody says ‘police,’ they say ‘bobbies.’”

The smaller had his eyes wide open, but he said nothing. As he was on the edge of the mat, the elder being in the middle, Gavroche tucked the blanket round him as a mother might have done, and heightened the mat under his head with old rags, in such a way as to form a pillow for the child. Then he turned to the elder:—

“Hey! We’re jolly comfortable here, ain’t we?”

“Ah, yes!” replied the elder, gazing at Gavroche with the expression of a saved angel.

The two poor little children who had been soaked through, began to grow warm once more.

“Ah, by the way,” continued Gavroche, “what were you bawling about?”

And pointing out the little one to his brother:—

“A mite like that, I’ve nothing to say about, but the idea of

a big fellow like you crying! It's idiotic; you looked like a calf."

"Gracious," replied the child, "we have no lodging."

"Bother!" retorted Gavroche, "you don't say 'lodgings,' you say 'erib.'"

"And then, we were afraid of being alone like that at night."

"You don't say 'night,' you say 'darkmans.'"

"Thank you, sir," said the child.

"Listen," went on Gavroche, "you must never bawl again over anything. I'll take care of you. You shall see what fun we'll have. In summer, we'll go to the Glacière with Navet, one of my pals, we'll bathe in the Gare, we'll run stark naked in front of the rafts on the bridge at Austerlitz,—that makes the laundresses raging. They scream, they get mad, and if you only knew how ridiculous they are! We'll go and see the man-skeleton. And then I'll take you to the play. I'll take you to see Frédérick Lemaître. I have tickets, I know some of the actors, I even played in a piece once. There were a lot of us fellers, and we ran under a cloth, and that made the sea. I'll get you an engagement at my theatre. We'll go to see the savages. They ain't real, those savages ain't. They wear pink tights that go all in wrinkles, and you can see where their elbows have been darned with white. Then, we'll go to the Opera. We'll get in with the hired applauders. The Opera elaque is well managed. I wouldn't associate with the elaque on the boulevard. At the Opera, just fancy! some of them pay twenty sous, but they're ninnies. They're called dishelouts. And then we'll go to see the guillotine work. I'll show you the executioner. He lives in the Rue des Marais. Monsieur Sanson. He has a letter-box at his door. Ah! we'll have famous fun!"

At that moment a drop of wax fell on Gavroche's finger, and recalled him to the realities of life.

"The deuce!" said he, "there's the wick giving out. Attention! I can't spend more than a sou a month on my lighting. When a body goes to bed, he must sleep. We haven't the time

to read M. Paul de Koek's romances. And besides, the light might pass through the cracks of the porte-cochère, and all the bobbies need to do is to see it."

"And then," remarked the elder timidly,—he alone dared talk to Gavroche, and reply to him, "a spark might fall in the straw, and we must look out and not burn the house down."

"People don't say 'burn the house down,' " remarked Gavroche, "they say 'blaze the crib.' "

The storm increased in violence, and the heavy downpour beat upon the back of the colossus amid claps of thunder. "You're taken in, rain!" said Gavroche. "It amuses me to hear the decanter run down the legs of the house. Winter is a stupid; it wastes its merchandise, it loses its labor. it can't wet us, and that makes it kick up a row, old water-carrier that it is."

This allusion to the thunder, all the consequences of which Gavroche, in his character of a philosopher of the nineteenth century, accepted, was followed by a broad flash of lightning, so dazzling that a hint of it entered the belly of the elephant through the crack. Almost at the same instant, the thunder rumbled with great fury. The two little creatures uttered a shriek, and started up so eagerly that the network came near being displaced, but Gavroche turned his bold face to them, and took advantage of the clap of thunder to burst into a laugh.

"Calm down, children. Don't topple over the edifice. That's fine, first-class thunder; all right. That's no slouch of a streak of lightning. Bravo for the good God! Deuce take it! It's almost as good as it is at the Ambigu."

That said, he restored order in the netting, pushed the two children gently down on the bed, pressed their knees, in order to stretch them out at full length, and exclaimed:—

"Since the good God is lighting his candle, I can blow out mine. Now, babes, now, my young humans, you must shut your peepers. It's very bad not to sleep. It'll make you swallow the strainer, or, as they say in fashionable society,

stink in the gullet. Wrap yourself up well in the hide! I'm going to put out the light. Are you ready?"

"Yes," murmured the elder, "I'm all right. I seem to have feathers under my head."

"People don't say 'head,'" cried Gavroche, "they say 'nut'."

The two children nestled close to each other. Gavroche finished arranging them on the mat, drew the blanket up to their very ears, then repeated, for the third time, his injunction in the hieratical tongue:—

"Shut your peepers!"

And he snuffed out his tiny light.

Hardly had the light been extinguished, when a peculiar trembling began to affect the netting under which the three children lay.

It consisted of a multitude of dull scratches which produced a metallic sound, as if claws and teeth were gnawing at the copper wire. This was accompanied by all sorts of little piercing cries.

The little five-year-old boy, on hearing this hubbub overhead, and chilled with terror, jogged his brother's elbow; but the elder brother had already shut his peepers, as Gavroche had ordered. Then the little one, who could no longer control his terror, questioned Gavroche, but in a very low tone, and with bated breath:—

"Sir?"

"Hey?" said Gavroche, who had just closed his eyes.

"What is that?"

"It's the rats," replied Gavroche.

And he laid his head down on the mat again.

The rats, in fact, who swarmed by thousands in the carcass of the elephant, and who were the living black spots which we have already mentioned, had been held in awe by the flame of the candle, so long as it had been lighted; but as soon as the cavern, which was the same as their city, had returned to darkness, scenting what the good story-teller Perrault calls "fresh meat," they had hurled themselves in throngs on Gavroche's tent, had climbed to the top of it, and had begun to

bite the meshes as though seeking to pierce this new-fangled trap.

Still the little one could not sleep.

“Sir?” he began again.

“Hey?” said Gavroche.

“What are rats?”

“They are mice.”

This explanation reassured the child a little. He had seen white mice in the course of his life, and he was not afraid of them. Nevertheless, he lifted up his voice once more.

“Sir?”

“Hey?” said Gavroche again.

“Why don’t you have a cat?”

“I did have one,” replied Gavroche, “I brought one here, but they ate her.”

This second explanation undid the work of the first, and the little fellow began to tremble again.

The dialogue between him and Gavroche began again for the fourth time:—

“Monsieur?”

“Hey?”

“Who was it that was eaten?”

“The cat.”

“And who ate the cat?”

“The rats.”

“The mice?”

“Yes, the rats.”

The child, in consternation, dismayed at the thought of mice which ate cats, pursued:—

“Sir, would those mice eat us?”

“Wouldn’t they just!” ejaculated Gavroche.

The child’s terror had reached its climax. But Gavroche added:—

“Don’t be afraid. They can’t get in. And besides. I’m here! Here, catch hold of my hand. Hold your tongue and shut your peepers!”

At the same time Gavroche grasped the little fellow’s hand

across his brother. The child pressed the hand close to him, and felt reassured. Courage and strength have these mysterious ways of communicating themselves. Silence reigned round them once more, the sound of their voices had frightened off the rats; at the expiration of a few minutes, they came raging back, but in vain, the three little fellows were fast asleep and heard nothing more.

The hours of the night fled away. Darkness covered the vast Place de la Bastille. A wintry gale, which mingled with the rain, blew in gusts, the patrol searched all the doorways, alleys, enclosures, and obscure nooks, and in their search for nocturnal vagabonds they passed in silence before the elephant; the monster, erect, motionless, staring open-eyed into the shadows, had the appearance of dreaming happily over his good deed; and sheltered from heaven and from men the three poor sleeping children.

In order to understand what is about to follow, the reader must remember, that, at that epoch, the Bastille guard-house was situated at the other end of the square, and that what took place in the vicinity of the elephant could neither be seen nor heard by the sentinel.

Towards the end of that hour which immediately precedes the dawn, a man turned from the Rue Saint-Antoine at a run, made the circuit of the enclosure of the column of July, and glided between the palings until he was underneath the belly of the elephant. If any light had illuminated that man, it might have been divined from the thorough manner in which he was soaked that he had passed the night in the rain. Arrived beneath the elephant, he uttered a peculiar cry, which did not belong to any human tongue, and which a parrot alone could have imitated. Twice he repeated this cry, of whose orthography the following barely conveys an idea:—

“Kirikikiou!”

At the second cry, a clear, young, merry voice responded from the belly of the elephant:—

“Yes!”

Almost immediately, the plank which closed the hole was

drawn aside, and gave passage to a child who descended the elephant's leg, and fell briskly near the man. It was Gavroche. The man was Montparnasse.

As for his cry of *Kirikikiou*,—that was, doubtless, what the child had meant, when he said:—

“You will ask for Monsieur Gavroche.”

On hearing it, he had waked with a start, had crawled out of his “alcove,” pushing apart the netting a little, and carefully drawing it together again, then he had opened the trap, and descended.

The man and the child recognized each other silently amid the gloom: Montparnasse confined himself to the remark:—

“We need you. Come, lend us a hand.”

The lad asked for no further enlightenment.

“I'm with you,” said he.

And both took their way towards the Rue Saint-Antoine, whence Montparnasse had emerged, winding rapidly through the long file of market-gardeners' carts which descend towards the markets at that hour.

The market-gardeners, crouching, half-asleep, in their wagons, amid the salads and vegetables, enveloped to their very eyes in their mufflers on account of the beating rain, did not even glance at these strange pedestrians.

CHAPTER III

THE VICISSITUDES OF FLIGHT

THIS is what had taken place that same night at the La Force:—

An escape had been planned between Babet, Brujon, Guelemer, and Thénardier, although Thénardier was in close confinement. Babet had arranged the matter for his own benefit, on the same day, as the reader has seen from Montparnasse's account to Gavroche. Montparnasse was to help them from outside.

Brujon, after having passed a month in the punishment cell, had had time, in the first place, to weave a rope, in the second, to mature a plan. In former times, those severe places where the discipline of the prison delivers the convict into his own hands, were composed of four stone walls, a stone ceiling, a flagged pavement, a camp bed, a grated window, and a door lined with iron, and were called *dungeons*; but the dungeon was judged to be too terrible; nowadays they are composed of an iron door, a grated window, a camp bed, a flagged pavement, four stone walls, and a stone ceiling, and are called *chambers of punishment*. A little light penetrates towards mid-day. The inconvenient point about these chambers which, as the reader sees, are not dungeons, is that they allow the persons who should be at work to think.

So Brujon meditated, and he emerged from the chamber of punishment with a rope. As he had the name of being very dangerous in the Charlemagne courtyard, he was placed in the New Building. The first thing he found in the New Building was Guelemer, the second was a nail; Guelemer, that is to say, crime; a nail, that is to say, liberty. Brujon, of whom it is high time that the reader should have a complete idea, was, with an appearance of delicate health and a profoundly premeditated languor, a polished, intelligent sprig, and a thief, who had a caressing glance, and an atrocious smile. His glance resulted from his will, and his smile from his nature. His first studies in his art had been directed to roofs. He had made great progress in the industry of the men who tear off lead, who plunder the roofs and despoil the gutters by the process called *double pickings*.

The circumstance which put the finishing touch on the moment peculiarly favorable for an attempt at escape, was that the roofers were re-laying and re-jointing, at that very moment, a portion of the slates on the prison. The Saint-Bernard courtyard was no longer absolutely isolated from the Charlemagne and the Saint-Louis courts. Up above there were scaffoldings and ladders; in other words, bridges and stairs in the direction of liberty.

The New Building, which was the most cracked and decrepit thing to be seen anywhere in the world, was the weak point in the prison. The walls were eaten by saltpetre to such an extent that the authorities had been obliged to line the vaults of the dormitories with a sheathing of wood, because stones were in the habit of becoming detached and falling on the prisoners in their beds. In spite of this antiquity, the authorities committed the error of confining in the New Building the most troublesome prisoners, of placing there "the hard cases," as they say in prison parlance.

The New Building contained four dormitories, one above the other, and a top story which was called the Bel-Air (Fine-Air). A large chimney-flue, probably from some ancient kitchen of the Dukes de la Foree, started from the ground-floor, traversed all four stories, cut the dormitories, where it figured as a flattened pillar, into two portions, and finally pierced the roof.

Guelemer and Brujon were in the same dormitory. They had been placed, by way of precaution, on the lower story. Chance ordained that the heads of their beds should rest against the chimney.

Thénardier was directly over their heads in the top story known as Fine-Air. The pedestrian who halts on the Rue Culture-Sainte-Catherine, after passing the barracks of the firemen, in front of the prote-coehère of the bathing establishment, beholds a yard full of flowers and shrubs in wooden boxes, at the extremity of which spreads out a little white rotunda with two wings, brightened up with green shutters, the bucolic dream of Jean Jacques.

Not more than ten years ago, there rose above that rotunda an enormous black, hideous, bare wall by which it was backed up.

This was the outer wall of La Foree.

This wall, beside that rotunda, was Milton viewed through Berquin.

Lofty as it was, this wall was overtopped by a still blacker roof, which could be seen beyond. This was the roof of the

New Building. There one could descry four dormer-windows, guarded with bars; they were the windows of the Fine-Air.

A chimney pierced the roof; this was the chimney which traversed the dormitories.

The Bel-Air, that top story of the New Building, was a sort of large hall, with a Mansard roof, guarded with triple gratings and double doors of sheet iron, which were studded with enormous bolts. When one entered from the north end, one had on one's left the four dormer-windows, on one's right, facing the windows, at regular intervals, four square, tolerably vast eaves, separated by narrow passages, built of masonry to about the height of the elbow, and the rest, up to the roof, of iron bars.

Thénardier had been in solitary confinement in one of these cages since the night of the 3d of February. No one was ever able to discover how, and by what connivance, he succeeded in procuring, and secreting a bottle of wine, invented, so it is said, by Desrués, with which a narcotic is mixed, and which the band of the *Endormeurs*, or *Sleep-compellers*, rendered famous.

There are, in many prisons, treacherous employees, half-jailers, half-thieves, who assist in escapes, who sell to the police an unfaithful service, and who turn a penny whenever they can.

On that same night, then, when Little Gavroche picked up the two lost children, Brujon and Guelemer, who knew that Babet, who had escaped that morning, was waiting for them in the street as well as Montparnasse, rose softly, and with the nail which Brujon had found, began to pierce the chimney against which their beds stood. The rubbish fell on Brujon's bed, so that they were not heard. Showers mingled with thunder shook the doors on their hinges, and created in the prison a terrible and opportune uproar. Those of the prisoners who woke, pretended to fall asleep again, and left Guelemer and Brujon to their own devices. Brujon was adroit; Guelemer was vigorous. Before any sound had reached the watcher, who

was sleeping in the grated cell which opened into the dormitory, the wall had been pierced, the chimney sealed, the iron grating which barred the upper orifice of the flue forced, and the two redoubtable ruffians were on the roof. The wind and rain redoubled, the roof was slippery.

“What a good night to leg it!” said Brujon.

An abyss six feet broad and eighty feet deep separated them from the surrounding wall. At the bottom of this abyss, they could see the musket of a sentinel gleaming through the gloom. They fastened one end of the rope which Brujon had spun in his dungeon to the stumps of the iron bars which they had just wrenched off, flung the other over the outer wall, crossed the abyss at one bound, clung to the coping of the wall, got astride of it, let themselves slip, one after the other, along the rope, upon a little roof which touches the bath-house, pulled their rope after them, jumped down into the courtyard of the bath-house, traversed it, pushed open the porter’s wicket, beside which hung his rope, pulled this, opened the portecochère, and found themselves in the street.

Three-quarters of an hour had not elapsed since they had risen in bed in the dark, nail in hand, and their project in their heads.

A few moments later they had joined Babet and Montparnasse, who were prowling about the neighborhood.

They had broken their rope in pulling it after them, and a bit of it remained attached to the chimney on the roof. They had sustained no other damage, however, than that of scratching nearly all the skin off their hands.

That night, Thénardier was warned, without any one being able to explain how, and was not asleep.

Towards one o’clock in the morning, the night being very dark, he saw two shadows pass along the roof, in the rain and squalls, in front of the dormer-window which was opposite his cage. One halted at the window, long enough to dart in a glance. This was Brujon.

Thénardier recognized him, and understood. This was enough.

Thénardier, rated as a burglar, and detained as a measure of precaution under the charge of organizing a nocturnal ambush, with armed force, was kept in sight. The sentry, who was relieved every two hours, marched up and down in front of his cage with loaded musket. The Fine-Air was lighted by a skylight. The prisoner had on his feet fetters weighing fifty pounds. Every day, at four o'clock in the afternoon, a jailer, escorted by two dogs,—this was still in vogue at that time,—entered his cage, deposited beside his bed a loaf of black bread weighing two pounds, a jug of water, a bowl filled with rather thin bouillon, in which swam a few Mayagan beans, inspected his irons and tapped the bars. This man and his dogs made two visits during the night.

Thénardier had obtained permission to keep a sort of iron bolt which he used to spike his bread into a crack in the wall, "in order to preserve it from the rats," as he said. As Thénardier was kept in sight, no objection had been made to this spike. Still, it was remembered afterwards, that one of the jailers had said: "It would be better to let him have only a wooden spike."

At two o'clock in the morning, the sentinel, who was an old soldier, was relieved, and replaced by a conscript. A few moments later, the man with the dogs paid his visit, and went off without noticing anything, except, possibly, the excessive youth and "the rustic air" of the "raw recruit." Two hours afterwards, at four o'clock, when they came to relieve the conscript, he was found asleep on the floor, lying like a log near Thénardier's cage. As for Thénardier, he was no longer there. There was a hole in the ceiling of his cage, and, above it, another hole in the roof. One of the planks of his bed had been wrenched off, and probably carried away with him, as it was not found. They also seized in his cell a half-empty bottle which contained the remains of the stupefying wine with which the soldier had been drugged. The soldier's bayonet had disappeared.

At the moment when this discovery was made, it was assumed that Thénardier was out of reach. The truth is, that

he was no longer in the New Building, but that he was still in great danger.

Thénardier, on reaching the roof of the New Building, had found the remains of Brujon's rope hanging to the bars of the upper trap of the chimney, but, as this broken fragment was much too short, he had not been able to escape by the outer wall, as Brujon and Guelemer had done.

When one turns from the Rue des Ballets into the Rue du Roi-de-Sicile, one almost immediately encounters a repulsive ruin. There stood on that spot, in the last century, a house of which only the back wall now remains, a regular wall of masonry, which rises to the height of the third story between the adjoining buildings. This ruin can be recognized by two large square windows which are still to be seen there; the middle one, that nearest the right gable, is barred with a worm-eaten beam adjusted like a prop. Through these windows there was formerly visible a lofty and lugubrious wall, which was a fragment of the outer wall of La Force.

The empty space on the street left by the demolished house is half-filled by a fence of rotten boards, shored up by five stone posts. In this recess lies concealed a little shanty which leans against the portion of the ruin which has remained standing. The fence has a gate, which, a few years ago, was fastened only by a latch.

It was the crest of this ruin that Thénardier had succeeded in reaching, a little after one o'clock in the morning.

How had he got there? That is what no one has ever been able to explain or understand. The lightning must, at the same time, have hindered and helped him. Had he made use of the ladders and scaffoldings of the slaters to get from roof to roof, from enclosure to enclosure, from compartment to compartment, to the buildings of the Charlemagne court, then to the buildings of the Saint-Louis court, to the outer wall, and thence to the hut on the Rue du Roi-de-Sicile? But in that itinerary there existed breaks which seemed to render it an impossibility. Had he placed the plank from his bed like a bridge from the roof of the Fine-Air to the outer wall, and

creawled flat on his belly on the coping of the outer wall the whole distance round the prison as far as the hut? But the outer wall of La Force formed a crenellated and unequal line; it mounted and descended, it dropped at the firemen's barracks, it rose towards the bath-house, it was cut in twain by buildings, it was not even of the same height on the Hotel Lamoignon as on the Rue Pavée; everywhere occurred falls and right angles; and then, the sentinels must have espied the dark form of the fugitive; hence, the route taken by Thénardier still remains rather inexplicable. In two manners, flight was impossible. Had Thénardier, spurred on by that thirst for liberty which changes precipices into ditches, iron bars into wattles of osier, a legless man into an athlete, a gouty man into a bird, stupidity into instinct, instinct into intelligence, and intelligence into genius, had Thénardier invented a third mode? No one has ever found out.

The marvels of escape cannot always be accounted for. The man who makes his escape, we repeat, is inspired; there is something of the star and of the lightning in the mysterious gleam of flight; the effort towards deliverance is no less surprising than the flight towards the sublime, and one says of the escaped thief: "How did he contrive to scale that wall?" in the same way that one says of Corneille: "Where did he find *the means of dying?*"

At all events, dripping with perspiration, drenched with rain, with his clothes hanging in ribbons, his hands flayed, his elbows bleeding, his knees torn, Thénardier had reached what children, in their figurative language, call *the edge* of the wall of the ruin, there he had stretched himself out at full length, and there his strength had failed him. A steep escarpment three stories high separated him from the pavement of the street.

The rope which he had was too short.

There he waited, pale, exhausted, desperate with all the despair which he had undergone, still hidden by the night, but telling himself that the day was on the point of dawning, alarmed at the idea of hearing the neighboring clock of Saint-

Paul strike four within a few minutes, an hour when the sentinel was relieved and when the latter would be found asleep under the pierced roof, staring in horror at a terrible depth, at the light of the street lanterns, the wet, black pavement, that pavement longed for yet frightful, which meant death, and which meant liberty.

He asked himself whether his three accomplices in flight had succeeded, if they had heard him, and if they would come to his assistance. He listened. With the exception of the patrol, no one had passed through the street since he had been there. Nearly the whole of the descent of the market-gardeners from Montreuil, from Charonne, from Vincennes, and from Bery to the markets was accomplished through the Rue Saint-Antoine.

Four o'clock struck. Thénardier shuddered. A few moments later, that terrified and confused uproar which follows the discovery of an escape broke forth in the prison. The sound of doors opening and shutting, the creaking of gratings on their hinges, a tumult in the guard-house, the hoarse shouts of the turnkeys, the shock of musket-butts on the pavement of the courts, reached his ears. Lights ascended and descended past the grated windows of the dormitories, a torch ran along the ridge-pole of the top story of the New Building, the firemen belonging in the barracks on the right had been summoned. Their helmets, which the torch lighted up in the rain, went and came along the roofs. At the same time, Thénardier perceived in the direction of the Bastille a wan whiteness lighting up the edge of the sky in doleful wise.

He was on top of a wall ten inches wide, stretched out under the heavy rains, with two gulfs to right and left, unable to stir, subject to the giddiness of a possible fall, and to the horror of a certain arrest, and his thoughts, like the pendulum of a clock, swung from one of these ideas to the other: "Dead if I fall, caught if I stay." In the midst of this anguish, he suddenly saw, the street being still dark, a man who was gliding along the walls and coming from the Rue Pavée, halt in the recess above which Thénardier was, as it were, suspended.

Here this man was joined by a second, who walked with the same caution, then by a third, then by a fourth. When these men were re-united, one of them lifted the latch of the gate in the fence, and all four entered the enclosure in which the shanty stood. They halted directly under Thénardier. These men had evidently chosen this vacant space in order that they might consult without being seen by the passers-by or by the sentinel who guards the wicket of La Force a few paces distant. It must be added, that the rain kept this sentinel blocked in his box. Thénardier, not being able to distinguish their visages, lent an ear to their words with the desperate attention of a wretch who feels himself lost.

Thénardier saw something resembling a gleam of hope flash before his eyes,—these men conversed in slang.

The first said in a low but distinct voice:—

“Let’s cut. What are we up to here?”

The second replied: “It’s raining hard enough to put out the very devil’s fire. And the bobbies will be along instanter. There’s a soldier on guard yonder. We shall get nabbed here.”

These two words, *icigo* and *icicaille*, both of which mean *ici*, and which belong, the first to the slang of the barriers, the second to the slang of the Temple, were flashes of light for Thénardier. By the *icigo* he recognized Brujon, who was a prowler of the barriers, by the *icicaille* he knew Babet, who, among his other trades, had been an old-clothes broker at the Temple.

The antique slang of the great century is no longer spoken except in the Temple, and Babet was really the only person who spoke it in all its purity. Had it not been for the *icicaille*, Thénardier would not have recognized him. for he had entirely changed his voice.

In the meanwhile, the third man had intervened.

“There’s no hurry yet, let’s wait a bit. How do we know that he doesn’t stand in need of us?”

By this, which was nothing but French, Thénardier recognized Montparnasse, who made it a point in his elegance to understand all slangs and to speak none of them.

As for the fourth, he held his peace, but his huge shoulders betrayed him. Thénardier did not hesitate. It was Guelemer.

Brujon replied almost impetuously, but still in a low tone:—

“What are you jabbering about? The tavern-keeper hasn’t managed to eut his stiek. He don’t tumble to the racket, that he don’t! You have to be a pretty knowing eove to tear up your shirt, eut up your sheet to make a rope, punch holes in doors, get up false papers, make false keys, file your irons, hang out your eord, hide yourself, and disguise yourself! The old fellow hasn’t managed to play it, he doesn’t understand how to work the business.”

Babet added, still in that classical slang which was spoken by Poulailleur and Cartouche, and which is to the bold, new, highly colored and risky argot used by Brujon what the language of Racine is to the language of André Chenier:—

“Your tavern-keeper must have been nabbed in the act. You have to be knowing. He’s only a greenhorn. He must have let himself be taken in by a bobby, perhaps even by a sheep who played it on him as his pal. Listen, Montparnasse, do you hear those shouts in the prison? You have seen all those lights. He’s recaptured. there! He’ll get off with twenty years. I ain’t afraid, I ain’t a coward, but there ain’t anything more to do, or otherwise they’d lead us a dance. Don’t get mad, come with us, let’s go drink a bottle of old wine together.”

“One doesn’t desert one’s friends in a serape,” grumbled Montparnasse.

“I tell you he’s nabbed!” retorted Brujon. “At the present moment, the inn-keeper ain’t worth a ha’penny. We can’t do nothing for him. Let’s be off. Every minute I think a bobby has got me in his fist.”

Montparnasse no longer offered more than a feeble resistance; the fact is, that these four men, with the fidelity of ruffians who never abandon each other, had prowled all night long about La Force, great as was their peril, in the hope of seeing Thénardier make his appearance on the top of some wall. But the night, which was really growing too fine,—for

the downpour was such as to render all the streets deserted,—the cold which was overpowering them, their soaked garments, their hole-ridden shoes, the alarming noise which had just burst forth in the prison, the hours which had elapsed, the patrol which they had encountered, the hope which was vanishing, all urged them to beat a retreat. Montparnasse himself, who was, perhaps, almost Thénardier's son-in-law, yielded. A moment more, and they would be gone. Thénardier was panting on his wall like the shipwrecked sufferers of the *Méduse* on their raft when they beheld the vessel which had appeared in sight vanish on the horizon.

He dared not call to them; a cry might be heard and ruin everything. An idea occurred to him, a last idea, a flash of inspiration; he drew from his pocket the end of Brujon's rope, which he had detached from the chimney of the New Building, and flung it into the space enclosed by the fence.

This rope fell at their feet.

"A widow,"¹ said Babet.

"My tortouse!"² said Brujon.

"The tavern-keeper is there," said Montparnasse.

They raised their eyes. Thénardier thrust out his head a very little.

"Quick!" said Montparnasse, "have you the other end of the rope, Brujon?"

"Yes."

"Knot the two pieces together, we'll fling him the rope, he can fasten it to the wall, and he'll have enough of it to get down with."

Thénardier ran the risk, and spoke:—

"I am paralyzed with cold."

"We'll warm you up."

"I can't budge."

"Let yourself slide, we'll catch you."

"My hands are benumbed."

"Only fasten the rope to the wall."

"I can't."

¹Argot of the Temple.

²Argot of the barriers.

"Then one of us must climb up," said Montparnasse.

"Three stories!" ejaculated Brujon.

An ancient plaster flue, which had served for a stove that had been used in the shanty in former times, ran along the wall and mounted almost to the very spot where they could see Thénardier. This flue, then much damaged and full of cracks, has since fallen, but the marks of it are still visible.

It was very narrow.

"One might get up by the help of that," said Montparnasse.

"By that flue?" exclaimed Babet, "a grown-up cove, never! it would take a brat."

"A brat must be got," resumed Brujon.

"Where are we to find a young 'un?" said Guelemer.

"Wait," said Montparnasse. "I've got the very article."

He opened the gate of the fence very softly, made sure that no one was passing along the street, stepped out cautiously, shut the gate behind him, and set off at a run in the direction of the Bastille.

Seven or eight minutes elapsed, eight thousand centuries to Thénardier; Babet, Brujon, and Guelemer did not open their lips; at last the gate opened once more, and Montparnasse appeared, breathless, and followed by Gavroche. The rain still rendered the street completely deserted.

Little Gavroche entered the enclosure and gazed at the forms of these ruffians with a tranquil air. The water was dripping from his hair. Guelemer addressed him:—

"Are you a man, young 'un?"

Gavroche shrugged his shoulders, and replied:—

"A young 'un like me's a man, and men like you are babes."

"The brat's tongue's well hung!" exclaimed Babet.

"The Paris brat ain't made of straw," added Brujon.

"What do you want?" asked Gavroche.

Montparnasse answered:—

"Climb up that flue."

"With this rope," said Babet.

"And fasten it," continued Brujon.

"To the top of the wall." went on Babet.

"To the cross-bar of the window," added Brujon.

"And then?" said Gavroche.

"There!" said Guelemer.

The gamin examined the rope, the flue, the wall, the windows, and made that indescribable and disdainful noise with his lips which signifies:—

"Is that all!"

"There's a man up there whom you are to save," resumed Montparnasse.

"Will you?" began Brujon again.

"Greenhorn!" replied the lad, as though the question appeared a most unprecedented one to him.

And he took off his shoes.

Guelemer seized Gavroche by one arm, set him on the roof of the shanty, whose worm-eaten planks bent beneath the urehin's weight, and handed him the rope which Brujon had knotted together during Montparnasse's absence. The gamin directed his steps towards the flue, which it was easy to enter, thanks to a large crack which touched the roof. At the moment when he was on the point of ascending, Thénardier, who saw life and safety approaching, bent over the edge of the wall; the first light of dawn struck white upon his brow dripping with sweat, upon his livid cheek-bones, his sharp and savage nose, his bristling gray beard, and Gavroche recognized him.

"Hullo! it's my father! Oh, that won't hinder."

And taking the rope in his teeth, he resolutely began the ascent.

He reached the summit of the hut, bestrode the old wall as though it had been a horse, and knotted the rope firmly to the upper cross-bar of the window.

A moment later, Thénardier was in the street.

As soon as he touched the pavement, as soon as he found himself out of danger, he was no longer either weary, or chilled or trembling; the terrible things from which he had escaped vanished like smoke, all that strange and ferocious mind awoke once more, and stood erect and free, ready to march onward.

These were this man's first words:—

“Now, whom are we to eat?”

It is useless to explain the sense of this frightfully transparent remark, which signifies both to kill, to assassinate, and to plunder. *To eat*, true sense: *to devour*.

“Let's get well into a corner,” said Brujon. “Let's settle it in three words, and part at once. There was an affair that promised well in the Rue Plumet, a deserted street, an isolated house, an old rotten gate on a garden, and lone women.”

“Well! why not?” demanded Thénardier.

“Your girl, Éponine, went to see about the matter,” replied Babet.

“And she brought a biseuit to Magnon,” added Guelemer. “Nothing to be made there.”

“The girl's no fool,” said Thénardier. “Still, it must be seen to.”

“Yes, yes,” said Brujon, “it must be looked up.”

In the meanwhile, none of the men seemed to see Gavroche, who, during this colloquy, had seated himself on one of the fence-posts; he waited a few moments, thinking that perhaps his father would turn towards him, then he put on his shoes again, and said:—

“Is that all? You don't want any more, my men? Now you're out of your scrape. I'm off. I must go and get my brats out of bed.”

And off he went.

The five men emerged, one after another, from the enclosure.

When Gavroche had disappeared at the corner of the Rue des Ballets, Babet took Thénardier aside.

“Did you take a good look at that young 'un?” he asked.

“What young 'un?”

“The one who climbed the wall and earried you the rope.”

“Not particuarly.”

“Well, I don't know, but it strikes me that it was your son.”

“Bah!” said Thénardier, “do you think so?”

BOOK SEVENTH.—SLANG

CHAPTER I

ORIGIN

Pigritia is a terrible word.

It engenders a whole world, *la pègre*, for which read *theft*, and a hell, *la pégrenne*, for which read *hunger*.

Thus, idleness is the mother.

She has a son, theft, and a daughter, hunger.

Where are we at this moment? In the land of slang.

What is slang? It is at one and the same time, a nation and a dialect: it is theft in its two kinds: people and language.

When, four and thirty years ago, the narrator of this grave and sombre history introduced into a work written with the same aim as this¹ a thief who talked argot, there arose amazement and clamor.—“What! How! Argot! Why, argot is horrible! It is the language of prisons, galleys, convicts, of everything that is most abominable in society!” etc., etc.

We have never understood this sort of objections.

Since that time, two powerful romancers, one of whom is a profound observer of the human heart, the other an intrepid friend of the people, Balzac and Eugène Sue, having represented their ruffians as talking their natural language, as the author of *The Last Day of a Condemned Man* did in 1828, the same objections have been raised. People repeated: “What do authors mean by that revolting dialect? Slang is odious! Slang makes one shudder!”

Who denies that? Of course it does.

¹The Last Day of a Condemned Man.

When it is a question of probing a wound, a gulf, a society, since when has it been considered wrong to go too far? to go to the bottom? We have always thought that it was sometimes a courageous act, and, at least, a simple and useful deed, worthy of the sympathetic attention which duty accepted and fulfilled merits. Why should one not explore everything, and study everything? Why should one halt on the way? The halt is a matter depending on the sounding-line, and not on the leadsmen.

Certainly, too, it is neither an attractive nor an easy task to undertake an investigation into the lowest depths of the social order, where terra firma comes to an end and where mud begins, to rummage in those vague, murky waves, to follow up, to seize and to fling, still quivering, upon the pavement that abject dialect which is dripping with filth when thus brought to the light, that pustulous vocabulary each word of which seems an unclean ring from a monster of the mire and the shadows. Nothing is more lugubrious than the contemplation thus in its nudity, in the broad light of thought, of the horrible swarming of slang. It seems, in fact, to be a sort of horrible beast made for the night which has just been torn from its cesspool. One thinks one beholds a frightful, living, and bristling thicket which quivers, rustles, wavers, returns to shadow, threatens and glares. One word resembles a claw, another an extinguished and bleeding eye, such and such a phrase seems to move like the elaw of a crab. All this is alive with the hideous vitality of things which have been organized out of disorganization.

Now, when has horror ever excluded study? Since when has malady banished medicine? Can one imagine a naturalist refusing to study the viper, the bat, the scorpion, the centipede, the tarantula, and one who would east them back into their darkness, saying: "Oh! how ugly that is!" The thinker who should turn aside from slang would resemble a surgeon who should avert his face from an ulcer or a wart. He would be like a philologist refusing to examine a fact in language, a philosopher hesitating to scrutinize a fact in humanity. For,

it must be stated to those who are ignorant of the case, that argot is both a literary phenomenon and a social result. What is slang, properly speaking? It is the language of wretchedness.

We may be stopped; the fact may be put to us in general terms, which is one way of attenuating it; we may be told, that all trades, professions, it may be added, all the accidents of the social hierarchy and all forms of intelligence, have their own slang. The merchant who says: "Montpellier not active, Marseilles fine quality," the broker on 'change who says: "Assets at end of current month," the gambler who says: "*Tiers et tout, refait de pique*," the sheriff of the Norman Isles who says: The holder in fee reverting to his landed estate cannot claim the fruits of that estate during the hereditary seizure of the real estate by the mortgagor," the playwright who says: "The piece was hissed," the comedian who says: "I've made a hit," the philosopher who says: "Phenomenal triplicity," the huntsman who says: "*Voileci allais, Voileci fuyant*," the phrenologist who says: "Amativeness, combativeness, secretiveness," the infantry soldier who says: "My shooting-iron," the cavalry-man who says: "My turkey-cock," the fencing-master who says: "Tierce, quarte, break," the printer who says: "My shooting-stick and galley,"—all, printer, fencing-master, cavalry dragoon, infantry-man, phrenologist, huntsman, philosopher, comedian, playwright, sheriff, gambler, stock-broker, and merchant, speak slang. The painter who says: "My grinder," the notary who says: "My Skip-the-Gutter," the hairdresser who says: "My mealyback," the cobbler who says: "My cub," talks slang. Strictly speaking, if one absolutely insists on the point, all the different fashions of saying the right and the left, the sailor's *port* and *starboard*, the scene-shifter's *court-side*, and *garden-side*, the beadle's *Gospel-side* and *Epistle-side*, are slang. There is the slang of the affected lady as well as of the *précieuses*. The Hotel Rambouillet nearly adjoins the Cour des Miracles. There is a slang of duchesses, witness this phrase contained in a love-letter from a very great lady and a very pretty woman

of the Restoration: "You will find in this gossip a fultitude of reasons why I should libertize."¹ Diplomatic ciphers are slang; the pontifical chancellery by using 26 for Rome, *grkztnrgzyal* for despatch, and *abfxustgrnogrku tu XI.* for the Duc de Modena, speaks slang. The physicians of the Middle Ages who, for carrot, radish, and turnip, said *Opoponach*, *perfoschinum*, *reptitalmus*, *dracatholicum*, *angelorum*, *postmegorum*, talked slang. The sugar-manufacturer who says: "Loaf, clarified, lumps, bastard, common, burnt,"—this honest manufacturer talks slang. A certain school of criticism twenty years ago, which used to say: "Half of the works of Shakespeare consists of plays upon words and puns,"—talked slang. The poet, and the artist who, with profound understanding, would designate M. de Montmorency as "a bourgeois," if he were not a judge of verses and statues, speak slang. The classic Academician who calls flowers "Flora," fruits, "Pomona," the sea, "Neptune," love, "fires," beauty, "charms," a horse, "a courser," the white or tri-colored cockade, "the rose of Bellona," the three-cornered hat, "Mars' triangle,"—that classical Academician talks slang. Algebra, medicine, botany, have each their slang. The tongue which is employed on board ship, that wonderful language of the sea, which is so complete and so picturesque, which was spoken by Jean Bart, Duquesne, Suffren, and Duperré, which mingles with the whistling of the rigging, the sound of the speaking-trumpets, the shock of the boarding-irons, the roll of the sea, the wind, the gale, the cannon, is wholly a heroic and dazzling slang, which is to the fierce slang of the thieves what the lion is to the jackal.

No doubt. But say what we will, this manner of understanding the word *slang* is an extension which every one will not admit. For our part, we reserve to the word its ancient and precise, circumscribed and determined significance, and we restrict slang to slang. The veritable slang and the slang that is pre-eminently slang, if the two words can be coupled

¹"Vous trouverez dans ces potains-là, une foulditude de raisons pour que je me libertise."

thus, the slang immemorial which was a kingdom, is nothing else, we repeat, than the homely, uneasy, crafty, treacherous, venomous, cruel, equivocal, vile, profound, fatal tongue of wretchedness. There exists, at the extremity of all abasement and all misfortunes, a last misery which revolts and makes up its mind to enter into conflict with the whole mass of fortunate facts and reigning rights; a fearful conflict, where, now cunning, now violent, unhealthy and ferocious at one and the same time, it attacks the social order with pin-pricks through vice, and with club-blows through crime. To meet the needs of this conflict, wretchedness has invented a language of combat, which is slang.

To keep afloat and to rescue from oblivion, to hold above the gulf, were it but a fragment of some language which man has spoken and which would, otherwise, be lost, that is to say, one of the elements, good or bad, of which civilization is composed, or by which it is complicated, to extend the records of social observation; is to serve civilization itself. This service Plautus rendered, consciously or unconsciously, by making two Carthaginian soldiers talk Phœnician; that service Molière rendered, by making so many of his characters talk Levantine and all sorts of dialects. Here objections spring up afresh. Phœnician, very good! Levantine, quite right! Even dialect, let that pass! They are tongues which have belonged to nations or provinces; but slang! What is the use of preserving slang? What is the good of assisting slang "to survive"?

To this we reply in one word, only. Assuredly, if the tongue which a nation or a province has spoken is worthy of interest, the language which has been spoken by a misery is still more worthy of attention and study.

It is the language which has been spoken, in France, for example, for more than four centuries, not only by a misery, but by every possible human misery.

And then, we insist upon it, the study of social deformities and infirmities, and the task of pointing them out with a view to remedy, is not a business in which choice is permitted. The historian of manners and ideas has no less austere a mission

than the historian of events. The latter has the surface of civilization, the conflicts of crowns, the births of princes, the marriages of kings, battles, assemblages, great public men, revolutions in the daylight, everything on the exterior; the other historian has the interior, the depths, the people who toil, suffer, wait, the oppressed woman, the agonizing child, the secret war between man and man, obscure ferocities, prejudices, plotted iniquities, the subterranean, the indistinct tremors of multitudes, the die-of-hunger, the counter-blows of the law, the secret evolution of souls, the go-bare-foot, the bare-armed, the disinherited, the orphans, the unhappy, and the infamous, all the forms which roam through the darkness. He must descend with his heart full of charity, and severity at the same time, as a brother and as a judge, to those impenetrable casemates where crawl, pell-mell, those who bleed and those who deal the blow, those who weep and those who curse, those who fast and those who devour, those who endure evil and those who inflict it. Have these historians of hearts and souls duties at all inferior to the historians of external facts? Does any one think that Alighieri has any fewer things to say than Machiavelli? Is the under side of civilization any less important than the upper side merely because it is deeper and more sombre? Do we really know the mountain well when we are not acquainted with the cavern?

Let us say, moreover, parenthetically, that from a few words of what precedes a marked separation might be inferred between the two classes of historians which does not exist in our mind. No one is a good historian of the patent, visible, striking, and public life of peoples, if he is not, at the same time, in a certain measure, the historian of their deep and hidden life; and no one is a good historian of the interior unless he understands how, at need, to be the historian of the exterior also. The history of manners and ideas permeates the history of events, and this is true reciprocally. They constitute two different orders of facts which correspond to each other, which are always interlaced, and which often bring forth results. All the lineaments which Providence traces on the surface

of a nation have their parallels, sombre but distinct, in their depths, and all convulsions of the depths produce ebullitions on the surface. True history being a mixture of all things, the true historian mingles in everything.

Man is not a circle with a single centre; he is an ellipse with a double focus. Facts form one of these, and ideas the other.

Slang is nothing but a dressing-room where the tongue having some bad action to perform, disguises itself. There it clothes itself in word-masks, in metaphor-rags. In this guise it becomes horrible.

One finds it difficult to recognize. Is it really the French tongue, the great human tongue? Behold it ready to step upon the stage and to retort upon crime, and prepared for all the employments of the repertory of evil. It no longer walks, it hobbles; it limps on the crutch of the Court of Miracles, a crutch metamorphosable into a club; it is called vagrancy; every sort of spectre, its dressers, have painted its face, it crawls and rears, the double gait of the reptile. Henceforth, it is apt at all rôles, it is made suspicious by the counterfeiter, covered with verdigris by the forger, blacked by the soot of the incendiary; and the murderer applies its rouge.

When one listens, by the side of honest men, at the portals of society, one overhears the dialogues of those who are on the outside. One distinguishes questions and replies. One perceives, without understanding it, a hideous murmur, sounding almost like human accents, but more nearly resembling a howl than an articulate word. It is slang. The words are misshapen and stamped with an indescribable and fantastic bestiality. One thinks one hears hydras talking.

It is unintelligible in the dark. It gnashes and whispers, completing the gloom with mystery. It is black in misfortune, it is blacker still in crime; these two blacknesses amalgamated, compose slang. Obscurity in the atmosphere, obscurity in acts, obscurity in voices. Terrible, toad-like tongue which goes and comes, leaps, crawls, slobbers, and stirs about in monstrous wise in that immense gray fog composed of rain and night, of

hunger, of vice, of falsehood, of injustice, of nudity, of suffocation, and of winter, the high noonday of the miserable.

Let us have compassion on the chastised. Alas! Who are we ourselves? Who am I who now address you? Who are you who are listening to me? And are you very sure that we have done nothing before we were born? The earth is not devoid of resemblance to a jail. Who knows whether man is not a recaptured offender against divine justice? Look closely at life. It is so made, that everywhere we feel the sense of punishment.

Are you what is called a happy man? Well! you are sad every day. Each day has its own great grief or its little care. Yesterday you were trembling for a health that is dear to you, to-day you fear for your own; to-morrow it will be anxiety about money, the day after to-morrow the diatribe of a slanderer, the day after that, the misfortune of some friend; then the prevailing weather, then something that has been broken or lost, then a pleasure with which your conscience and your vertebral column reproach you; again, the course of public affairs. This without reckoning in the pains of the heart. And so it goes on. One cloud is dispelled, another forms. There is hardly one day out of a hundred which is wholly joyous and sunny. And you belong to that small class who are happy! As for the rest of mankind, stagnating night rests upon them.

Thoughtful minds make but little use of the phrase: the fortunate and the unfortunate. In this world, evidently the vestibule of another, there are no fortunate.

The real human division is this: the luminous and the shady. To diminish the number of the shady, to augment the number of the luminous,—that is the object. That is why we cry: Education! science! To teach reading, means to light the fire; every syllable spelled out sparkles.

However, he who says light does not, necessarily, say joy. People suffer in the light; excess burns. The flame is the enemy of the wing. To burn without ceasing to fly,—therein lies the marvel of genius.

When you shall have learned to know, and to love, you will still suffer. The day is born in tears. The luminous weep, if only over those in darkness.

CHAPTER II

ROOTS

SLANG is the tongue of those who sit in darkness.

Thought is moved in its most sombre depths, social philosophy is bidden to its most poignant meditations, in the presence of that enigmatic dialect at once so blighted and rebellious. Therein lies chastisement made visible. Every syllable has an air of being marked. The words of the vulgar tongue appear therein wrinkled and shrivelled, as it were, beneath the hot iron of the executioner. Some seem to be still smoking. Such and such a phrase produces upon you the effect of the shoulder of a thief branded with the fleur-de-lys, which has suddenly been laid bare. Ideas almost refuse to be expressed in these substantives which are fugitives from justice. Metaphor is sometimes so shameless, that one feels that it has worn the iron neck-fetter.

Moreover, in spite of all this, and because of all this, this strange dialect has by rights, its own compartment in that great impartial case of pigeon-holes where there is room for the rusty farthing as well as for the gold medal, and which is called literature. Slang, whether the public admit the fact or not, has its syntax and its poetry. It is a language. Yes, by the deformity of certain terms, we recognize the fact that it was chewed by Mandrin, and by the splendor of certain metonymies, we feel that Villon spoke it.

That exquisite and celebrated verse—

Mais où sont les neiges d'antan?
But where are the snows of years gone by?

is a verse of slang. *Antam*—*ante annum*—is a word of

Thunes slang, which signified the past year, and by extension, *formerly*. Thirty-five years ago, at the epoch of the departure of the great chain-gang, there could be read in one of the cells at Bicêtre, this maxim engraved with a nail on the wall by a king of Thunes condemned to the galleys: *Les dabs d'antan trimaient siempre pour la pierre du Coësre*. This means *Kings in days gone by always went and had themselves anointed*. In the opinion of that king, anointment meant the galleys.

The word *décarade*, which expresses the departure of heavy vehicles at a gallop, is attributed to Villon, and it is worthy of him. This word, which strikes fire with all four of its feet, sums up in a masterly onomatopœia the whole of La Fontaine's admirable verse:—

Six forts chevaux tiraient un coche.
Six stout horses drew a coach.

From a purely literary point of view, few studies would prove more curious and fruitful than the study of slang. It is a whole language within a language, a sort of sickly excrescence, an unhealthy graft which has produced a vegetation, a parasite which has its roots in the old Gallic trunk, and whose sinister foliage crawls all over one side of the language. This is what may be called the first, the vulgar aspect of slang. But, for those who study the tongue as it should be studied, that is to say, as geologists study the earth, slang appears like a veritable alluvial deposit. According as one digs a longer or shorter distance into it, one finds in slang, below the old popular French, Provençal, Spanish, Italian, Levantine, that language of the Mediterranean ports, English and German, the Romance language in its three varieties, French, Italian, and Romance Romance, Latin, and finally Basque and Celtic. A profound and unique formation. A subterranean edifice erected in common by all the miserable. Each accursed race has deposited its layer, each suffering has dropped its stone there, each heart has contributed its pebble. A throng of evil, base, or irritated souls, who have traversed life and have

vanished into eternity, linger there almost entirely visible still beneath the form of some monstrous word.

Do you want Spanish? The old Gothic slang abounded in it. Here is *boffete*, a box on the ear, which is derived from *bofeton*; *vantane*, window (later on *vanterne*), which comes from *vantana*; *gat*, cat, which comes from *gato*; *acite*, oil, which comes from *aceyte*. Do you want Italian? Here is *spade*, sword, which comes from *spada*; *carvel*, boat, which comes from *caravella*. Do you want English? Here is *bichot*, which comes from *bishop*; *raille*, spy, which comes from *rascal*, *rascalion*; *pilche*, a case, which comes from *pilcher*, a sheath. Do you want German? Here is the *caleur*, the waiter, *kellner*; the *hers*, the master, *herzog* (duke). Do you want Latin? Here is *frangir*, to break, *frangere*; *affurer*, to steal, *fur*; *cadene*, chain, *catena*. There is one word which crops up in every language of the continent, with a sort of mysterious power and authority. It is the word *magnus*; the Scotchman makes of it his *mac*, which designates the chief of the clan; Mac-Farlane, Mac-Callumore, the great Farlane, the great Callumore¹; slang turns it into *meck* and later *le meg*, that is to say, God. Would you like Basque? Here is *gahisto*, the devil, which comes from *gäiztoa*, evil; *sorgabon*, good night, which comes from *gabon*, good evening. Do you want Celtic? Here is *blavin*, a handkerchief, which comes from *blavet*, gushing water; *ménesse*, a woman (in a bad sense), which comes from *meinec*, full of stones; *barant*, brook, from *baranton*, fountain; *goffeur*, locksmith, from *goff*, blacksmith; *guedouze*, death, which comes from *guenn-du*, black-white. Finally, would you like history? Slang calls crowns *les mal-têses*, a souvenir of the coin in circulation on the galleys of Malta.

In addition to the philological origins just indicated, slang possesses other and still more natural roots, which spring, so to speak, from the mind of man itself.

In the first place, the direct creation of words. Therein lies the mystery of tongues. To paint with words, which con-

¹It must be observed, however, that *mac* in Celtic means *son*.

tains figures one knows not how or why, is the primitive foundation of all human languages, what may be called their granite.

Slang abounds in words of this description, immediate words, words created instantaneously no one knows either where or by whom, without etymology, without analogies, without derivatives, solitary, barbarous, sometimes hideous words, which at times possess a singular power of expression and which live. The executioner, *le taule*; the forest, *le sabri*; fear, flight, *taf*; the lackey, *le larbin*; the mineral, the prefect, the minister, *pharos*; the devil, *le rabouin*. Nothing is stranger than these words which both mask and reveal. Some, *le rabouin*, for example, are at the same time grotesque and terrible, and produce on you the effect of a cyclopean grimace.

In the second place, metaphor. The peculiarity of a language which is desirous of saying all yet concealing all is that it is rich in figures. Metaphor is an enigma, wherein the thief who is plotting a stroke, the prisoner who is arranging an escape, take refuge. No idiom is more metaphorical than slang: *dévisser le coco* (to unscrew the nut), to twist the neck; *tortiller* (to wriggle), to eat; *être gerbé*, to be tried; *a rat*, a bread thief; *il lansquine*. it rains, a striking, ancient figure which partly bears its date about it, which assimilates long oblique lines of rain, with the dense and slanting pikes of the lanciers, and which compresses into a single word the popular expression: it rains halberds. Sometimes, in proportion as slang progresses from the first epoch to the second, words pass from the primitive and savage sense to the metaphorical sense. The devil ceases to be *le rabouin*, and becomes *le boulanger* (the baker), who puts the bread into the oven. This is more witty, but less grand, something like Racine after Corneille, like Euripides after Æschylus. Certain slang phrases which participate in the two epochs and have at once the barbaric character and the metaphorical character resemble phantasmas. *Les sorqueuers vont solliciter des gails à la lune*—the prowlers are going to steal horses by night,—this passes before

the mind like a group of spectres. One knows not what one sees.

In the third place, the expedient. Slang lives on the language. It uses it in accordance with its fancy, it dips into it hap-hazard, and it often confines itself, when occasion arises, to alter it in a gross and summary fashion. Occasionally, with the ordinary words thus deformed and complicated with words of pure slang, picturesque phrases are formed, in which there can be felt the mixture of the two preceding elements, the direct creation and the metaphor: *le cab jaspine, je marronne que la roulotte de Pantin trime dans le sabri*, the dog is barking, I suspect that the diligence for Paris is passing through the woods. *Le dab est sinve, la dabuge est merloussière, la fée est bative*, the bourgeois is stupid, the bourgeoise is cunning, the daughter is pretty. Generally, to throw listeners off the track, slang confines itself to adding to all the words of the language without distinction, an ignoble tail, a termination in *aille*, in *orgue*, in *iergue*, or in *uche*. Thus: *Vousiergue trouvaille bonorgue ce gigotmuche?* Do you think that leg of mutton good? A phrase addressed by Cartouche to a turnkey in order to find out whether the sum offered for his escape suited him.

The termination in *mar* has been added recently.

Slang, being the dialect of corruption, quickly becomes corrupted itself. Besides this, as it is always seeking concealment, as soon as it feels that it is understood, it changes its form. Contrary to what happens with every other vegetation, every ray of light which falls upon it kills whatever it touches. Thus slang is in constant process of decomposition and recomposition; an obscure and rapid work which never pauses. It passes over more ground in ten years than a language in ten centuries. Thus *le larton* (bread) becomes *le lartif*: *le gail* (horse) becomes *le gaye*: *la fertanche* (straw) becomes *la fertille*: *le momignard* (brat), *le momacque*: *les fiques* (duds), *frusques*: *la chique* (the church), *l'égrugeoir*: *le colabre* (neck), *le colos*. The devil is at first, *gabisto*, then *le rabouin*, then *the baker*; the priest is a *ratichon*, then the boar (*le*

sanglier); the dagger is *le vingt-deux* (twenty-two), then *le surin*, then *le lingre*; the police are *railles*, then *roussins*, then *rousses*, then *marchands de lacets* (dealers in stay-laces), then *coquers*, then *cognes*; the executioner is *le taule*, then *Charlot*, *l'atigeur*, then *le becquillard*. In the seventeenth century, to fight was "to give each other snuff"; in the nineteenth it is "to chew each other's throats." There have been twenty different phrases between these two extremes. Cartouche's talk would have been Hebrew to Lacenaire. All the words of this language are perpetually engaged in flight like the men who utter them.

Still, from time to time, and in consequence of this very movement, the ancient slang crops up again and becomes new once more. It has its headquarters where it maintains its sway. The Temple preserved the slang of the seventeenth century; Bicêtre, when it was a prison, preserved the slang of Thunes. There one could hear the termination in *anche* of the old Thuneurs. *Boyanches-tu* (bois-tu), do you drink? But perpetual movement remains its law, nevertheless.

If the philosopher succeeds in fixing, for a moment, for purposes of observation, this language which is incessantly evaporating, he falls into doleful and useful meditation. No study is more efficacious and more fecund in instruction. There is not a metaphor, not an analogy, in slang, which does not contain a lesson. Among these men, to beat means to feign; one beats a malady; ruse is their strength.

For them, the idea of the man is not separated from the idea of darkness. The night is called *la sorgue*; man, *l'orgue*. Man is a derivative of the night.

They have taken up the practice of considering society in the light of an atmosphere which kills them, of a fatal force, and they speak of their liberty as one would speak of his health. A man under arrest is a *sick man*; one who is condemned is a *dead man*.

The most terrible thing for the prisoner within the four walls in which he is buried, is a sort of glacial chastity, and he calls the dungeon the *castus*. In that funereal place, life out-

side always presents itself under its most smiling aspect. The prisoner has irons on his feet; you think, perhaps, that his thought is that it is with the feet that one walks? No; he is thinking that it is with the feet that one dances: so, when he has succeeded in severing his fetters, his first idea is that now he can dance, and he calls the saw the *bastringue* (public-house ball).—A name is a centre; profound assimilation.—The ruffian has two heads, one of which reasons out his actions and leads him all his life long, and the other which he has upon his shoulders on the day of his death; he calls the head which counsels him in crime *la sorbonne*, and the head which expiates it *la tronche*.—When a man has no longer anything but rags upon his body and vices in his heart, when he has arrived at that double moral and material degradation which the word blackguard characterizes in its two acceptations, he is ripe for crime; he is like a well-whetted knife; he has two cutting edges, his distress and his malice; so slang does not say a blackguard, it says *un régusé*.—What are the galleys? A brazier of damnation, a hell. The convict calls himself a *fagot*.—And finally, what name do malefactors give to their prison? The *college*. A whole penitentiary system can be evolved from that word.

Does the reader wish to know where the majority of the songs of the galleys, those refrains called in the special vocabulary *lirlonfa*, have had their birth?

Let him listen to what follows:—

There existed at the Châtelet in Paris a large and long cellar. This cellar was eight feet below the level of the Seine. It had neither windows nor air-holes, its only aperture was the door; men could enter there, air could not. This vault had for ceiling a vault of stone, and for floor ten inches of mud. It was flagged; but the pavement had rotted and cracked under the oozing of the water. Eight feet above the floor, a long and massive beam traversed this subterranean excavation from side to side; from this beam hung, at short distances apart, chains three feet long, and at the end of these chains there were rings for the neck. In this vault men who had been

condemned to the galleys were incarcerated until the day of their departure for Toulon. They were thrust under this beam, where each one found his fetters swinging in the darkness and waiting for him.

The chains, those pendant arms, and the necklets, those open hands, caught the unhappy wretches by the throat. They were rivetted and left there. As the chain was too short, they could not lie down. They remained motionless in that cavern, in that night, beneath that beam, almost hanging, forced to unheard-of efforts to reach their bread, jug, or their vault overhead, mud even to mid-leg, filth flowing to their very calves, broken asunder with fatigue, with thighs and knees giving way, clinging fast to the chain with their hands in order to obtain some rest, unable to sleep except when standing erect, and awakened every moment by the strangling of the collar; some woke no more. In order to eat, they pushed the bread, which was flung to them in the mud, along their leg with their heel until it reached their hand.

How long did they remain thus? One month, two months, six months sometimes; one stayed a year. It was the ante-chamber of the galleys. Men were put there for stealing a hare from the king. In this sepulchre-hell, what did they do? What man can do in a sepulchre, they went through the agonies of death, and what can man do in hell, they sang: for song lingers where there is no longer any hope. In the waters of Malta, when a galley was approaching, the song could be heard before the sound of the oars. Poor Survineent, the poacher, who had gone through the prison-cellar of the Châtelet, said: "It was the rhymes that kept me up." Uselessness of poetry. What is the good of rhyme?

It is in this cellar that nearly all the slang songs had their birth. It is from the dungeon of the Grand-Châtelet of Paris that comes the melancholy refrain of the Montgomery galley: "*Timaloumisaine, timaloumison.*" The majority of these songs are melancholy; some are gay; one is tender:—

Icaille est la theatre
Du petit dardant.

Here is the theatre
Of the little archer (Cupid).

Do what you will, you cannot annihilate that eternal relic in the heart of man, love.

In this world of dismal deeds, people keep their secrets. The secret is the thing above all others. The secret, in the eyes of these wretches, is unity which serves as a base of union. To betray a secret is to tear from each member of this fierce community something of his own personality. To inform against, in the energetic slang dialect, is called: "to eat the bit." As though the informer drew to himself a little of the substance of all and nourished himself on a bit of each one's flesh.

What does it signify to receive a box on the ear? Common-place metaphor replies: "It is to see thirty-six candles." Here slang intervenes and takes it up: Candle, *camoufle*. Thereupon, the ordinary tongue gives *camouflet*¹ as the synonym for *soufflet*. Thus, by a sort of infiltration from below upwards, with the aid of metaphor, that incalculable, trajectory slang mounts from the cavern to the Academy; and Poulaillex saying: "I light my *camoufle*," causes Voltaire to write: "Langleviel La Beaumelle deserves a hundred *camouflets*."

Researches in slang mean discoveries at every step. Study and investigation of this strange idiom lead to the mysterious point of intersection of regular society with society which is accursed.

The thief also has his food for cannon. stealable matter, you, I, whoever passes by; *le pantre*. (*Pan*, everybody.)

Slang is language turned convict.

That the thinking principle of man be thrust down ever so low, that it can be dragged and pinioned there by obscure tyrannies of fatality, that it can be bound by no one knows what fetters in that abyss, is sufficient to create consternation.

Oh, poor thought of miserable wretches!

Alas! will no one come to the succor of the human soul in that darkness? Is it her destiny there to await forever the mind, the liberator, the immense rider of Pegasi and hippo-

¹Smoke puffed in the face of a person asleep.

griffs, the combatant of heroes of the dawn who shall descend from the azure between two wings, the radiant knight of the future? Will she forever summon in vain to her assistance the lance of light of the ideal? Is she condemned to hear the fearful approach of Evil through the density of the gulf, and to catch glimpses, nearer and nearer at hand, beneath the hideous water, of that dragon's head, that maw streaked with foam, and that writhing undulation of claws, swellings, and rings? Must it remain there, without a gleam of light, without hope, given over to that terrible approach, vaguely scented out by the monster, shuddering, dishevelled, wringing its arms, forever chained to the rock of night, a sombre Andromeda white and naked amid the shadows!

CHAPTER III

SLANG WHICH WEEPS AND SLANG WHICH LAUGHS

As the reader perceives, slang in its entirety, slang of four hundred years ago, like the slang of to-day, is permeated with that sombre, symbolical spirit which gives to all words a mien which is now mournful, now menacing. One feels in it the wild and ancient sadness of those vagrants of the Court of Miracles who played at cards with packs of their own, some of which have come down to us. The eight of clubs, for instance, represented a huge tree bearing eight enormous trefoil leaves, a sort of fantastic personification of the forest. At the foot of this tree a fire was burning, over which three hares were roasting a huntsman on a spit, and behind him, on another fire, hung a steaming pot, whence emerged the head of a dog. Nothing can be more melancholy than these reprisals in painting, by a pack of cards, in the presence of stakes for the roasting of smugglers and of the cauldron for the boiling of counterfeiters. The diverse forms assumed by thought in the realm of slang, even song, even raillery, even menace, all partook of this powerless and dejected character.

All the songs, the melodies of some of which have been collected, were humble and lamentable to the point of evoking tears. The *pègre* is always the poor *pègre*, and he is always the hare in hiding, the fugitive mouse, the flying bird. He hardly complains, he contents himself with sighing; one of his moans has come down to us: "I do not understand how God, the father of men, can torture his children and his grandchildren and hear them cry, without himself suffering torture."¹ The wretch, whenever he has time to think, makes himself small before the low, and frail in the presence of society; he lies down flat on his face, he entreats, he appeals to the side of compassion; we feel that he is conscious of his guilt.

Towards the middle of the last century a change took place, prison songs and thieves' ritournelles assumed, so to speak, an insolent and jovial mien. The plaintive *maluré* was replaced by the *larifla*. We find in the eighteenth century, in nearly all the songs of the galleys and prisons, a diabolical and enigmatical gayety. We hear this strident and lilting refrain which we should say had been lighted up by a phosphorescent gleam, and which seems to have been flung into the forest by a will-o'-the-wisp playing the fife:—

Miralabi suslababo
Mirliton ribonribette
Surlababi mirlababo
Mirliton ribonribo.

This was sung in a cellar or in a nook of the forest while cutting a man's throat.

A serious symptom. In the eighteenth century, the ancient melancholy of the dejected classes vanishes. They began to laugh. They rally the *grand meg* and the *grand dab*. Given Louis XV. they call the King of France "le Marquis de Pantin." And behold, they are almost gay. A sort of gleam proceeds from these miserable wretches, as though their

¹Je n'entrave que le dail comment meck, le daron des orgues, peut atiger ses mômes et ses momignards et les locher criblant sans être agité lui-meme.

consciencess were not heavy within them any more. These lamentable tribes of darkness have no longer merely the desperate audacity of actions, they possess the heedless audacity of mind. A sign that they are losing the sense of their criminality, and that they feel, even among thinkers and dreamers, some undefinable support which the latter themselves know not of. A sign that theft and pillage are beginning to filter into doctrines and sophisms, in such a way as to lose somewhat of their ugliness, while communicating much of it to sophisms and doctrines. A sign, in short, of some outbreak which is prodigious and near unless some diversion shall arise.

Let us pause a moment. Whom are we accusing here? Is it the eighteenth century? Is it philosophy? Certainly not. The work of the eighteenth century is healthy and good and wholesome. The encyclopedists, Diderot at their head; the physiocrates, Turgot at their head; the philosophers, Voltaire at their head; the Utopians, Rousseau at their head,—these are four sacred legions. Humanity's immense advance towards the light is due to them. They are the four vanguards of the human race, marching towards the four cardinal points of progress. Diderot towards the beautiful, Turgot towards the useful, Voltaire towards the true, Rousseau towards the just. But by the side of and above the philosophers, there were the sophists, a venomous vegetation mingled with a healthy growth, hemlock in the virgin forest. While the executioner was burning the great books of the liberators of the century on the grand staircase of the court-house, writers now forgotten were publishing, with the King's sanction, no one knows what strangely disorganizing writings, which were eagerly read by the unfortunate. Some of these publications, odd to say, which were patronized by a prince, are to be found in the Secret Library. These facts, significant but unknown, were imperceptible on the surface. Sometimes, in the very obscurity of a fact lurks its danger. It is obscure because it is underhand. Of all these writers, the one who probably then excavated in the masses the most unhealthy gallery was Restif de La Bretonne.

This work, peculiar to the whole of Europe, effected more ravages in Germany than anywhere else. In Germany, during a given period, summed up by Schiller in his famous drama *The Robbers*, theft and pillage rose up in protest against property and labor, assimilated certain specious and false elementary ideas, which, though just in appearance, were absurd in reality, enveloped themselves in these ideas, disappeared within them, after a fashion, assumed an abstract name, passed into the state of theory, and in that shape circulated among the laborious, suffering, and honest masses, unknown even to the imprudent chemists who had prepared the mixture, unknown even to the masses who accepted it. Whenever a fact of this sort presents itself, the case is grave. Suffering engenders wrath; and while the prosperous classes blind themselves or fall asleep, which is the same thing as shutting one's eyes, the hatred of the unfortunate classes lights its torch at some aggrieved or ill-made spirit which dreams in a corner, and sets itself to the scrutiny of society. The scrutiny of hatred is a terrible thing.

Hence, if the ill-fortune of the times so wills it, those fearful commotions which were formerly called *jacqueries*, beside which purely political agitations are the merest child's play, which are no longer the conflict of the oppressed and the oppressor, but the revolt of discomfort against comfort. Then everything crumbles.

Jacqueries are earthquakes of the people.

It is this peril, possibly imminent towards the close of the eighteenth century, which the French Revolution, that immense act of probity, cut short.

The French Revolution, which is nothing else than the idea armed with the sword, rose erect, and, with the same abrupt movement, closed the door of ill and opened the door of good.

It put a stop to torture, promulgated the truth, expelled miasma, rendered the century healthy, crowned the populace.

It may be said of it that it created man a second time, by giving him a second soul, the right.

The nineteenth century has inherited and profited by its

work, and to-day, the social catastrophe to which we lately alluded is simply impossible. Blind is he who announces it! Foolish is he who fears it! Revolution is the vaccine of Jacquerie.

Thanks to the Revolution, social conditions have echanged. Feudal and monarehical maladies no longer run in our blood. There is no more of the Middle Ages in our constitution. We no longer live in the days when terrible swarms within made irruptions, when one heard beneath his feet the obscure course of a dull rumble, when indescribable elevations from mole-like tunnels appeared on the surface of civilization, where the soil cracked open, where the roofs of caverns yawned, and where one suddenly beheld monstrous heads emerging from the earth.

The revolutionary sense is a moral sense. The sentiment of right, once developed, develops the sentiment of duty. The law of all is liberty, which ends where the liberty of others begins, according to Robespierre's admirable definition. Since '89, the whole people has been dilating into a sublime individual; there is not a poor man, who, possessing his right, has not his ray of sun; the die-of-hunger feels within him the honesty of France; the dignity of the citizen is an internal armor; he who is free is scrupulous; he who votes reigns. Hence incorruptibility; hence the misearriage of unhealthy lusts; hence eyes heroically lowered before temptations. The revolutionary wholesomeness is such, that on a day of deliverance, a 14th of July, a 10th of August, there is no longer any populace. The first cry of the enlightened and increasing throngs is: death to thieves! Progress is an honest man; the ideal and the absolute do not filch pocket-handkerchiefs. By whom were the wagons containing the wealth of the Tuileries escorted in 1848? By the rag-pickers of the Faubourg Saint-Antoine. Rags mounted guard over the treasure. Virtue rendered these tatterdemalions resplendent. In those wagons in ehests, hardly closed, and some, even, half-open, amid a hundred dazzling caskets, was that ancient crown of France, studded with diamonds, surmounted by the earbunele

of royalty, by the Regent diamond, which was worth thirty millions. Barefooted, they guarded that crown.

Hence, no more *Jacquerie*. I regret it for the sake of the skilful. The old fear has produced its last effects in that quarter; and henceforth it can no longer be employed in politics. The principal spring of the red spectre is broken. Every one knows it now. The scare-crow scares no longer. The birds take liberties with the mannikin, foul creatures alight upon it, the bourgeois laugh at it.

CHAPTER IV

THE TWO DUTIES: TO WATCH AND TO HOPE

THIS being the case, is all social danger dispelled? Certainly not. There is no *Jacquerie*; society may rest assured on that point; blood will no longer rush to its head. But let society take heed to the manner in which it breathes. Apoplexy is no longer to be feared, but phthisis is there. Social phthisis is called misery.

One can perish from being undermined as well as from being struck by lightning.

Let us not weary of repeating, and sympathetic souls must not forget that this is the first of fraternal obligations, and selfish hearts must understand that the first of political necessities consists in thinking first of all of the disinherited and sorrowing throngs, in solacing, airing, enlightening, loving them, in enlarging their horizon to a magnificent extent, in lavishing upon them education in every form, in offering them the example of labor, never the example of idleness, in diminishing the individual burden by enlarging the notion of the universal aim, in setting a limit to poverty without setting a limit to wealth, in creating vast fields of public and popular activity, in having, like *Briareus*, a hundred hands to extend in all directions to the oppressed and the feeble, in employing the collective power for that grand duty of opening workshops

for all arms, schools for all aptitudes, and laboratories for all degrees of intelligence, in augmenting salaries, diminishing trouble, balancing what should be and what is, that is to say, in proportioning enjoyment to effort and a glut to need; in a word, in evolving from the social apparatus more light and more comfort for the benefit of those who suffer and those who are ignorant.

And, let us say it, all this is but the beginning. The true question is this: labor cannot be a law without being a right.

We will not insist upon this point; this is not the proper place for that.

If nature calls itself Providence, society should call itself foresight.

Intellectual and moral growth is no less indispensable than material improvement. To know is a sacrament, to think is the prime necessity, truth is nourishment as well as grain. A reason which fasts from science and wisdom grows thin. Let us enter equal complaint against stomachs and minds which do not eat. If there is anything more heart-breaking than a body perishing for lack of bread, it is a soul which is dying from hunger for the light.

The whole of progress tends in the direction of solution. Some day we shall be amazed. As the human race mounts upward, the deep layers emerge naturally from the zone of distress. The obliteration of misery will be accomplished by a simple elevation of level.

We should do wrong were we to doubt this blessed consummation.

The past is very strong, it is true, at the present moment. It censures. This rejuvenation of a corpse is surprising. Behold, it is walking and advancing. It seems a victor; this dead body is a conqueror. He arrives with his legions, superstitions, with his sword, despotism, with his banner, ignorance; a while ago, he won ten battles. He advances, he threatens, he laughs, he is at our doors. Let us not despair, on our side. Let us sell the field on which Hannibal is encamped.

What have we to fear, we who believe?

No such thing as a back-flow of ideas exists any more than there exists a return of a river on its course.

But let those who do not desire a future reflect on this matter. When they say "no" to progress, it is not the future but themselves that they are condemning. They are giving themselves a sad malady; they are inoculating themselves with the past. There is but one way of rejecting To-morrow, and that is to die.

Now, no death, that of the body as late as possible, that of the soul never,—this is what we desire.

Yes, the enigma will utter its word, the sphinx will speak, the problem will be solved.

Yes, the people, sketched out by the eighteenth century, will be finished by the nineteenth. He who doubts this is an idiot! The future blossoming, the near blossoming forth of universal well-being, is a divinely fatal phenomenon.

Immense combined propulsions direct human affairs and conduct them within a given time to a logical state, that is to say, to a state of equilibrium; that is to say, to equity. A force composed of earth and heaven results from humanity and governs it; this force is a worker of miracles; marvellous issues are no more difficult to it than extraordinary vicissitudes. Aided by science, which comes from one man, and by the event, which comes from another, it is not greatly alarmed by these contradictions in the attitude of problems, which seem impossibilities to the vulgar herd. It is no less skilful at causing a solution to spring forth from the reconciliation of ideas, than a lesson from the reconciliation of facts, and we may expect anything from that mysterious power of progress, which brought the Orient and the Occident face to face one fine day, in the depths of a sepulchre, and made the imams converse with Bonaparte in the interior of the Great Pyramid.

In the meantime, let there be no halt, no hesitation, no pause in the grandiose onward march of minds. Social philosophy consists essentially in science and peace. Its object is, and its result must be, to dissolve wrath by the study of an-

tagonisms. It examines, it scrutinizes, it analyzes; then it puts together once more, it proceeds by means of reduction, discarding all hatred.

More than once, a society has been seen to give way before the wind which is let loose upon mankind; history is full of the shipwrecks of nations and empires; manners, customs, laws, religions,—and some fine day that unknown force, the hurrican, passes by and bears them all away. The civilizations of India, of Chaldea, of Persia, of Syria, of Egypt, have disappeared one after the other. Why? We know not. What are the causes of these disasters? We do not know. Could these societies have been saved? Was it their fault? Did they persist in the fatal vice which destroyed them? What is the amount of suicide in these terrible deaths of a nation and a race? Questions to which there exists no reply. Darkness enwraps condemned civilizations. They sprung a leak, then they sank. We have nothing more to say; and it is with a sort of terror that we look on, at the bottom of that sea which is called the past, behind those colossal waves, at the shipwreck of those immense vessels, Babylon, Nineveh, Tarsus, Thebes, Rome, beneath the fearful gusts which emerge from all the mouths of the shadows. But shadows are there, and light is here. We are not acquainted with the maladies of these ancient civilizations, we do not know the infirmities of our own. Everywhere upon it we have the right of light, we contemplate its beauties, we lay bare its defects. Where it is ill, we probe; and the sickness once diagnosed, the study of the cause leads to the discovery of the remedy. Our civilization, the work of twenty centuries, is its law and its prodigy; it is worth the trouble of saving. It will be saved. It is already much to have solaced it; its enlightenment is yet another point. All the labors of modern social philosophies must converge towards this point. The thinker of to-day has a great duty—to auscultate civilization.

We repeat, that this auscultation brings encouragement; it is by this persistence in encouragement that we wish to conclude these pages, an austere interlude in a mournful drama.

Beneath the social mortality, we feel human imperishableness. The globe does not perish, because it has these wounds, craters, eruptions, sulphur pits, here and there, nor because of a volcano which ejects its pus. The maladies of the people do not kill man.

And yet, any one who follows the course of social clinics shakes his head at times. The strongest, the tenderest, the most logical have their hours of weakness.

Will the future arrive? It seems as though we might almost put this question, when we behold so much terrible darkness. Melancholy face-to-face encounter of selfish and wretched. On the part of the selfish, the prejudices, shadows of costly education, appetite increasing through intoxication, a giddiness of prosperity which dulls, a fear of suffering which, in some, goes as far as an aversion for the suffering, an implacable satisfaction, the *I* so swollen that it bars the soul; on the side of the wretched covetousness, envy, hatred of seeing others enjoy, the profound impulses of the human beast towards assuaging its desires, hearts full of mist, sadness, need, fatality, impure and simple ignorance.

Shall we continue to raise our eyes to heaven? is the luminous point which we distinguish there one of those which vanish? The ideal is frightful to behold, thus lost in the depths, small, isolated, imperceptible, brilliant, but surrounded by those great, black menaces, monstrously heaped around it; yet no more in danger than a star in the maw of the clouds.

BOOK EIGHTH.—ENCHANTMENTS AND DESOLATIONS

CHAPTER I

FULL LIGHT

THE reader has probably understood that Éponine, having recognized through the gate, the inhabitant of that Rue Plumet whither Magnon had sent her, had begun by keeping the ruffians away from the Rue Plumet, and had then conducted Marius thither, and that, after many days spent in ecstacy before that gate, Marius, drawn on by that force which draws the iron to the magnet and a lover towards the stones of which is built the house of her whom he loves, had finally entered Cosette's garden as Romeo entered the garden of Juliet. This had even proved easier for him than for Romeo; Romeo was obliged to scale a wall, Marius had only to use a little force on one of the bars of the decrepit gate which vacillated in its rusty recess, after the fashion of old people's teeth. Marius was slender and readily passed through.

As there was never any one in the street, and as Marius never entered the garden except at night, he ran no risk of being seen.

Beginning with that blessed and holy hour when a kiss betrothed these two souls, Marius was there every evening. If, at that period of her existence, Cosette had fallen in love with a man in the least unscrupulous or debauched, she would have been lost; for there are generous natures which yield themselves, and Cosette was one of them. One of woman's magnanimities is to yield. Love, at the height where it is absolute, is complicated with some indescribably celestial blind-

ness of modesty. But what dangers you run, O noble souls! Often you give the heart, and we take the body. Your heart remains with you, you gaze upon it in the gloom with a shudder. Love has no middle course; it either ruins or it saves. All human destiny lies in this dilemma. This dilemma, ruin, or safety, is set forth no more inexorably by any fatality than by love. Love is life, if it is not death. Cradle; also coffin. The same sentiment says "yes" and "no" in the human heart. Of all the things that God has made, the human heart is the one which sheds the most light, alas! and the most darkness.

God willed that Cosette's love should encounter one of the loves which save.

Throughout the whole of the month of May of that year 1832, there were there, in every night, in that poor, neglected garden, beneath that thicket which grew thicker and more fragrant day by day, two beings composed of all chastity, all innocence, overflowing with all the felicity of heaven, nearer to the archangels than to mankind, pure, honest, intoxicated, radiant, who shone for each other amid the shadows. It seemed to Cosette that Marius had a crown, and to Marius that Cosette had a nimbus. They touched each other, they gazed at each other, they clasped each other's hands, they pressed close to each other; but there was a distance which they did not pass. Not that they respected it; they did not know of its existence. Marius was conscious of a barrier, Cosette's innocence; and Cosette of a support, Marius' loyalty. The first kiss had also been the last. Marius, since that time, had not gone further than to touch Cosette's hand, or her kerchief, or a lock of her hair, with his lips. For him, Cosette was a perfume and not a woman. He inhaled her. She refused nothing, and he asked nothing. Cosette was happy, and Marius was satisfied. They lived in this ecstatic state which can be described as the dazzling of one soul by another soul. It was the ineffable first embrace of two maiden souls in the ideal. Two swans meeting on the Jungfrau.

At that hour of love, an hour when voluptuousness is absolutely mute, beneath the omnipotence of ecstasy, Marius, the

pure and seraphic Marius, would rather have gone to a woman of the town than have raised Cosette's robe to the height of her ankle. Once, in the moonlight, Cosette stooped to pick up something on the ground, her bodice fell apart and permitted a glimpse of the beginning of her throat. Marius turned away his eyes.

What took place between these two beings? Nothing. They adored each other.

At night, when they were there, that garden seemed a living and a sacred spot. All flowers unfolded around them and sent them incense; and they opened their souls and scattered them over the flowers. The wanton and vigorous vegetation quivered, full of strength and intoxication, around these two innocents, and they uttered words of love which set the trees to trembling.

What words were these? Breaths. Nothing more. These breaths sufficed to trouble and to touch all nature round about. Magic power which we should find it difficult to understand were we to read in a book these conversations which are made to be borne away and dispersed like smoke wreaths by the breeze beneath the leaves. Take from those murmurs of two lovers that melody which proceeds from the soul and which accompanies them like a lyre, and what remains is nothing more than a shade; you say: "What! is that all!" eh! yes, childish prattle, repetitions, laughter at nothing, nonsense, everything that is deepest and most sublime in the world! The only things which are worth the trouble of saying and hearing!

The man who has never heard, the man who has never uttered these absurdities, these paltry remarks, is an imbecile and a malicious fellow. Cosette said to Marius:—

"Dost thou know?—"

[In all this and athwart this celestial maidenliness, and without either of them being able to say how it had come about, they had begun to call each other *thou*.]

"Dost thou know? My name is Euphrasie."

"Euphrasie? Why, no, thy name is Cosette."

"Oh! Cosette is a very ugly name that was given to me when

I was a little thing. But my real name is Euphrasie. Dost thou like that name—Euphrasie?”

“Yes. But Cosette is not ugly.”

“Do you like it better than Euphrasie?”

“Why, yes.”

“Then I like it better too. Truly, it is pretty, Cosette. Call me Cosette.”

And the smile that she added made of this dialogue an idyl worthy of a grove situated in heaven. On another occasion she gazed intently at him and exclaimed:—

“Monsieur, you are handsome, you are good-looking, you are witty, you are not at all stupid, you are much more learned than I am, but I bid you defiance with this word: I love you!”

And Marius, in the very heavens, thought he heard a strain sung by a star.

Or she bestowed on him a gentle tap because he coughed, and she said to him:—

“Don’t cough, sir; I will not have people cough on my domain without my permission. It’s very naughty to cough and to disturb me. I want you to be well, because, in the first place, if you were not well, I should be very unhappy. What should I do then?”

And this was simply divine.

Once Marius said to Cosette:—

“Just imagine, I thought at one time that your name was Ursule.”

This made both of them laugh the whole evening.

In the middle of another conversation, he chanced to exclaim:—

“Oh! One day, at the Luxembourg, I had a good mind to finish breaking up a veteran!” But he stopped short, and went no further. He would have been obliged to speak to Cosette of her garter, and that was impossible. This bordered on a strange theme, the flesh, before which that immense and innocent love recoiled with a sort of sacred fright.

Marius pictured life with Cosette to himself like this, without anything else; to come every evening to the Rue Plumet,

to displace the old and accommodating bar of the chief-justice's gate, to sit elbow to elbow on that bench, to gaze through the trees at the scintillation of the on-coming night, to fit a fold of the knee of his trousers into the ample fall of Cosette's gown, to caress her thumb-nail, to call her *thou*, to smell of the same flower, one after the other, forever, indefinitely. During this time, clouds passed above their heads. Every time that the wind blows it bears with it more of the dreams of men than of the clouds of heaven.

This chaste, almost shy love was not devoid of gallantry, by any means. To pay compliments to the woman whom a man loves is the first method of bestowing caresses, and he is half audacious who tries it. A compliment is something like a kiss through a veil. Voluptuousness mingles there with its sweet tiny point, while it hides itself. The heart draws back before voluptuousness only to love the more. Marius' blandishments, all saturated with fancy, were, so to speak, of azure hue. The birds when they fly up yonder, in the direction of the angels, must hear such words. There were mingled with them, nevertheless, life, humanity, all the positiveness of which Marius was capable. It was what is said in the bower, a prelude to what will be said in the chamber; a lyrical effusion, strophe and sonnet intermingled, pleasing hyperboles of cooing, all the refinements of adoration arranged in a bouquet and exhaling a celestial perfume, an ineffable twitter of heart to heart.

"Oh!" murmured Marius, "how beautiful you are! I dare not look at you. It is all over with me when I contemplate you. You are a grace. I know not what is the matter with me. The hem of your gown, when the tip of your shoe peeps from beneath, upsets me. And then, what an enchanted gleam when you open your thought even but a little! You talk astonishingly good sense. It seems to me at times that you are a dream. Speak, I listen, I admire. Oh Cosette! how strange it is and how charming! I am really beside myself. You are adorable, Mademoiselle. I study your feet with the microscope and your soul with the telescope."

And Cosette answered:—

“I have been loving a little more all the time that has passed since this morning.”

Questions and replies took care of themselves in this dialogue, which always turned with mutual consent upon love, as the little pith figures always turn on their peg.

Cosette's whole person was ingenuousness, ingenuity, transparency, whiteness, candor, radiance. It might have been said of Cosette that she was clear. She produced on those who saw her the sensation of April and dawn. There was dew in her eyes. Cosette was a condensation of the auroral light in the form of a woman.

It was quite simple that Marius should admire her, since he adored her. But the truth is, that this little school-girl, fresh from the convent, talked with exquisite penetration and uttered, at times, all sorts of true and delicate sayings. Her prattle was conversation. She never made a mistake about anything, and she saw things justly. The woman feels and speaks with the tender instinct of the heart, which is infallible.

No one understands so well as a woman, how to say things that are, at once, both sweet and deep. Sweetness and depth, they are the whole of woman; in them lies the whole of heaven.

In this full felicity, tears welled up to their eyes every instant. A crushed lady-bug, a feather fallen from a nest, a branch of hawthorn broken, aroused their pity, and their ecstasy, sweetly mingled with melancholy, seemed to ask nothing better than to weep. The most sovereign symptom of love is a tenderness that is, at times, almost unbearable.

And, in addition to this,—all these contradictions are the lightning play of love,—they were fond of laughing, they laughed readily and with a delicious freedom, and so familiarly that they sometimes presented the air of two boys.

Still, though unknown to hearts intoxicated with purity, nature is always present and will not be forgotten. She is there with her brutal and sublime object; and however great

may be the innocence of souls, one feels in the most modest private interview, the adorable and mysterious shade which separates a couple of lovers from a pair of friends.

They idolized each other.

The permanent and the immutable are persistent. People live, they smile, they laugh, they make little grimaces with the tips of their lips, they interlace their fingers, they call each other *thou*, and that does not prevent eternity.

Two lovers hide themselves in the evening, in the twilight, in the invisible, with the birds, with the roses; they fascinate each other in the darkness with their hearts which they throw into their eyes, they murmur, they whisper, and in the meantime, immense librations of the planets fill the infinite universe.

CHAPTER II

THE BEWILDERMENT OF PERFECT HAPPINESS

THEY existed vaguely, frightened at their happiness. They did not notice the cholera which decimated Paris precisely during that very month. They had confided in each other as far as possible, but this had not extended much further than their names. Marius had told Cosette that he was an orphan, that his name was Marius Pontmercy, that he was a lawyer, that he lived by writing things for publishers, that his father had been a colonel, that the latter had been a hero, and that he, Marius, was on bad terms with his grandfather who was rich. He had also hinted at being a baron, but this had produced no effect on Cosette. She did not know the meaning of the word. Marius was Marius. On her side, she had confided to him that she had been brought up at the Petit-Picpus convent, that her mother, like his own, was dead, that her father's name was M. Fauchelevent, that he was very good, that he gave a great deal to the poor, but that he was poor himself, and that he denied himself everything though he denied her nothing.

Strange to say, in the sort of symphony which Marius had lived since he had been in the habit of seeing Cosette, the past, even the most recent past, had become so confused and distant to him, that what Cosette told him satisfied him completely. It did not even occur to him to tell her about the nocturnal adventure in the hovel, about Thénardier, about the burn, and about the strange attitude and singular flight of her father. Marius had momentarily forgotten all this; in the evening he did not even know that there had been a morning, what he had done, where he had breakfasted, nor who had spoken to him; he had songs in his ears which rendered him deaf to every other thought; he only existed at the hours when he saw Cosette. Then, as he was in heaven, it was quite natural that he should forget earth. Both bore languidly the indefinable burden of immaterial pleasures. Thus lived these somnambulists who are called lovers.

Alas! Who is there who has not felt all these things? Why does there come an hour when one emerges from this azure, and why does life go on afterwards?

Loving almost takes the place of thinking. Love is an ardent forgetfulness of all the rest. Then ask logic of passion if you will. There is no more absolute logical sequence in the human heart than there is a perfect geometrical figure in the celestial mechanism. For Cosette and Marius nothing existed except Marius and Cosette. The universe around them had fallen into a hole. They lived in a golden minute. There was nothing before them, nothing behind. It hardly occurred to Marius that Cosette had a father. His brain was dazzled and obliterated. Of what did these lovers talk then? We have seen, of the flowers, and the swallows, the setting sun and the rising moon, and all sorts of important things. They had told each other everything except everything. The everything of lovers is nothing. But the father, the realities, that lair, the ruffians, that adventure, to what purpose? And was he very sure that this nightmare had actually existed? They were two, and they adored each other, and beyond that there was nothing. Nothing else existed. It is probable that this van-

ishing of hell in our rear is inherent to the arrival of paradise. Have we beheld demons? Are there any? Have we trembled? Have we suffered? We no longer know. A rosy cloud hangs over it.

So these two beings lived in this manner, high aloft, with all that improbability which is in nature; neither at the nadir nor at the zenith, between man and seraphim, above the mire, below the ether, in the clouds; hardly flesh and blood, soul and ecstasy from head to foot; already too sublime to walk the earth, still too heavily charged with humanity to disappear in the blue, suspended like atoms which are waiting to be precipitated; apparently beyond the bounds of destiny; ignorant of that rut; yesterday, to-day, to-morrow; amazed, rapturous, floating, soaring; at times so light that they could take their flight out into the infinite; almost prepared to soar away to all eternity. They slept wide-awake, thus sweetly lulled. Oh! splendid lethargy of the real overwhelmed by the ideal.

Sometimes, beautiful as Cosette was, Marius shut his eyes in her presence. The best way to look at the soul is through closed eyes.

Marius and Cosette never asked themselves whither this was to lead them. They considered that they had already arrived. It is a strange claim on man's part to wish that love should lead to something.

CHAPTER III

THE BEGINNING OF SHADOW

JEAN VALJEAN suspected nothing.

Cosette, who was rather less dreamy than Marius, was gay, and that sufficed for Jean Valjean's happiness. The thoughts which Cosette cherished, her tender preoccupations, Marius' image which filled her heart, took away nothing from the incomparable purity of her beautiful, chaste, and smiling brow. She was at the age when the virgin bears her love as the angel

his lily. So Jean Valjean was at ease. And then, when two lovers have come to an understanding, things always go well; the third party who might disturb their love is kept in a state of perfect blindness by a restricted number of precautions which are always the same in the case of all lovers. Thus, Cosette never objected to any of Jean Valjean's proposals. Did she want to take a walk? "Yes, dear little father." Did she want to stay at home? Very good. Did he wish to pass the evening with Cosette? She was delighted. As he always went to bed at ten o'clock, Marius did not come to the garden on such occasions until after that hour, when, from the street, he heard Cosette open the long glass door on the veranda. Of course, no one ever met Marius in the daytime. Jean Valjean never even dreamed any longer that Marius was in existence. Only once, one morning, he chanced to say to Cosette: "Why, you have whitewash on your back!" On the previous evening, Marius, in a transport, had pushed Cosette against the wall.

Old Toussaint, who retired early, thought of nothing but her sleep, and was as ignorant of the whole matter as Jean Valjean.

Marius never set foot in the house. When he was with Cosette, they hid themselves in a recess near the steps, in order that they might neither be seen nor heard from the street, and there they sat, frequently contenting themselves, by way of conversation, with pressing each other's hands twenty times a minute as they gazed at the branches of the trees. At such times, a thunderbolt might have fallen thirty paces from them, and they would not have noticed it, so deeply was the reverie of the one absorbed and sunk in the reverie of the other.

Limpid purity. Hours wholly white; almost all alike. This sort of love is a recollection of lily petals and the plumage of the dove.

The whole extent of the garden lay between them and the street. Every time that Marius entered and left, he carefully adjusted the bar of the gate in such a manner that no displacement was visible.

He usually went away about midnight, and returned to Courfeyrac's lodgings. Courfeyrac said to Bahorel:—

“Would you believe it? Marius comes home nowadays at one o'clock in the morning.”

Bahorel replied:—

“What do you expect? There's always a petard in a semi-nary fellow.”

At times, Courfeyrac folded his arms, assumed a serious air, and said to Marius:—

“You are getting irregular in your habits, young man.”

Courfeyrac, being a practical man, did not take in good part this reflection of an invisible paradise upon Marius; he was not much in the habit of concealed passions; it made him impatient, and now and then he called upon Marius to come back to reality.

One morning, he threw him this admonition:—

“My dear fellow, you produce upon me the effect of being located in the moon, the realm of dreams, the province of illusions, capital, soap-bubble. Come, be a good boy, what's her name?”

But nothing could induce Marius “to talk.” They might have torn out his nails before one of the two sacred syllables of which that ineffable name, Cosette, was composed. True love is as luminous as the dawn, and as silent as the tomb. Only, Courfeyrac saw this change in Marius, that his taciturnity was of the beaming order.

During this sweet month of May, Marius and Cosette learned to know these immense delights. To dispute and to say *you* for *thou*, simply that they might say *thou* the better afterwards. To talk at great length with very minute details, of persons in whom they took not the slightest interest in the world; another proof that in that ravishing opera called love, the libretto counts for almost nothing;

For Marius, to listen to Cosette discussing finery;

For Cosette, to listen to Marius talk in politics;

To listen, knee pressed to knee, to the carriages rolling along the Rue de Babylone;

To gaze upon the same planet in space, or at the same glow-worm gleaming in the grass ;

To hold their peace together ; a still greater delight than conversation ;

Etc., etc.

In the meantime, divers complications were approaching.

One evening, Marius was on his way to the rendezvous, by way of the Boulevard des Invalides. He habitually walked with drooping head. As he was on the point of turning the corner of the Rue Plumet, he heard some one quite close to him say :—

“Good evening, Monsieur Marius.”

He raised his head and recognized Éponine.

This produced a singular effect upon him. He had not thought of that girl a single time since the day when she had conducted him to the Rue Plumet, he had not seen her again, and she had gone completely out of his mind. He had no reasons for anything but gratitude towards her, he owed her his happiness, and yet, it was embarrassing to him to meet her.

It is an error to think that passion, when it is pure and happy, leads man to a state of perfection ; it simply leads him, as we have noted, to a state of oblivion. In this situation, man forgets to be bad, but he also forgets to be good. Gratitude, duty, matters essential and important to be remembered, vanish. At any other time, Marius would have behaved quite differently to Éponine. Absorbed in Cosette, he had not even clearly put it to himself that this Éponine was named Éponine Thénardier, and that she bore the name inscribed in his father’s will, that name, for which, but a few months before, he would have so ardently sacrificed himself. We show Marius as he was. His father himself was fading out of his soul to some extent, under the splendor of his love.

He replied with some embarrassment :—

“Ah ! so it’s you, Éponine ?”

“Why do you call me *you* ? Have I done anything to you ?”

“No,” he answered.

Certainly, he had nothing against her. Far from it. Only,

he felt that he could not do otherwise, now that he used *thou* to Cosette, than say *you* to Éponine.

As he remained silent, she exclaimed :—

“Say—”

Then she paused. It seemed as though words failed that creature formerly so heedless and so bold. She tried to smile and could not. Then she resumed :—

“Well?”

Then she paused again, and remained with downcast eyes.

“Good evening, Mr. Marius,” said she suddenly and abruptly; and away she went.

CHAPTER IV

A CAB RUNS IN ENGLISH AND BARKS IN SLANG

THE following day was the 3d of June, 1832, a date which it is necessary to indicate on account of the grave events which at that epoch hung on the horizon of Paris in the state of lightning-charged clouds. Marius, at nightfall, was pursuing the same road as on the preceding evening, with the same thoughts of delight in his heart, when he caught sight of Éponine approaching, through the trees of the boulevard. Two days in succession—this was too much. He turned hastily aside, quitted the boulevard, changed his course and went to the Rue Plumet through the Rue Monsieur.

This caused Éponine to follow him to the Rue Plumet, a thing which she had not yet done. Up to that time, she had contented herself with watching him on his passage along the boulevard without ever seeking to encounter him. It was only on the evening before that she had attempted to address him.

So Éponine followed him, without his suspecting the fact. She saw him displace the bar and slip into the garden.

She approached the railing, felt of the bars one after the other, and readily recognized the one which Marius had moved.

She murmured in a low voice and in gloomy accents:—

“None of that, Lisette!”

She seated herself on the underpinning of the railing, close beside the bar, as though she were guarding it. It was precisely at the point where the railing touched the neighboring wall. There was a dim nook there, in which Éponine was entirely concealed.

She remained thus for more than an hour, without stirring and without breathing, a prey to her thoughts.

Towards ten o'clock in the evening, one of the two or three persons who passed through the Rue Plumet, an old, belated bourgeois who was making haste to escape from this deserted spot of evil repute, as he skirted the garden railings and reached the angle which it made with the wall, heard a dull and threatening voice saying:—

“I'm no longer surprised that he comes here every evening.”

The passer-by cast a glance around him, saw no one, dared not peer into the black niche, and was greatly alarmed. He redoubled his pace.

This passer-by had reason to make haste, for a very few instants later, six men, who were marching separately and at some distance from each other, along the wall, and who might have been taken for a gray patrol, entered the Rue Plumet.

The first to arrive at the garden railing halted, and waited for the others; a second later, all six were reunited.

These men began to talk in a low voice.

“This is the place.” said one of them.

“Is there a *cab* [dog] in the garden?” asked another.

“I don't know. In any case, I have fetched a ball that we'll make him eat.”

“Have you some putty to break the pane with?”

“Yes.”

“The railing is old,” interpolated a fifth, who had the voice of a ventriloquist.

“So much the better.” said the second who had spoken. “It won't screech under the saw, and it won't be hard to cut.”

The sixth, who had not yet opened his lips, now began to inspect the gate, as Éponine had done an hour earlier, grasping each bar in succession, and shaking them cautiously.

Thus he came to the bar which Marius had loosened. As he was on the point of grasping this bar, a hand emerged abruptly from the darkness, fell upon his arm; he felt himself vigorously thrust aside by a push in the middle of his breast, and a hoarse voice said to him, but not loudly:—

“There’s a dog.”

At the same moment, he perceived a pale girl standing before him.

The man underwent that shock which the unexpected always brings. He bristled up in hideous wise; nothing is so formidable to behold as ferocious beasts who are uneasy; their terrified air evokes terror.

He recoiled and stammered:—

“What jade is this?”

“Your daughter.”

It was, in fact, Éponine, who had addressed Thénardier.

At the apparition of Éponine, the other five, that is to say, Claquesous, Guelemer, Babet, Brujon, and Montparnasse had noiselessly drawn near, without precipitation, without uttering a word, with the sinister slowness peculiar to these men of the night.

Some indescribable but hideous tools were visible in their hands. Guelemer held one of those pairs of curved pincers which prowlers call *fanchons*.

“Ah, see here, what are you about there? What do you want with us? Are you crazy?” exclaimed Thénardier, as loudly as one can exclaim and still speak low; “what have you come here to hinder our work for?”

Éponine burst out laughing, and threw herself on his neck.

“I am here, little father, because I am here. Isn’t a person allowed to sit on the stones nowadays? It’s you who ought not to be here. What have you come here for, since it’s a biscuit? I told Magnon so. There’s nothing to be done here.

But embrace me, my good little father! It's a long time since I've seen you! So you're out?"

Thénardier tried to disentangle himself from Éponine's arms, and grumbled:—

"That's good. You've embraced me. Yes, I'm out. I'm not in. Now, get away with you."

But Éponine did not release her hold, and redoubled her caresses.

"But how did you manage it, little pa? You must have been very clever to get out of that. Tell me about it! And my mother? Where is mother? Tell me about mamma."

Thénardier replied:—

"She's well. I don't know, let me alone, and be off, I tell you."

"I won't go, so there now," pouted Éponine like a spoiled child; "you send me off, and it's four months since I saw you, and I've hardly had time to kiss you."

And she caught her father round the neck again.

"Come, now, this is stupid!" said Babet.

"Make haste!" said Guelemer, "the cops may pass."

The ventriloquist's voice repeated his distich:—

"Nous n' sommes pas le jour de l'an,
A bécoter papa, maman."

"This isn't New Year's day
To peck at pa and ma."

Éponine turned to the five ruffians.

"Why, it's Monsieur Brujon. Good day, Monsieur Babet. Good day, Monsieur Claquesous. Don't you know me, Monsieur Guelemer? How goes it, Montparnasse?"

"Yes, they know you!" ejaculated Thénardier. "But good day, good evening, sheer off! leave us alone!"

"It's the hour for foxes, not for chickens," said Montparnasse.

"You see the job we have on hand here," added Babet.

Éponine caught Montparnasse's hand.

"Take care," said he, "you'll cut yourself, I've a knife open."

"My little Montparnasse," responded Éponine very gently,

“you must have confidence in people. I am the daughter of my father, perhaps. Monsieur Babet, Monsieur Guelemer, I’m the person who was charged to investigate this matter.”

It is remarkable that Éponine did not talk slang. That frightful tongue had become impossible to her since she had known Marius.

She pressed in her hand, small, bony, and feeble as that of a skeleton, Guelemer’s huge, coarse fingers, and continued:—

“You know well that I’m no fool. Ordinarily, I am believed. I have rendered you service on various occasions. Well, I have made inquiries; you will expose yourselves to no purpose, you see. I swear to you that there is nothing in this house.”

“There are lone women,” said Guelemer.

“No, the persons have moved away.”

“The eandles haven’t, anyway!” ejaculated Babet.

And he pointed out to Éponine, across the tops of the trees, a light which was wandering about in the mansard roof of the pavilion. It was Toussaint, who had stayed up to spread out some linen to dry.

Éponine made a final effort.

“Well,” said she, “they’re very poor folks, and it’s a hovel where there isn’t a sou.”

“Go to the devil!” cried Thénardier. “When we’ve turned the house upside down and put the cellar at the top and the attic below, we’ll tell you what there is inside, and whether it’s francs or sous or half-farthings.”

And he pushed her aside with the intention of entering.

“My good friend, Mr. Montparnasse,” said Éponine, “I entreat you, you are a good fellow, don’t enter.”

“Take care, you’ll cut yourself,” replied Montparnasse.

Thénardier resumed in his decided tone:—

“Decamp, my girl, and leave men to their own affairs!”

Éponine released Montparnasse’s hand, which she had grasped again, and said:—

“So you mean to enter this house?”

“Rather!” grinned the ventriloquist.



SHE SET HER BACK AGAINST THE GATE AND FACED THE RUFFIANS

Then she set her back against the gate, faced the six ruffians who were armed to the teeth, and to whom the night lent the visages of demons, and said in a firm, low voice:—

“Well, I don’t mean that you shall.”

They halted in amazement. The ventriloquist, however, finished his grin. She went on:—

“Friends! Listen well. This is not what you want. Now I’m talking. In the first place, if you enter this garden, if you lay a hand on this gate, I’ll screeam, I’ll beat on the door, I’ll rouse everybody, I’ll have the whole six of you seized, I’ll call the police.”

“She’d do it, too,” said Thénardier in a low tone to Brujon and the ventriloquist.

She shook her head and added:—

“Beginning with my father!”

Thénardier stepped nearer.

“Not so close, my good man!” said she.

He retreated, growling between his teeth:—

“Why, what’s the matter with her?”

And he added:—

“Bitch!”

She began to laugh in a terrible way:—

“As you like, but you shall not enter here. I’m not the daughter of a dog, since I’m the daughter of a wolf. There are six of you, what matters that to me? You are men. Well, I’m a woman. You don’t frighten me. I tell you that you shan’t enter this house, because it doesn’t suit me. If you approach, I’ll bark. I told you, I’m the dog, and I don’t care a straw for you. Go your way, you bore me! Go where you please, but don’t come here, I forbid it! You can use your knives, I’ll use kicks; it’s all the same to me, come on!”

She advanced a pace nearer the ruffians, she was terrible, she burst out laughing:—

“Pardine! I’m not afraid. I shall be hungry this summer, and I shall be cold this winter. Aren’t they ridiculous, these minnies of men, to think they can scare a girl! What! Scare? Oh, yes, much! Because you have finical poppets of mistresses

who hide under the bed when you put on a big voice, forsooth! I ain't afraid of anything, that I ain't!"

She fastened her intent gaze upon Thénardier and said:—
 "Not even of you, father!"

Then she continued, as she cast her blood-shot, spectre-like eyes upon the ruffians in turn:—

"What do I care if I'm picked up to-morrow morning on the pavement of the Rue Plumet, killed by the blows of my father's club, or whether I'm found a year from now in the nets at Saint-Cloud or the Isle of Swans in the midst of rotte^d old corks and drowned dogs?"

She was forced to pause; she was seized by a dry cough, her breath came from her weak and narrow chest like the death-rattle.

She resumed:—

"I have only to cry out, and people will come, and then slap, bang! There are six of you; I represent the whole world."

Thénardier made a movement towards her.

"Don't approach!" she cried.

He halted, and said gently:—

"Well, no; I won't approach, but don't speak so loud. So you intend to hinder us in our work, my daughter? But we must earn our living all the same. Have you no longer any kind feeling for your father?"

"You bother me," said Éponine.

"But we must live, we must eat—"

"Burst!"

So saying, she seated herself on the underpinning of the fence and hummed:—

"Mon bras si dodu,
 Ma jambe bien faite
 Et le temps perdu."

"My arm so plump,
 My leg well formed,
 And time wasted."

She had set her elbow on her knee and her chin in her hand, and she swung her foot with an air of indifference. Her tattered gown permitted a view of her thin shoulder-blades. The neighboring street lantern illuminated her profile and her

attitude. Nothing more resolute and more surprising could be seen.

The six rascals, speechless and gloomy at being held in check by a girl, retreated beneath the shadow east by the lantern, and held counsel with furious and humiliated shrugs.

In the meantime she stared at them with a stern but peaceful air.

"There's something the matter with her," said Babet. "A reason. Is she in love with the dog? It's a shame to miss his, anyway. Two women, an old fellow who lodges in the back-yard, and curtains that ain't so bad at the windows. The old love must be a Jew. I think the job's a good one."

"Well, go in, then, the rest of you," exclaimed Montparnasse. "Do the job. I'll stay here with the girl, and if she fails us—"

He flashed the knife, which he held open in his hand, in the light of the lantern.

Thénardier said not a word, and seemed ready for whatever the rest pleased.

Brujon, who was somewhat of an oracle, and who had, as the reader knows, "put up the job," had not as yet spoken. He seemed thoughtful. He had the reputation of not stieking at anything, and it was known that he had plundered a police post simply out of bravado. Besides this he made verses and songs, which gave him great authority.

Babet interrogated him:—

"You say nothing, Brujon?"

Brujon remained silent an instant longer, then he shook his head in various ways, and finally concluded to speak:—

"See here; this morning I came across two sparrows fighting, this evening I jostled a woman who was quarrelling. All that's bad. Let's quit."

They went away.

As they went, Montparnasse muttered:—

"Never mind! if they had wanted, I'd have cut her throat."

Babet responded:—

"I wouldn't. I don't hit a lady."

At the corner of the street they halted and exchanged the following enigmatical dialogue in a low tone:—

“Where shall we go to sleep to-night?”

“Under Pantin [Paris].”

“Have you the key to the gate, Thénardier?”

“Pardi.”

Éponine, who never took her eyes off of them, saw them retreat by the road by which they had come. She rose and began to creep after them along the walls and the houses. She followed them thus as far as the boulevard.

There they parted, and she saw these six men plunge into the gloom, where they appeared to melt away.

CHAPTER V

THINGS OF THE NIGHT

AFTER the departure of the ruffians, the Rue Plumet resumed its tranquil, nocturnal aspect. That which had just taken place in this street would not have astonished a forest. The lofty trees, the copses, the heaths, the branches rudely interlaced, the tall grass, exist in a sombre manner; the savage swarming there catches glimpses of sudden apparitions of the invisible; that which is below man distinguishes, through the mists, that which is beyond man; and the things of which we living beings are ignorant there meet face to face in the night. Nature, bristling and wild, takes alarm at certain approaches in which she fancies that she feels the supernatural. The forces of the gloom know each other, and are strangely balanced by each other. Teeth and claws fear what they cannot grasp. Blood-drinking bestiality, voracious appetites, hunger in search of prey, the armed instincts of nails and jaws which have for source and aim the belly, glare and smell out uneasily the impassive spectral forms straying beneath a shroud, erect in its vague and shuddering robe, and which seem to them to live with a dead and terrible life.

These brutalities, which are only matter, entertain a confused fear of having to deal with the immense obscurity condensed into an unknown being. A black figure barring the way stops the wild beast short. That which emerges from the cemetery intimidates and disconcerts that which emerges from the cave; the ferocious fear the sinister; wolves recoil when they encounter a ghoul.

CHAPTER VI

MARIUS BECOMES PRACTICAL ONCE MORE TO THE EXTENT OF GIVING COSETTE HIS ADDRESS

WHILE this sort of a dog with a human face was mounting guard over the gate, and while the six ruffians were yielding to a girl, Marius was by Cosette's side.

Never had the sky been more studded with stars and more charming, the trees more trembling, the odor of the grass more penetrating; never had the birds fallen asleep among the leaves with a sweeter noise; never had all the harmonies of universal serenity responded more thoroughly to the inward music of love; never had Marius been more captivated, more happy, more ecstatic.

But he had found Cosette sad; Cosette had been weeping. Her eyes were red.

This was the first cloud in that wonderful dream.

Marius' first word had been: "What is the matter?"

And she had replied: "This."

Then she had seated herself on the bench near the steps, and while he tremblingly took his place beside her, she had continued:—

"My father told me this morning to hold myself in readiness, because he has business, and we may go away from here."

Marius shivered from head to foot.

When one is at the end of one's life, to die means to go away; when one is at the beginning of it, to go away means to die.

For the last six weeks, Marius had little by little, slowly, by degrees, taken possession of Cosette each day. As we have already explained, in the case of first love, the soul is taken long before the body; later on, one takes the body long before the soul; sometimes one does not take the soul at all; the Faublas and the Prudhommes add: "Because there is none"; but the sarcasm is, fortunately, a blasphemy. So Marius possessed Cosette, as spirits possess, but he enveloped her with all his soul, and seized her jealously with incredible conviction. He possessed her smile, her breath, her perfume, the profound radiance of her blue eyes, the sweetness of her skin when he touched her hand, the charming mark which she had on her neck, all her thoughts. Therefore, he possessed all Cosette's dreams.

He incessantly gazed at, and he sometimes touched lightly with his breath, the short locks on the nape of her neck, and he declared to himself that there was not one of those short hairs which did not belong to him, Marius. He gazed upon and adored the things that she wore, her knot of ribbon, her gloves, her sleeves, her shoes, her cuffs, as sacred objects of which he was the master. He dreamed that he was the lord of those pretty shell combs which she wore in her hair, and he even said to himself, in confused and suppressed stammerings of voluptuousness which did not make their way to the light, that there was not a ribbon of her gown, not a mesh in her stockings, not a fold in her bodice, which was not his. Beside Cosette he felt himself beside his own property, his own thing, his own despot and his slave. It seemed as though they had so intermingled their souls, that it would have been impossible to tell them apart had they wished to take them back again.—"This is mine." "No, it is mine." "I assure you that you are mistaken. This is my property." "What you are taking as your own is myself."—Marius was something that made a part of Cosette, and Cosette was something which made a part of Marius. Marius felt Cosette within him. To have Cosette, to possess Cosette, this, to him, was not to be distinguished from breathing. It was in the midst of this faith, of this

intoxication, of this virgin possession, unprecedented and absolute, of this sovereignty, that these words: "We are going away," fell suddenly, at a blow, and that the harsh voice of reality cried to him: "Cosette is not yours!"

Marius awoke. For six weeks Marius had been living, as we have said, outside of life; those words, *going away!* caused him to re-enter it harshly.

He found not a word to say. Cosette merely felt that his hand was very cold. She said to him in her turn: "What is the matter?"

He replied in so low a tone that Cosette hardly heard him:—

"I did not understand what you said."

She began again:—

"This morning my father told me to settle all my little affairs and to hold myself in readiness. that he would give me his linen to put in a trunk, that he was obliged to go on a journey, that we were to go away, that it is necessary to have a large trunk for me and a small one for him, and that all is to be ready in a week from now, and that we might go to England."

"But this is outrageous!" exclaimed Marius.

It is certain, that, at that moment, no abuse of power, no violence, not one of the abominations of the worst tyrants, no action of Busiris, of Tiberius, or of Henry VIII., could have equalled this in atrocity, in the opinion of Marius; M. Fauchelevent taking his daughter off to England because he had business there.

He demanded in a weak voice:—

"And when do you start?"

"He did not say when."

"And when shall you return?"

"He did not say when."

Marius rose and said coldly:—

"Cosette, shall you go?"

Cosette turned toward him her beautiful eyes, all filled with anguish, and replied in a sort of bewilderment:—

"Where?"

"To England. Shall you go?"

"Why do you say *you* to me?"

"I ask you whether you will go?"

"What do you expect me to do?" she said, clasping her hands.

"So, you will go?"

"If my father goes."

"So, you will go?"

Cosette took Marius' hand, and pressed it without replying.

"Very well," said Marius, "then I will go elsewhere."

Cosette felt rather than understood the meaning of these words. She turned so pale that her face shone white through the gloom. She stammered:—

"What do you mean?"

Marius looked at her, then raised his eyes to heaven, and answered: "Nothing."

When his eyes fell again, he saw Cosette smiling at him. The smile of a woman whom one loves possesses a visible radiance, even at night.

"How silly we are! Marius, I have an idea."

"What is it?"

"If we go away, do you go too! I will tell you where! Come and join me wherever I am."

Marius was now a thoroughly roused man. He had fallen back into reality. He cried to Cosette:—

"Go away with you! Are you mad? Why, I should have to have money, and I have none! Go to England? But I am in debt now, I owe, I don't know how much, more than ten louis to Courfeyrae, one of my friends with whom you are not acquainted! I have an old hat which is not worth three francs, I have a coat which lacks buttons in front, my shirt is all ragged, my elbows are torn, my boots let in the water; for the last six weeks I have not thought about it, and I have not told you about it. You only see me at night, and you give me your love; if you were to see me in the daytime, you would

give me a sou! Go to England! Eh! I haven't enough to pay for a passport!"

He threw himself against a tree which was close at hand, erect, his brow pressed close to the bark, feeling neither the wood which flayed his skin, nor the fever which was throbbing in his temples, and there he stood motionless, on the point of falling, like the statue of despair.

He remained a long time thus. One could remain for eternity in such abysses. At last he turned round. He heard behind him a faint stifled noise, which was sweet yet sad.

It was Cosette sobbing.

She had been weeping for more than two hours beside Marius as he meditated.

He came to her, fell at her knees, and slowly prostrating himself, he took the tip of her foot which peeped out from beneath her robe, and kissed it.

She let him have his way in silence. There are moments when a woman accepts, like a sombre and resigned goddess, the religion of love.

"Do not weep," he said.

She murmured:—

"Not when I may be going away, and you cannot come!"

He went on:—

"Do you love me?"

She replied, sobbing, by that word from paradise which is never more charming than amid tears:—

"I adore you!"

He continued in a tone which was an indescribable caress:—

"Do not weep. Tell me, will you do this for me, and cease to weep?"

"Do you love me?" said she.

He took her hand.

"Cosette. I have never given my word of honor to any one, because my word of honor terrifies me. I feel that my father is by my side. Well, I give you my most sacred word of honor, that if you go away I shall die."

In the tone with which he uttered these words there lay a

melancholy so solemn and so tranquil, that Cosette trembled. She felt that chill which is produced by a true and gloomy thing as it passes by. The shock made her cease weeping.

"Now, listen," said he, "do not expect me to-morrow."

"Why?"

"Do not expect me until the day after to-morrow."

"Oh! Why?"

"You will see."

"A day without seeing you! But that is impossible!"

"Let us sacrifice one day in order to gain our whole lives, perhaps."

And Marius added in a low tone and in an aside:—

"He is a man who never changes his habits, and he has never received any one except in the evening."

"Of what man are you speaking?" asked Cosette.

"I? I said nothing."

"What do you hope, then?"

"Wait until the day after to-morrow."

"You wish it?"

"Yes, Cosette."

She took his head in both her hands, raising herself on tip-toe in order to be on a level with him, and tried to read his hope in his eyes.

Marius resumed:—

"Now that I think of it, you ought to know my address: something might happen, one never knows; I live with that friend named Courfeyrac, Rue de la Verrerie, No. 16."

He searched in his pocket, pulled out his penknife, and with the blade he wrote on the plaster of the wall:—

"16 Rue de la Verrerie."

In the meantime, Cosette had begun to gaze into his eyes once more.

"Tell me your thought, Marius; you have some idea. Tell it to me. Oh! tell me, so that I may pass a pleasant night."

"This is my idea: that it is impossible that God should mean to part us. Wait; expect me the day after to-morrow."

"What shall I do until then?" said Cosette. "You are out-

side, you go, and come! How happy men are! I shall remain entirely alone! Oh! How sad I shall be! What is it that you are going to do to-morrow evening? tell me."

"I am going to try something."

"Then I will pray to God and I will think of you here, so that you may be successful. I will question you no further, since you do not wish it. You are my master. I shall pass the evening to-morrow in singing that music from *Euryanthe* that you love, and that you came one evening to listen to, outside my shutters. But day after to-morrow you will come early. I shall expect you at dusk, at nine o'clock precisely, I warn you. Mon Dieu! how sad it is that the days are so long! On the stroke of nine, do you understand, I shall be in the garden."

"And I also."

And without having uttered it, moved by the same thought, impelled by those electric currents which place lovers in continual communication, both being intoxicated with delight even in their sorrow, they fell into each other's arms, without perceiving that their lips met while their uplifted eyes, overflowing with rapture and full of tears, gazed upon the stars.

When Marius went forth, the street was deserted. This was the moment when Éponine was following the ruffians to the boulevard.

While Marius had been dreaming with his head pressed to the tree, an idea had crossed his mind; an idea, alas! that he himself judged to be senseless and impossible. He had come to a desperate decision.

CHAPTER VII

THE OLD HEART AND THE YOUNG HEART IN THE PRESENCE OF EACH OTHER

AT that epoch, Father Gillenormand was well past his ninety-first birthday. He still lived with Mademoiselle Gillenormand in the Rue des Filles-du-Calvaire, No. 6, in the old

house which he owned. He was, as the reader will remember, one of those antique old men who await death perfectly erect, whom age bears down without bending, and whom even sorrow cannot curve.

Still, his daughter had been saying for some time: "My father is sinking." He no longer boxed the maids' ears; he no longer thumped the landing-place so vigorously with his cane when Basque was slow in opening the door. The Revolution of July had exasperated him for the space of barely six months. He had viewed, almost tranquilly, that coupling of words, in the *Moniteur*: M. Humblot-Conté, peer of France. The fact is, that the old man was deeply dejected. He did not bend, he did not yield; this was no more a characteristic of his physical than of his moral nature, but he felt himself giving way internally. For four years he had been waiting for Marius, with his foot firmly planted, that is the exact word, in the conviction that that good-for-nothing young scamp would ring at his door some day or other; now he had reached the point, where, at certain gloomy hours, he said to himself, that if Marius made him wait much longer—It was not death that was insupportable to him; it was the idea that perhaps he should never see Marius again. The idea of never seeing Marius again had never entered his brain until that day; now the thought began to recur to him, and it chilled him. Absence, as is always the case in genuine and natural sentiments, had only served to augment the grandfather's love for the ungrateful child, who had gone off like a flash. It is during December nights, when the cold stands at ten degrees, that one thinks oftenest of the son.

M. Gillenormand was, or thought himself, above all things, incapable of taking a single step, he—the grandfather, towards his grandson; "I would die rather," he said to himself. He did not consider himself as the least to blame; but he thought of Marius only with profound tenderness, and the mute despair of an elderly, kindly old man who is about to vanish in the dark.

He began to lose his teeth, which added to his sadness.

M. Gillenormand, without however acknowledging it to himself, for it would have rendered him furious and ashamed, had never loved a mistress as he loved Marius.

He had had placed in his chamber, opposite the head of his bed, so that it should be the first thing on which his eyes fell on waking, an old portrait of his other daughter, who was dead, Madame Pontmercy, a portrait which had been taken when she was eighteen. He gazed incessantly at that portrait. One day, he happened to say, as he gazed upon it:—

“I think the likeness is strong.”

“To my sister?” inquired Mademoiselle Gillenormand. “Yes, certainly.”

“The old man added:—

“And to him also.”

Once as he sat with his knees pressed together, and his eyes almost closed, in a despondent attitude, his daughter ventured to say to him:—

“Father, are you as angry with him as ever?”

She paused, not daring to proceed further.

“With whom?” he demanded.

“With that poor Marius.”

He raised his aged head, laid his withered and emaciated fist on the table, and exclaimed in his most irritated and vibrating tone:—

“Poor Marius, do you say! That gentleman is a knave, a wretched scoundrel, a vain little ingrate, a heartless, soulless, haughty, and wicked man!”

And he turned away so that his daughter might not see the tear that stood in his eye.

Three days later he broke a silence which had lasted four hours, to say to his daughter point-blank:—

“I had the honor to ask Mademoiselle Gillenormand never to mention him to me.”

Aunt Gillenormand renounced every effort, and pronounced this acute diagnosis: “My father never cared very much for my sister after her folly. It is clear that he detests Marius.”

“After her folly” meant: “after she had married the colonel.”

However, as the reader has been able to conjecture, Mademoiselle Gillenormand had failed in her attempt to substitute her favorite, the officer of lancers, for Marius. The substitute, Théodule, had not been a success. M. Gillenormand had not accepted the *quid pro quo*. A vacancy in the heart does not accommodate itself to a stop-gap. Théodule, on his side, though he scented the inheritance, was disgusted at the task of pleasing. The goodman bored the lancer; and the lancer shocked the goodman. Lieutenant Théodule was gay, no doubt, but a chatter-box, frivolous, but vulgar; a high liver, but a frequenter of bad company; he had mistresses, it is true, and he had a great deal to say about them, it is true also; but he talked badly. All his good qualities had a defect. M. Gillenormand was worn out with hearing him tell about the love affairs that he had in the vicinity of the barracks in the Rue de Babylone. And then, Lieutenant Gillenormand sometimes came in his uniform, with the tri-colored cockade. This rendered him downright intolerable. Finally, Father Gillenormand had said to his daughter: “I’ve had enough of that Théodule. I haven’t much taste for warriors in time of peace. Receive him if you choose. I don’t know but I prefer slashers to fellows that drag their swords. The clash of blades in battle is less dismal, after all, than the clank of the scabbard on the pavement. And then, throwing out your chest like a bully and lacing yourself like a girl, with stays under your cuirass, is doubly ridiculous. When one is a veritable man, one holds equally aloof from swagger and from affected airs. He is neither a blusterer nor a finnick-hearted man. Keep your Théodule for yourself.”

It was in vain that his daughter said to him: “But he is your grandnephew, nevertheless,”—it turned out that M. Gillenormand, who was a grandfather to the very finger-tips, was not in the least a grand-uncle.

In fact, as he had good sense, and as he had compared the two, Théodule had only served to make him regret Marius all the more.

One evening,—it was the 24th of June, which did not prevent Father Gillenormand having a rousing fire on the hearth,—he had dismissed his daughter, who was sewing in a neighboring apartment. He was alone in his chamber, amid its pastoral scenes, with his feet propped on the andirons, half enveloped in his huge screen of coromandel lacquer, with its nine leaves, with his elbow resting on a table where burned two candles under a green shade, engulfed in his tapestry arm-chair, and in his hand a book which he was not reading. He was dressed, according to his wont, like an *incroyable*, and resembled an antique portrait by Garat. This would have made people run after him in the street, had not his daughter covered him up, whenever he went out, in a vast bishop's wadded cloak, which concealed his attire. At home, he never wore a dressing gown, except when he rose and retired. "It gives one a look of age," said he.

Father Gillenormand was thinking of Marius lovingly and bitterly; and, as usual, bitterness predominated. His tenderness once soured always ended by boiling and turning to indignation. He had reached the point where a man tries to make up his mind and to accept that which rends his heart. He was explaining to himself that there was no longer any reason why Marius should return, that if he intended to return, he should have done it long ago, that he must renounce the idea. He was trying to accustom himself to the thought that all was over, and that he should die without having beheld "that gentleman" again. But his whole nature revolted; his aged paternity would not consent to this. "Well!" said he,—this was his doleful refrain,—"he will not return!" His bald head had fallen upon his breast, and he fixed a melancholy and irritated gaze upon the ashes on his hearth.

In the very midst of his reverie, his old servant Basque entered, and inquired:—

"Can Monsieur receive M. Marius?"

The old man sat up erect, pallid, and like a corpse which rises under the influence of a galvanic shock. All his blood had retreated to his heart. He stammered:—

“M. Marius what?”

“I don’t know,” replied Basque, intimidated and put out of countenance by his master’s air; “I have not seen him. Nicolette came in and said to me: ‘There’s a young man here; say that it is M. Marius.’”

Father Gillenormand stammered in a low voice:—

“Show him in.”

And he remained in the same attitude, with shaking head, and his eyes fixed on the door. It opened once more. A young man entered. It was Marius.

Marius halted at the door, as though waiting to be bidden to enter.

His almost squalid attire was not perceptible in the obscurity caused by the shade. Nothing could be seen but his calm, grave, but strangely sad face.

It was several minutes before Father Gillenormand, dulled with amazement and joy, could see anything except a brightness as when one is in the presence of an apparition. He was on the point of swooning; he saw Marius through a dazzling light. It certainly was he, it certainly was Marius.

At last! After the lapse of four years! He grasped him entire, so to speak, in a single glance. He found him noble, handsome, distinguished, well-grown, a complete man, with a suitable mien and a charming air. He felt a desire to open his arms, to call him, to fling himself forward; his heart melted with rapture, affectionate words swelled and overflowed his breast; at length all his tenderness came to the light and reached his lips, and, by a contrast which constituted the very foundation of his nature, what came forth was harshness. He said abruptly:—

“What have you come here for?”

Marius replied with embarrassment:—

“Monsieur—”

M. Gillenormand would have liked to have Marius throw himself into his arms. He was displeased with Marius and with himself. He was conscious that he was brusque, and that Marius was cold. It caused the goodman unendurable and

irritating anxiety to feel so tender and forlorn within, and only to be able to be hard outside. Bitterness returned. He interrupted Marius in a peevish tone:—

“Then why did you come?”

That “then” signified: *If you do not come to embrace me.* Marius looked at his grandfather, whose pallor gave him a face of marble.

“Monsieur—”

“Have you come to beg my pardon? Do you acknowledge your faults?”

He thought he was putting Marius on the right road, and that “the child” would yield. Marius shivered; it was the denial of his father that was required of him; he dropped his eyes and replied:—

“No, sir.”

“Then,” exclaimed the old man impetuously, with a grief that was poignant and full of wrath, “what do you want of me?”

Marius clasped his hands, advanced a step, and said in a feeble and trembling voice:—

“Sir, have pity on me.”

These words touched M. Gillenormand; uttered a little sooner, they would have rendered him tender, but they came too late. The grandfather rose; he supported himself with both hands on his cane; his lips were white, his brow wavered, but his lofty form towered above Marius as he bowed.

“Pity on you, sir! It is youth demanding pity of the old man of ninety-one! You are entering into life, I am leaving it; you go to the play, to balls, to the café, to the billiard-hall; you have wit, you please the women, you are a handsome fellow; as for me, I spit on my brands in the heart of summer; you are rich with the only riches that are really such, I possess all the poverty of age; infirmity, isolation! You have your thirty-two teeth, a good digestion, bright eyes, strength, appetite, health, gayety, a forest of black hair; I have no longer even white hair, I have lost my teeth, I am losing my legs, I am losing my memory; there are three names of streets

that I confound incessantly, the Rue Charlot, the Rue du Chaume, and the Rue Saint-Claude, that is what I have come to; you have before you the whole future, full of sunshine, and I am beginning to lose my sight, so far am I advancing into the night; you are in love, that is a matter of course, I am beloved by no one in all the world; and you ask pity of me! Parbleu! Molière forgot that. If that is the way you jest at the courthouse, Messieurs the lawyers, I sincerely compliment you. You are droll."

And the octogenarian went on in a grave and angry voice:—

"Come, now, what do you want of me?"

"Sir," said Marius, "I know that my presence is displeasing to you, but I have come merely to ask one thing of you, and then I shall go away immediately."

"You are a fool!" said the old man. "Who said that you were to go away?"

This was the translation of the tender words which lay at the bottom of his heart:—

"Ask my pardon! Throw yourself on my neck!"

M. Gillenormand felt that Marius would leave him in a few moments, that his harsh reception had repelled the lad, that his hardness was driving him away; he said all this to himself, and it augmented his grief; and as his grief was straightway converted into wrath, it increased his harshness. He would have liked to have Marius understand, and Marius did not understand, which made the goodman furious.

He began again:—

"What! you deserted me, your grandfather, you left my house to go no one knows whither, you drove your aunt to despair, you went off, it is easily guessed, to lead a bachelor life; it's more convenient, to play the dandy, to come in at all hours, to amuse yourself; you have given me no signs of life, you have contracted debts without even telling me to pay them, you have become a smasher of windows and a blusterer, and, at the end of four years, you come to me, and that is all you have to say to me!"

This violent fashion of driving a grandson to tenderness was productive only of silence on the part of Marius. M. Gillenormand folded his arms; a gesture which with him was peculiarly imperious, and apostrophized Marius bitterly:—

“Let us make an end of this. You have come to ask something of me, you say? Well, what? What is it? Speak!”

“Sir,” said Marius, with the look of a man who feels that he is falling over a precipice, “I have come to ask your permission to marry.”

M. Gillenormand rang the bell. Basque opened the door half-way.

“Call my daughter.”

A second later, the door was opened once more, Mademoiselle Gillenormand did not enter, but showed herself; Marius was standing, mute, with pendant arms and the face of a criminal; M. Gillenormand was pacing back and forth in the room. He turned to his daughter and said to her:—

“Nothing. It is Monsieur Marius. Say good day to him. Monsieur wishes to marry. That’s all. Go away.”

The curt, hoarse sound of the old man’s voice announced a strange degree of excitement. The aunt gazed at Marius with a frightened air, hardly appeared to recognize him, did not allow a gesture or a syllable to escape her, and disappeared at her father’s breath more swiftly than a straw before the hurricane.

In the meantime, Father Gillenormand had returned and placed his back against the chimney-piece once more.

“You marry! At one and twenty! You have arranged that! You have only a permission to ask! a formality. Sit down, sir. Well, you have had a revolution since I had the honor to see you last. The Jacobins got the upper hand. You must have been delighted. Are you not a Republican since you are a Baron? You can make that agree. The Republic makes a good sauce for the barony. Are you one of those decorated by July? Have you taken the Louvre at all, sir? Quite near here, in the Rue Saint-Antoine, opposite the Rue des Nonnandières, there is a cannon-ball incrusting in the wall of the third

story of a house with this inscription: 'July 28th, 1830.' Go take a look at that. It produces a good effect. Ah! those friends of yours do pretty things. By the way, aren't they erecting a fountain in the place of the monument of M. le Duc de Berry? So you want to marry? Whom? Can one inquire without indiscretion?"

He paused, and, before Marius had time to answer, he added violently:—

"Come now, you have a profession? A fortune made? How much do you earn at your trade of lawyer?"

"Nothing," said Marius, with a sort of firmness and resolution that was almost fierce.

"Nothing? Then all that you have to live upon is the twelve hundred livres that I allow you?"

Marius did not reply. M. Gillenormand continued:—

"Then I understand the girl is rich?"

"As rich as I am."

"What! No dowry?"

"No."

"Expectations?"

"I think not."

"Utterly naked! What's the father?"

"I don't know."

"And what's her name?"

"Mademoiselle Fauchelevant."

"Fauchewhat?"

"Fauchelevant."

"Pttt!" ejaculated the old gentleman.

"Sir!" exclaimed Marius.

M. Gillenormand interrupted him with the tone of a man who is speaking to himself:—

"That's right, one and twenty years of age, no profession, twelve hundred livres a year, Madame la Baronne de Pontmercy will go and purchase a couple of sous' worth of parsley from the fruiterer."

"Sir," repeated Marius, in the despair at the last hope, which was vanishing, "I entreat you! I conjure you in the

name of Heaven, with clasped hands, sir, I throw myself at your feet, permit me to marry her!"

The old man burst into a shout of strident and mournful laughter, coughing and laughing at the same time.

"Ah! ah! ah! You said to yourself: 'Pardine! I'll go hunt up that old blockhead, that absurd numskull! What a shame that I'm not twenty-five! How I'd treat him to a nice respectful summons! How nicely I'd get along without him! It's nothing to me. I'd say to him: "You're only too happy to see me, you old idiot, I want to marry, I desire to wed Mamselle No-matter-whom, daughter of Monsieur No-matter-what, I have no shoes, she has no chemise, that just suits; I want to throw my career, my future, my youth, my life to the dogs; I wish to take a plunge into wretchedness with a woman around my neck, that's an idea, and you must consent to it!" and the old fossil will consent.' Go, my lad, do as you like, attach your paving-stone, marry your Pousselevant, your Coupelevant—Never, sir, never!"

"Father—"

"Never!"

At the tone in which that "never" was uttered, Marius lost all hope. He traversed the chamber with slow steps, with bowed head, tottering and more like a dying man than like one merely taking his departure. M. Gillenormand followed him with his eyes, and at the moment when the door opened, and Marius was on the point of going out, he advanced four paces, with the senile vivacity of impetuous and spoiled old gentlemen, seized Marius by the collar, brought him back energetically into the room, flung him into an arm-chair and said to him:—

"Tell me all about it!"

"It was that single word "father" which had effected this revolution.

Marius stared at him in bewilderment. M. Gillenormand's mobile face was no longer expressive of anything but rough and ineffable good-nature. The grandsire had given way before the grandfather.

"Come, see here, speak, tell me about your love affairs, jabber, tell me everything! Sapristi! how stupid young folks are!"

"Father—" repeated Marius.

The old man's entire countenance lighted up with indescribable radiance.

"Yes, that's right, call me father, and you'll see!"

There was now something so kind, so gentle, so open-hearted, and so paternal in this brusqueness, that Marius, in the sudden transition from discouragement to hope, was stunned and intoxicated by it, as it were. He was seated near the table, the light from the candles brought out the dilapidation of his costume, which Father Gillenormand regarded with amazement.

"Well, father—" said Marius.

"Ah, by the way," interrupted M. Gillenormand, "you really have not a penny then? You are dressed like a pick-pocket."

He rummaged in a drawer, drew forth a purse, which he laid on the table: "Here are a hundred louis, buy yourself a hat."

"Father," pursued Marius, "my good father, if you only knew! I love her. You cannot imagine it; the first time I saw her was at the Luxembourg, she came there; in the beginning, I did not pay much heed to her, and then, I don't know how it came about, I fell in love with her. Oh! how unhappy that made me! Now, at last, I see her every day, at her own home, her father does not know it, just fancy, they are going away, it is in the garden that we meet, in the evening, her father means to take her to England, then I said to myself: 'I'll go and see my grandfather and tell him all about the affair. I should go mad first. I should die, I should fall ill, I should throw myself into the water. I absolutely must marry her, since I should go mad otherwise.' This is the whole truth, and I do not think that I have omitted anything. She lives in a garden with an iron fence, in the Rue Plumet. It is in the neighborhood of the Invalides."

Father Gillenormand had seated himself, with a beaming countenance, beside Marius. As he listened to him and drank in the sound of his voice, he enjoyed at the same time a protracted pinch of snuff. At the words "Rue Plumet" he interrupted his inhalation and allowed the remainder of his snuff to fall upon his knees.

"The Rue Plumet, the Rue Plumet, did you say?—Let us see!—Are there not barracks in that vicinity?—Why, yes, that's it. Your cousin Théodule has spoken to me about it. The lancer, the officer. A gay girl, my good friend, a gay girl!—Pardieu, yes, the Rue Plumet. It is what used to be called the Rue Blomet.—It all comes back to me now. I have heard of that little girl of the iron railing in the Rue Plumet. In a garden, a Pamela. Your taste is not bad. She is said to be a very tidy creature. Between ourselves, I think that simpleton of a lancer has been courting her a bit. I don't know where he did it. However, that's not to the purpose. Besides, he is not to be believed. He brags, Marius! I think it quite proper that a young man like you should be in love. It's the right thing at your age. I like you better as a lover than as a Jacobin. I like you better in love with a petticoat, sapristi! with twenty petticoats, than with M. de Robespierre. For my part, I will do myself the justice to say, that in the line of *sans-culottes*, I have never loved any one but women. Pretty girls are pretty girls, the deuce! There's no objection to that. As for the little one, she receives you without her father's knowledge. That's in the established order of things. I have had adventures of that same sort myself. More than one. Do you know what is done then? One does not take the matter ferociously; one does not precipitate himself into the tragic; one does not make one's mind to marriage and M. le Maire with his scarf. One simply behaves like a fellow of spirit. One shows good sense. Slip along, mortals; don't marry. You come and look up your grandfather, who is a good-natured fellow at bottom, and who always has a few rolls of louis in an old drawer; you say to him: 'See here, grandfather.' And the grandfather says: 'That's a simple matter. Youth must amuse

itself, and old age must wear out. I have been young, you will be old. Come, my boy, you shall pass it on to your grandson. Here are two hundred pistoles. Amuse yourself, deuce take it! Nothing better! That's the way the affair should be treated. You don't marry, but that does no harm. You understand me?"

Marius, petrified and incapable of uttering a syllable, made a sign with his head that he did not.

The old man burst out laughing, winked his aged eye, gave him a slap on the knee, stared him full in the face with a mysterious and beaming air, and said to him, with the tenderest of shrugs of the shoulder:—

“Booby! make her your mistress.”

Marius turned pale. He had understood nothing of what his grandfather had just said. This twaddle about the Rue Blomett Pamela, the barracks, the laneer, had passed before Marius like a dissolving view. Nothing of all that could bear any reference to Cosette, who was a lily. The good man was wandering in his mind. But this wandering terminated in words which Marius did understand, and which were a mortal insult to Cosette. Those words, “make her your mistress,” entered the heart of the strict young man like a sword.

He rose, picked up his hat which lay on the floor, and walked to the door with a firm, assured step. There he turned round, bowed deeply to his grandfather, raised his head erect again, and said:—

“Five years ago you insulted my father; to-day you have insulted my wife. I ask nothing more of you, sir. Farewell.”

Father Gillenormand, utterly confounded, opened his mouth, extended his arms, tried to rise, and before he could utter a word, the door closed once more, and Marius had disappeared.

The old man remained for several minutes motionless and as though struck by lightning, without the power to speak or breathe, as though a clenched fist grasped his throat. At last he tore himself from his arm-chair, ran, so far as a man can run at ninety-one, to the door, opened it, and cried:—

“Help! Help!”

His daughter made her appearance, then the domestics. He began again, with a pitiful rattle: “Run after him! Bring him back! What have I done to him? He is mad! He is going away! Ah! my God! Ah! my God! This time he will not come back!”

He went to the window which looked out on the street, threw it open with his aged and palsied hands, leaned out more than half-way, while Basque and Nicolette held him behind, and shouted:—

“Marius! Marius! Marius! Marius!”

But Marius could no longer hear him, for at that moment he was turning the corner of the Rue Saint-Louis.

The octogenarian raised his hands to his temples two or three times with an expression of anguish, recoiled tottering, and fell back into an arm-chair, pulseless, voiceless, tearless, with quivering head and lips which moved with a stupid air, with nothing in his eyes and nothing any longer in his heart except a gloomy and profound something which resembled night.

BOOK NINTH.—WHITHER ARE THEY GOING?

CHAPTER I

JEAN VALJEAN

THAT same day, towards four o'clock in the afternoon, Jean Valjean was sitting alone on the back side of one of the most solitary slopes in the Champ-de-Mars. Either from prudence, or from a desire to meditate, or simply in consequence of one of those insensible changes of habit which gradually introduce themselves into the existence of every one, he now rarely went out with Cosette. He had on his workman's waistcoat, and trousers of gray linen; and his long-visored cap concealed his countenance.

He was calm and happy now beside Cosette; that which had, for a time, alarmed and troubled him had been dissipated; but for the last week or two, anxieties of another nature had come up. One day, while walking on the boulevard, he had caught sight of Thénardier; thanks to his disguise, Thénardier had not recognized him; but since that day, Jean Valjean had seen him repeatedly, and he was now certain that Thénardier was prowling about in their neighborhood.

This had been sufficient to make him come to a decision.

Moreover, Paris was not tranquil: political troubles presented this inconvenient feature, for any one who had anything to conceal in his life, that the police had grown very uneasy and very suspicious, and that while seeking to ferret out a man like Pépin or Morey, they might very readily discover a man like Jean Valjean.

Jean Valjean had made up his mind to quit Paris, and even France, and go over to England.

He had warned Cosette. He wished to set out before the end of the week.

He had seated himself on the slope in the Champ-de-Mars, turning over all sorts of thoughts in his mind,—Thénardier, the police, the journey, and the difficulty of procuring a passport.

He was troubled from all these points of view.

Last of all, an inexplicable circumstance which had just attracted his attention, and from which he had not yet recovered, had added to his state of alarm.

On the morning of that very day, when he alone of the household was stirring, while strolling in the garden before Cosette's shutters were open, he had suddenly perceived on the wall, the following line, engraved, probably with a nail:—

16 Rue de la Verrerie.

This was perfectly fresh, the grooves in the ancient black mortar were white, a tuft of nettles at the foot of the wall was powdered with the fine, fresh plaster.

This had probably been written on the preceding night.

What was this? A signal for others? A warning for himself?

In any case, it was evident that the garden had been violated, and that strangers had made their way into it.

He recalled the odd incidents which had already alarmed the household.

His mind was now filling in this canvas.

He took good care not to speak to Cosette of the line written on the wall, for fear of alarming her.

In the midst of his preoccupations, he perceived, from a shadow cast by the sun, that some one had halted on the crest of the slope immediately behind him.

He was on the point of turning round, when a paper folded in four fell upon his knees as though a hand had dropped it over his head.

He took the paper, unfolded it, and read these words written in large characters, with a pencil:—

“MOVE AWAY FROM YOUR HOUSE.”

Jean Valjean sprang hastily to his feet ; there was no one on the slope ; he gazed all around him and perceived a creature larger than a child, not so large as a man, clad in a gray blouse and trousers of dust-colored cotton velvet, who was jumping over the parapet and who slipped into the moat of the Champ-de-Mars.

Jean Valjean returned home at once, in a very thoughtful mood.

CHAPTER II

MARIUS

MARIUS had left M. Gillenormand in despair. He had entered the house with very little hope, and quitted it with immense despair.

However, and those who have observed the depths of the human heart will understand this, the officer, the lancer, the ninny, Cousin Théodule, had left no trace in his mind. Not the slightest. The dramatic poet might, apparently, expect some complications from this revelation made point-blank by the grandfather to the grandson. But what the drama would gain thereby, truth would lose. Marius was at an age when one believes nothing in the line of evil : later on comes the age when one believes everything. Suspicions are nothing else than wrinkles. Early youth has none of them. That which overwhelmed Othello glides innocuous over Candide. Suspect Cosette ! There are hosts of crimes which Marius could sooner have committed.

He began to wander about the streets, the resource of those who suffer. He thought of nothing, so far as he could afterwards remember. At two o'clock in the morning he returned to Courfeyrac's quarters and flung himself, without undressing, on his mattress. The sun was shining brightly when he sank into that frightful leaden slumber which permits ideas to go and come in the brain. When he awoke, he saw

Courfeyrac, Enjolras, Feuilly, and Combeferre standing in the room with their hats on and all ready to go out.

Courfeyrac said to him:—

“Are you coming to General Lamarque’s funeral?”

It seemed to him that Courfeyrac was speaking Chinese.

He went out some time after them. He put in his pocket the pistols which Javert had given him at the time of the adventure on the 3d of February, and which had remained in his hands. These pistols were still loaded. It would be difficult to say what vague thought he had in his mind when he took them with him.

All day long he prowled about, without knowing where he was going; it rained at times, he did not perceive it; for his dinner, he purchased a penny roll at a baker’s, put it in his pocket and forgot it. It appears that he took a bath in the Seine without being aware of it. There are moments when a man has a furnace within his skull. Marius was passing through one of those moments. He no longer hoped for anything; this step he had taken since the preceding evening. He waited for night with feverish impatience, he had but one idea clearly before his mind;—this was, that at nine o’clock he should see Cosette. This last happiness now constituted his whole future; after that, gloom. At intervals, as he roamed through the most deserted boulevards, it seemed to him that he heard strange noises in Paris. He thrust his head out of his revery and said: “Is there fighting on hand?”

At nightfall, at nine o’clock precisely, as he had promised Cosette, he was in the Rue Plumet. When he approached the grating he forgot everything. It was forty-eight hours since he had seen Cosette; he was about to behold her once more; every other thought was effaced, and he felt only a profound and unheard-of joy. Those minutes in which one lives centuries always have this sovereign and wonderful property, that at the moment when they are passing they fill the heart completely.

Marius displaced the bar, and rushed headlong into the

garden. Cosette was not at the spot where she ordinarily waited for him. He traversed the thicket, and approached the recess near the flight of steps: "She is waiting for me there," said he. Cosette was not there. He raised his eyes, and saw that the shutters of the house were closed. He made the tour of the garden, the garden was deserted. Then he returned to the house, and, rendered senseless by love, intoxicated, terrified, exasperated with grief and uneasiness, like a master who returns home at an evil hour, he tapped on the shutters. He knocked and knocked again, at the risk of seeing the window open, and her father's gloomy face make its appearance, and demand: "What do you want?" This was nothing in comparison with what he dimly caught a glimpse of. When he had rapped, he lifted up his voice and called Cosette.—"Cosette!" he cried; "Cosette!" he repeated imperiously. There was no reply. All was over. No one in the garden; no one in the house.

Marius fixed his despairing eyes on that dismal house, which was as black and as silent as a tomb and far more empty. He gazed at the stone seat on which he had passed so many adorable hours with Cosette. Then he seated himself on the flight of steps, his heart filled with sweetness and resolution, he blessed his love in the depths of his thought, and he said to himself that, since Cosette was gone, all that there was left for him was to die.

All at once he heard a voice which seemed to proceed from the street, and which was calling to him through the trees:—

"Mr. Marius!"

He started to his feet.

"Hey?" said he.

"Mr. Marius, are you there?"

"Yes."

"Mr. Marius," went on the voice, "your friends are waiting for you at the barricade of the Rue de la Chanvrerie."

This voice was not wholly unfamiliar to him. It resembled the hoarse, rough voice of Éponine. Marius hastened to the

gate, thrust aside the movable bar, passed his head through the aperture, and saw some one who appeared to him to be a young man, disappearing at a run into the gloom.

CHAPTER III

M. MABEUF

JEAN VALJEAN'S purse was of no use to M. Mabeuf. M. Mabeuf, in his venerable, infantile austerity, had not accepted the gift of the stars; he had not admitted that a star could coin itself into louis d'or. He had not divined that what had fallen from heaven had come from Gavroche. He had taken the purse to the police commissioner of the quarter, as a lost article placed by the finder at the disposal of claimants. The purse was actually lost. It is unnecessary to say that no one claimed it, and that it did not succor M. Mabeuf.

Moreover, M. Mabeuf had continued his downward course.

His experiments on indigo had been no more successful in the Jardin des Plantes than in his garden at Austerlitz. The year before he had owed his housekeeper's wages; now, as we have seen, he owed three quarters of his rent. The pawnshop had sold the plates of his *Flora* after the expiration of thirteen months. Some coppersmith had made stewpans of them. His copper plates gone, and being unable to complete even the incomplete copies of his *Flora* which were in his possession, he had disposed of the text, at a miserable price, as waste paper, to a second-hand bookseller. Nothing now remained to him of his life's work. He set to work to eat up the money for these copies. When he saw that this wretched resource was becoming exhausted, he gave up his garden and allowed it to run to waste. Before this, a long time before, he had given up his two eggs and the morsel of beef which he ate from time to time. He dined on bread and potatoes. He had sold the last of his furniture, then all duplicates of his bedding, his clothing and his blankets, then his herbariums

and prints; but he still retained his most precious books, many of which were of the greatest rarity, among others, *Les Quadrans Historiques de la Bible*, edition of 1560; *La Concordance des Bibles*, by Pierre de Besse; *Les Marguerites de la Marguerite*, of Jean de La Haye, with a dedication to the Queen of Navarre; the book *de la Charge et Dignité de l'Ambassadeur*, by the Sieur de Villiers Hotman; a *Florilegium Rabbincum* of 1644; a *Tibullus* of 1567, with this magnificent inscription: *Venetii, in ædibus Manutianis*; and lastly, a Diogenes Laertius, printed at Lyons in 1644, which contained the famous variant of the manuscript 411, thirteenth century, of the Vatican, and those of the two manuscripts of Venice, 393 and 394, consulted with such fruitful results by Henri Estienne, and all the passages in Doric dialect which are only found in the celebrated manuscript of the twelfth century belonging to the Naples Library. M. Mabeuf never had any fire in his chamber, and went to bed at sundown, in order not to consume any candles. It seemed as though he had no longer any neighbors: people avoided him when he went out; he perceived the fact. The wretchedness of a child interests a mother, the wretchedness of a young man interests a young girl, the wretchedness of an old man interests no one. It is, of all distresses, the coldest. Still, Father Mabeuf had not entirely lost his childlike serenity. His eyes acquired some vivacity when they rested on his books, and he smiled when he gazed at the Diogenes Laertius, which was a unique copy. His bookcase with glass doors was the only piece of furniture which he had kept beyond what was strictly indispensable.

One day, Mother Plutarque said to him:—

“I have no money to buy any dinner.”

What she called dinner was a loaf of bread and four or five potatoes.

“On credit?” suggested M. Mabeuf.

“You know well that people refuse me.”

M. Mabeuf opened his bookcase, took a long look at all his books, one after another, as a father obliged to decimate his children would gaze upon them before making a choice, then

seized one hastily, put it in under his arm and went out. He returned two hours later, without anything under his arm, laid thirty sous on the table, and said:—

“You will get something for dinner.”

From that moment forth, Mother Plutarque saw a sombre veil, which was never more lifted, descend over the old man's candid face.

On the following day, on the day after, and on the day after that, it had to be done again.

M. Mabeuf went out with a book and returned with a coin. As the second-hand dealers perceived that he was forced to sell, they purchased of him for twenty sous that for which he had paid twenty francs, sometimes at those very shops. Volume by volume, the whole library went the same road. He said at times: “But I am eighty;” as though he cherished some secret hope that he should arrive at the end of his days before reaching the end of his books. His melancholy increased. Once, however, he had a pleasure. He had gone out with a Robert Estienne, which he had sold for thirty-five sous under the Quai Malaquais, and he returned with an Aldus which he had bought for forty sous in the Rue des Grès.—“I owe five sous,” he said, beaming on Mother Plutarque. That day he had no dinner.

He belonged to the Horticultural Society. His destitution became known there. The president of the society came to see him, promised to speak to the Minister of Agriculture and Commerce about him, and did so.—“Why, what!” exclaimed the Minister, “I should think so! An old savant! a botanist! an inoffensive man! Something must be done for him!” On the following day, M. Mabeuf received an invitation to dine with the Minister. Trembling with joy, he showed the letter to Mother Plutarque. “We are saved!” said he. On the day appointed, he went to the Minister's house. He perceived that his ragged cravat, his long, square coat, and his waxed shoes astonished the ushers. No one spoke to him, not even the Minister. About ten o'clock in the evening, while he was still waiting for a word, he heard the Minister's wife, a beautiful

woman in a low-necked gown whom he had not ventured to approach, inquire: "Who is that old gentleman?" He returned home on foot at midnight, in a driving rain-storm. He had sold an Elzevir to pay for a carriage in which to go thither.

He had acquired the habit of reading a few pages in his Diogenes Laertius every night, before he went to bed. He knew enough Greek to enjoy the peculiarities of the text which he owned. He had now no other enjoyment. Several weeks passed. All at once, Mother Plutarque fell ill. There is one thing sadder than having no money with which to buy bread at the baker's, and that is having no money to purchase drugs at the apothecary's. One evening, the doctor had ordered a very expensive potion. And the malady was growing worse; a nurse was required. M. Mabeuf opened his bookcase; there was nothing there. The last volume had taken its departure. All that was left to him was Diogenes Laertius. He put this unique copy under his arm, and went out. It was the 4th of June, 1832; he went to the Porte Saint-Jacques, to Royal's successor, and returned with one hundred francs. He laid the pile of five-franc pieces on the old serving-woman's nightstand, and returned to his chamber without saying a word.

On the following morning, at dawn, he seated himself on the overturned post in his garden, and he could be seen over the top of the hedge, sitting the whole morning motionless, with drooping head, his eyes vaguely fixed on the withered flower-beds. It rained at intervals; the old man did not seem to perceive the fact.

In the afternoon, extraordinary noises broke out in Paris. They resembled shots and the clamors of a multitude.

Father Mabeuf raised his head. He saw a gardener passing, and inquired:—

"What is it?"

The gardener, spade on baek, replied in the most unconcerned tone:—

"It is the riots."

"What riots?"

"Yes, they are fighting."

“Why are they fighting?”

“Ah, good Heavens!” ejaculated the gardener.

“In what direction?” went on M. Mabeuf.

“In the neighborhood of the Arsenal.”

Father Mabeuf went to his room, took his hat, mechanically sought for a book to place under his arm, found none, said: “Ah! truly!” and went off with a bewildered air.

BOOK TENTH.—THE 5TH OF JUNE, 1832

CHAPTER I

THE SURFACE OF THE QUESTION

OF what is revolt composed? Of nothing and of everything. Of an electricity disengaged, little by little, of a flame suddenly darting forth, of a wandering force, of a passing breath. This breath encounters heads which speak, brains which dream, souls which suffer, passions which burn, wretchedness which howls, and bears them away.

Whither?

At random. Athwart the state, the laws, athwart prosperity and the insolence of others.

Irritated convictions, embittered enthusiasms, agitated indignations, instincts of war which have been repressed, youthful courage which has been exalted, generous blindness; curiosity, the taste for change, the thirst for the unexpected, the sentiment which causes one to take pleasure in reading the posters for the new play, and love, the prompter's whistle, at the theatre; the vague hatreds, rancors, disappointments, every vanity which thinks that destiny has bankrupted it; discomfort, empty dreams, ambitions that are hedged about, whoever hopes for a downfall, some outcome, in short, at the very bottom, the rabble, that mud which catches fire,—such are the elements of revolt. That which is grandest and that which is basest; the beings who prowl outside of all bounds, awaiting an occasion, bohemians, vagrants, vagabonds of the cross-roads, those who sleep at night in a desert of houses with no other roof than the cold elouds of heaven, those who, each day, demand their bread from chance and not from toil,

the unknown of poverty and nothingness, the bare-armed, the bare-footed, belong to revolt. Whoever cherishes in his soul a secret revolt against any deed whatever on the part of the state, of life or of fate, is ripe for riot, and, as soon as it makes its appearance, he begins to quiver, and to feel himself borne away with the whirlwind.

Revolt is a sort of waterspout in the social atmosphere which forms suddenly in certain conditions of temperature, and which, as it eddies about, mounts, descends, thunders, tears, razes, crushes, demolishes, uproots, bearing with it great natures and small, the strong man and the feeble mind, the tree trunk and the stalk of straw. Woe to him whom it bears away as well as to him whom it strikes! It breaks the one against the other.

It communicates to those whom it seizes an indescribable and extraordinary power. It fills the first-comer with the force of events; it converts everything into projectiles. It makes a cannon-ball of a rough stone, and a general of a porter.

If we are to believe certain oracles of crafty political views, a little revolt is desirable from the point of view of power. System: revolt strengthens those governments which it does not overthrow. It puts the army to the test; it consecrates the bourgeoisie, it draws out the muscles of the police; it demonstrates the force of the social framework. It is an exercise in gymnastics; it is almost hygiene. Power is in better health after a revolt, as a man is after a good rubbing down.

Revolt, thirty years ago, was regarded from still other points of view.

There is for everything a theory, which proclaims itself "good sense"; Philintus against Alcestis; mediation offered between the false and the true; explanation, admonition, rather haughty extenuation which, because it is mingled with blame and excuse, thinks itself wisdom, and is often only pedantry. A whole political school called "the golden mean" has been the outcome of this. As between cold water and

hot water, it is the lukewarm water party. This school with its false depth, all on the surface, which dissects effects without going back to first causes, ehides from its height of a demi-science, the agitation of the public square.

If we listen to this school, "The riots which complicated the affair of 1830 deprived that great event of a portion of its purity. The Revolution of July had been a fine popular gale, abruptly followed by blue sky. They made the cloudy sky reappear. They caused that revolution, at first so remarkable for its unanimity, to degenerate into a quarrel. In the Revolution of July, as in all progress accomplished by fits and starts, there had been secret fractures; these riots rendered them perceptible. It might have been said: 'Ah! this is broken.' After the Revolution of July, one was sensible only of deliverance; after the riots, one was conscious of a catastrophe.

"All revolt closes the shops, depresses the funds, throws the Exchange into consternation, suspends commerce, elogs business, precipitates failures: no more money, private fortunes rendered uneasy, public credit shaken. industry disconcerted, capital withdrawing, work at a discount, fear everywhere; counter-shocks in every town. Hence gulfs. It has been calculated that the first day of a riot costs France twenty millions, the second day forty, the third sixty, a three days' uprising costs one hundred and twenty millions, that is to say, if only the financial result be taken into consideration, it is equivalent to a disaster, a shipwreck or a lost battle, which should annihilate a fleet of sixty ships of the line.

"No doubt, historically, uprisings have their beauty; the war of the pavements is no less grandiose, and no less pathetic, than the war of thickets: in the one there is the soul of forests, in the other the heart of cities; the one has Jean Chouan, the other has a Jeanne. Revolts have illuminated with a red glare all the most original points of the Parisian character, generosity, devotion, stormy gaiety, students proving that bravery forms part of intelligence, the National Guard invincible, bivouacs of shopkeepers, fortresses of street urchins, contempt

of death on the part of passers-by. Schools and legions clashed together. After all, between the combatants, there was only a difference of age; the race is the same; it is the same stoical men who died at the age of twenty for their ideas, at forty for their families. The army, always a sad thing in civil wars, opposed prudence to audacity. Uprisings, while proving popular intrepidity, also educated the courage of the bourgeois.

“This is well. But is all this worth the bloodshed? And to the bloodshed add the future darkness, progress compromised, uneasiness among the best men, honest liberals in despair, foreign absolutism happy in these wounds dealt to revolution by its own hand. the vanquished of 1830 triumphing and saying: ‘We told you so!’ Add Paris enlarged. possibly, but France most assuredly diminished. Add, for all must needs be told, the massacres which have too often dishonored the victory of order grown ferocious over liberty gone mad. To sum up all, uprisings have been disastrous.”

Thus speaks that approximation to wisdom with which the bourgeoisie, that approximation to the people, so willingly contents itself.

For our parts, we reject this word *uprisings* as too large, and consequently as too convenient. We make a distinction between one popular movement and another popular movement. We do not inquire whether an uprising costs as much as a battle. Why a battle, in the first place? Here the question of war comes up. Is war less of a scourge than an uprising is of a calamity? And then, are all uprisings calamities? And what if the revolt of July did cost a hundred and twenty millions? The establishment of Philip V. in Spain cost France two milliards. Even at the same price, we should prefer the 14th of July. However, we reject these figures, which appear to be reasons and which are only words. An uprising being given, we examine it by itself. In all that is said by the doctrinarian objection above presented, there is no question of anything but effect, we seek the cause.

We will be explicit.

CHAPTER II

THE ROOT OF THE MATTER

THERE is such a thing as an uprising, and there is such a thing as insurrection; these are two separate phases of wrath; one is in the wrong, the other is in the right. In democratic states, the only ones which are founded on justice, it sometimes happens that the fraction usurps; then the whole rises and the necessary claim of its rights may proceed as far as resort to arms. In all questions which result from collective sovereignty, the war of the whole against the fraction is insurrection; the attack of the fraction against the whole is revolt; according as the Tuileries contain a king or the Convention, they are justly or unjustly attacked. The same cannon, pointed against the populace, is wrong on the 10th of August, and right on the 14th of Vendémiaire. Alike in appearance, fundamentally different in reality; the Swiss defend the false, Bonaparte defends the true. That which universal suffrage has effected in its liberty and in its sovereignty cannot be undone by the street. It is the same in things pertaining purely to civilization; the instinct of the masses, clear-sighted to-day, may be troubled to-morrow. The same fury legitimate when directed against Terray and absurd when directed against Turgot. The destruction of machines, the pillage of warehouses, the breaking of rails, the demolition of docks, the false routes of multitudes, the refusal by the people of justice to progress, Ramus assassinated by students, Rousseau driven out of Switzerland and stoned,—that is revolt. Israel against Moses, Athens against Phocian. Rome against Cicero,—that is an uprising; Paris against the Bastille,—that is insurrection. The soldiers against Alexander, the sailors against Christopher Columbus,—this is the same revolt; impious revolt; why? Because Alexander is doing for Asia with the sword that which Christopher Columbus is doing for America with the compass; Alexander

like Columbus, is finding a world. These gifts of a world to civilization are such augmentations of light, that all resistance in that case is culpable. Sometimes the populace counterfeits fidelity to itself. The masses are traitors to the people. Is there, for example, anything stranger than that long and bloody protest of dealers in contraband salt, a legitimate chronic revolt, which, at the decisive moment, on the day of salvation, at the very hour of popular victory, espouses the throne, turns into *chouannerie*, and, from having been an insurrection against, becomes an uprising for, sombre masterpieces of ignorance! The contraband salt dealer escapes the royal gibbets, and with a rope's end round his neck, mounts the white cockade. "Death to the salt duties," brings forth, "Long live the King!" The assassins of Saint-Barthélemy, the cut-throats of September, the manslaughters of Avignon, the assassins of Coligny, the assassins of Madam Lamballe, the assassins of Brune, Miquelets, Verdets, Cadenettes, the companions of Jéhu, the chevaliers of Brassard,—behold an uprising. La Vendée is a grand, catholic uprising. The sound of right in movement is recognizable, it does not always proceed from the trembling of excited masses; there are mad rages, there are cracked bells, all tocsins do not give out the sound of bronze. The brawl of passions and ignorances is quite another thing from the shock of progress. Show me in what direction you are going. Rise, if you will, but let it be that you may grow great. There is no insurrection except in a forward direction. Any other sort of rising is bad; every violent step towards the rear is a revolt; to retreat is to commit a deed of violence against the human race. Insurrection is a fit of rage on the part of truth; the pavements which the uprising disturbs give forth the spark of right. These pavements bequeath to the uprising only their mud. Danton against Louis XIV. is insurrection; Hébert against Danton is revolt.

Hence it results that if insurrection in given cases may be, as Lafayette says, the most holy of duties, an uprising may be the most fatal of crimes.

There is also a difference in the intensity of heat; insurrection is often a volcano, revolt is often only a fire of straw.

Revolt, as we have said, is sometimes found among those in power. Polignac is a rioter; Camille Desmoulins is one of the governing powers.

Insurrection is sometimes resurrection.

The solution of everything by universal suffrage being an absolutely modern fact, and all history anterior to this fact being, for the space of four thousand years, filled with violated right, and the suffering of peoples. each epoch of history brings with it that protest of which it is capable. Under the Cæsars, there was no insurrection, but there was Juvenal.

The *facit indignatio* replaces the Gracchi.

Under the Cæsars, there is the exile to Syene; there is also the man of the *Annales*. We do not speak of the immense exile of Patmos who, on his part also, overwhelms the real world with a protest in the name of the ideal world, who makes of his vision an enormous satire and casts on Rome-Nineveh, on Rome-Babylon, on Rome-Sodom, the flaming reflection of the Apocalypse. John on his rock is the sphinx on its pedestal; we may understand him, he is a Jew, and it is Hebrew; but the man who writes the *Annales* is of the Latin race, let us rather say he is a Roman.

As the Neros reign in a black way, they should be painted to match. The work of the graving-tool alone would be too pale; there must be poured into the channel a concentrated prose which bites.

Despots count for something in the question of philosophers. A word that is chained is a terrible word. The writer doubles and trebles his style when silence is imposed on a nation by its master. From this silence there arises a certain mysterious plenitude which filters into thought and there congeals into bronze. The compression of history produces conciseness in the historian. The granite solidity of such and such a celebrated prose is nothing but the accumulation effected by the tyrant.

Tyranny constrains the writer to conditions of diameter

which are augmentations of force. The Ciceronian period, which hardly sufficed for Verres, would be blunted on Caligula. The less spread of sail in the phrase, the more intensity in the blow. Tacitus thinks with all his might.

The honesty of a great heart, condensed in justice and truth, overwhelms as with lightning.

Be it remarked, in passing, that Tacitus is not historically superposed upon Cæsar. The Tiberii were reserved for him. Cæsar and Tacitus are two successive phenomena, a meeting between whom seems to be mysteriously avoided, by the One who, when He sets the centuries on the stage, regulates the entrances and the exits. Cæsar is great, Tacitus is great; God spares these two greatnesses by not allowing them to clash with one another. The guardian of justice, in striking Cæsar, might strike too hard and be unjust. God does not will it. The great wars of Africa and Spain, the pirates of Sicily destroyed, civilization introduced into Gaul, into Brittany, into Germany,—all this glory eovers the Rubicon. There is here a sort of delicacy of the divine justice, hesitating to let loose upon the illustrious usurper the formidable historian, sparing Cæsar Tacitus, and according extenuating circumstances to genius.

Certainly, despotism remains despotism, even under the despot of genius. There is corruption under all illustrious tyrants, but the moral pest is still more hideous under infamous tyrants. In such reigns, nothing veils the shame; and those who make examples, Tacitus as well as Juvenal, slap this ignominy which cannot reply, in the face, more usefully in the presence of all humanity.

Rome smells worse under Vitellius than under Sylla. Under Claudius and under Domitian, there is a deformity of baseness corresponding to the repulsiveness of the tyrant. The villany of slaves is a direct product of the despot; a miasma exhales from these cowering consciences wherein the master is reflected; public powers are unclean; hearts are small; consciences are dull, souls are like vermin; thus it is under Caracalla, thus it is under Commodus, thus it is under

Heliogabalus, while, from the Roman Senate, under Cæsar, there comes nothing but the odor of the dung which is peculiar to the eyries of the eagles.

Hence the advent, apparently tardy, of the Tacituses and the Juvenals; it is in the hour for evidence, that the demonstrator makes his appearance.

But Juvenal and Tacitus, like Isaiah in Biblical times, like Dante in the Middle Ages, is man; riot and insurrection are the multitude, which is sometimes right and sometimes wrong.

In the majority of cases, riot proceeds from a material fact; insurrection is always a moral phenomenon. Riot is Masaniello; insurrection, Spartacus. Insurrection borders on mind. riot on the stomach; Gaster grows irritated; but Gaster, assuredly, is not always in the wrong. In questions of famine, riot, Buzançais, for example, holds a true, pathetic, and just point of departure. Nevertheless, it remains a riot. Why? It is because, right at bottom, it was wrong in form. Shy although in the right, violent although strong, it struck at random; it walked like a blind elephant; it left behind it the corpses of old men, of women, and of children; it wished the blood of inoffensive and innocent persons without knowing why. The nourishment of the people is a good object; to massacre them is a bad means.

All armed protests, even the most legitimate, even that of the 10th of August, even that of July 14th, begin with the same troubles. Before the right gets set free, there is foam and tumult. In the beginning, the insurrection is a riot, just as a river is a torrent. Ordinarily it ends in that ocean: revolution. Sometimes, however, coming from those lofty mountains which dominate the moral horizon, justice, wisdom, reason, right, formed of the pure snow of the ideal, after a long fall from rock to rock, after having reflected the sky in its transparency and increased by a hundred affluents in the majestic mien of triumph, insurrection is suddenly lost in some quagmire, as the Rhine is in a swamp.

All this is of the past, the future is another thing. Universal suffrage has this admirable property, that it dissolves

riot in its inception, and, by giving the vote to insurrection, it deprives it of its arms. The disappearance of wars, of street wars as well as of wars on the frontiers, such is the inevitable progression. Whatever To-day may be, To-morrow will be peace.

However, insurrection, riot, and points of difference between the former and the latter,—the bourgeois, properly speaking, knows nothing of such shades. In his mind, all is sedition, rebellion pure and simple, the revolt of the dog against his master, an attempt to bite whom must be punished by the chain and the kennel, barking, snapping, until such day as the head of the dog, suddenly enlarged, is outlined vaguely in the gloom face to face with the lion.

Then the bourgeois shouts: "Long live the people!"

This explanation given, what does the movement of June, 1832, signify, so far as history is concerned? Is it a revolt? Is it an insurrection?"

It may happen to us, in placing this formidable event on the stage, to say revolt now and then, but merely to distinguish superficial facts, and always preserving the distinction between revolt, the form, and insurrection, the foundation.

This movement of 1832 had, in its rapid outbreak and in its melancholy extinction, so much grandeur, that even those who see in it only an uprising, never refer to it otherwise than with respect. For them, it is like a relic of 1830. Excited imaginations, say they, are not to be calmed in a day. A revolution cannot be cut off short. It must needs undergo some undulations before it returns to a state of rest, like a mountain sinking into the plain. There are no Alps without their Jura, nor Pyrenees without the Asturias.

This pathetic crisis of contemporary history which the memory of Parisians calls "the epoch of the riots," is certainly a characteristic hour amid the stormy hours of this century. A last word, before we enter on the recital.

The facts which we are about to relate belong to that dramatic and living reality, which the historian sometimes neglects for lack of time and space. There, nevertheless, we in-

sist upon it, is life, palpitation, human tremor. Petty details, as we think we have already said, are, so to speak, the foliage of great events, and are lost in the distance of history. The epoch, surnamed "of the riots," abounds in details of this nature. Judicial inquiries have not revealed, and perhaps have not sounded the depths, for another reason than history. We shall therefore bring to light, among the known and published peculiarities, things which have not heretofore been known, about facts over which have passed the forgetfulness of some, and the death of others. The majority of the actors in these gigantic scenes have disappeared; beginning with the very next day they held their peace; but of what we shall relate, we shall be able to say: "We have seen this." We alter a few names, for history relates and does not inform against, but the deed which we shall paint will be genuine. In accordance with the conditions of the book which we are now writing, we shall show only one side and one episode, and certainly, the least known at that, of the two days, the 5th and the 6th of June, 1832, but we shall do it in such wise that the reader may catch a glimpse, beneath the gloomy veil which we are about to lift, of the real form of this frightful public adventure.

CHAPTER III

A BURIAL; AN OCCASION TO BE BORN AGAIN

IN the spring of 1832, although the cholera had been chilling all minds for the last three months and had cast over their agitation an indescribable and gloomy pacification, Paris had already long been ripe for commotion. As we have said, the great city resembles a piece of artillery; when it is loaded, it suffices for a spark to fall, and the shot is discharged. In June, 1832, the spark was the death of General Lamarque.

Lamarque was a man of renown and of action. He had had in succession, under the Empire and under the Restora-

tion, the sorts of bravery requisite for the two epochs, the bravery of the battle-field and the bravery of the tribune. He was as eloquent as he had been valiant; a sword was discernible in his speech. Like Foy, his predecessor, after upholding the command, he upheld liberty; he sat between the left and the extreme left, beloved of the people because he accepted the chances of the future, beloved of the populace because he had served the Emperor well; he was, in company with Comtes Gérard and Drouet, one of Napoleon's marshals *in petto*. The treaties of 1815 removed him as a personal offence. He hated Wellington with a downright hatred which pleased the multitude; and, for seventeen years, he majestically preserved the sadness of Waterloo, paying hardly any attention to intervening events. In his death agony, at his last hour, he clasped to his breast a sword which had been presented to him by the officers of the Hundred Days. Napoleon had died uttering the word *army*, Lamarque uttering the word *country*.

His death, which was expected, was dreaded by the people as a loss, and by the government as an occasion. This death was an affliction. Like everything that is bitter, affliction may turn to revolt. This is what took place.

On the preceding evening, and on the morning of the 5th of June, the day appointed for Lamarque's burial, the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, which the procession was to touch at, assumed a formidable aspect. This tumultuous network of streets was filled with rumors. They armed themselves as best they might. Joiners carried off door-weights of their establishment "to break down doors." One of them had made himself a dagger of a stocking-weaver's hook by breaking off the hook and sharpening the stump. Another, who was in a fever "to attack," slept wholly dressed for three days. A carpenter named Lombier met a comrade, who asked him: "Whither are you going?" "Eh! well, I have no weapons." "What then?" "I'm going to my timber-yard to get my compasses." "What for?" "I don't know," said Lombier. A certain Jacqueline, an expeditious man, accosted some passing arti-

sans: "Come here, you!" He treated them to ten sous' worth of wine and said: "Have you work?" "No." "Go to Filspierre, between the Barrière Charonne and the Barrière Montreuil, and you will find work." At Filspierre's they found cartridges and arms. Certain well-known leaders were going the rounds, that is to say, running from one house to another, to collect their men. At Barthélemy's, near the Barrière du Trône, at Capel's, near the Petit-Chapeau, the drinkers accosted each other with a grave air. They were heard to say: "Have you your pistol?" "Under my blouse." "And you?" "Under my shirt." In the Rue Traversière, in front of the Bland workshop, and in the yard of the Maison-Brulée, in front of tool-maker Bernier's, groups whispered together. Among them was observed a certain Mavot, who never remained more than a week in one shop, as the masters always discharged him "because they were obliged to dispute with him every day." Mavot was killed on the following day at the barricade of the Rue Ménilmontant. Pretot, who was destined to perish also in the struggle, seconded Mavot, and to the question: "What is your object?" he replied: "*Insurrection.*" Workmen assembled at the corner of the Rue de Berrey, waited for a certain Lemarin, the revolutionary agent for the Faubourg Saint-Marcereau. Watchwords were exchanged almost publicly.

On the 5th of June, accordingly, a day of mingled rain and sun, General Lamarque's funeral procession traversed Paris with official military pomp, somewhat augmented through precaution. Two battalions, with draped drums and reversed arms, ten thousand National Guards, with their swords at their sides, escorted the coffin. The hearse was drawn by young men. The officers of the Invalides came immediately behind it, bearing laurel branches. Then came an innumerable, strange, agitated multitude, the sectionaries of the Friends of the People, the Law School, the Medical School, refugees of all nationalities, and Spanish, Italian, German, and Polish flags, tricolored horizontal banners, every possible sort of banner, children waving green boughs, stone-cutters and carpenters

who were on strike at the moment, printers who were recognizable by their paper caps, marching two by two, three by three, uttering cries, nearly all of them brandishing sticks, some brandishing sabres, without order and yet with a single soul, now a tumultuous rout, again a column. Squads chose themselves leaders; a man armed with a pair of pistols in full view, seemed to pass the host in review, and the files separated before him. On the side alleys of the boulevards, in the branches of the trees, on balconies, in windows, on the roofs, swarmed the heads of men, women, and children; all eyes were filled with anxiety. An armed throng was passing, and a terrified throng looked on.

The Government, on its side, was taking observations. It observed with its hand on its sword. Four squadrons of carabineers could be seen in the Place Louis XV. in their saddles, with their trumpets at their head, cartridge-boxes filled and muskets loaded, all in readiness to march; in the Latin country and at the Jardin des Plantes, the Municipal Guard echeloned from street to street; at the Halle-aux-Vins, a squadron of dragoons; at the Grève half of the 12th Light Infantry, the other half being at the Bastille; the 6th Dragoons at the Célestins; and the courtyard of the Louvre full of artillery. The remainder of the troops were confined to their barracks, without reckoning the regiments of the environs of Paris. Power being uneasy, held suspended over the menacing multitude twenty-four thousand soldiers in the city and thirty thousand in the banlieue.

Divers reports were in circulation in the cortège. Legitimist tricks were hinted at: they spoke of the Duc de Reichstadt, whom God had marked out for death at that very moment when the populace were designating him for the Empire. One personage, whose name has remained unknown, announced that at a given hour two overseers who had been won over, would throw open the doors of a factory of arms to the people. That which predominated on the uncovered brows of the majority of those present was enthusiasm mingled with dejection. Here and there, also, in that multitude given over

to such violent but noble emotions, there were visible genuine visages of criminals and ignoble mouths which said: "Let us plunder!" There are certain agitations which stir up the bottoms of marshes and make clouds of mud rise through the water. A phenomenon to which "well drilled" policemen are no strangers.

The procession proceeded, with feverish slowness, from the house of the deceased, by way of the boulevards as far as the Bastille. It rained from time to time; the rain mattered nothing to that throng. Many incidents, the coffin borne round the Vendome column, stones thrown at the Duc de Fitz-James, who was seen on a balcony with his hat on his head, the Gallic cock torn from a popular flag and dragged in the mire, a policeman wounded with a blow from a sword at the Porte Saint-Martin, an officer of the 12th Light Infantry saying aloud: "I am a Republican," the Polytechnic School coming up unexpectedly against orders to remain at home, the shouts of: "Long live the Polytechnique! Long live the Republic!" marked the passage of the funeral train. At the Bastille, long files of curious and formidable people who descended from the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, effected a junction with the procession, and a certain terrible seething began to agitate the throng.

One man was heard to say to another: "Do you see that fellow with a red beard, he's the one who will give the word when we are to fire." It appears that this red beard was present, at another riot, the Quénisset affair, entrusted with this same function.

The hearse passed the Bastille, traversed the small bridge, and reached the esplanade of the bridge of Austerlitz. There it halted. The crowd, surveyed at that moment with a bird's-eye view, would have presented the aspect of a comet whose head was on the esplanade and whose tail spread out over the Quai Bourdon, covered the Bastille, and was prolonged on the boulevard as far as the Porte Saint-Martin. A circle was traced around the hearse. The vast rout held their peace. Lafayette spoke and bade Lamarque farewell. This was a

touching and august instant, all heads uncovered, all hearts beat high.

All at once, a man on horseback, clad in black, made his appearance in the middle of the group with a red flag, others say, with a pike surmounted with a red liberty-cap. Lafayette turned aside his head. Exelmans quitted the procession.

This red flag raised a storm, and disappeared in the midst of it. From the Boulevard Bourdon to the bridge of Austerlitz one of those clamors which resemble billows stirred the multitude. Two prodigious shouts went up: "Lamarque to the Pantheon!—Lafayette to the Town-hall!" Some young men, amid the acclamations of the throng, harnessed themselves and began to drag Lamarque in the hearse across the bridge of Austerlitz and Lafayette in a hackney-coach along the Quai Morland.

In the crowd which surrounded and cheered Lafayette, it was noticed that a German showed himself named Ludwig Snyder, who died a centenarian afterwards, who had also been in the war of 1776, and who had fought at Trenton under Washington, and at Brandywine under Lafayette.

In the meantime, the municipal cavalry on the left bank had been set in motion, and came to bar the bridge, on the right bank the dragoons emerged from the Célestins and deployed along the Quai Morland. The men who were dragging Lafayette suddenly caught sight of them at the corner of the quay and shouted: "The dragoons!" The dragoons advanced at a walk, in silence, with their pistols in their holsters, their swords in their scabbards, their guns slung in their leather sockets, with an air of gloomy expectation.

They halted two hundred paces from the little bridge. The carriage in which sat Lafayette advanced to them, their ranks opened and allowed it to pass, and then closed behind it. At that moment the dragoons and the crowd touched. The women fled in terror. What took place during that fatal minute? No one can say. It is the dark moment when two clouds come together. Some declare that a blast of trumpets sounding the charge was heard in the direction of the Arsenal,

others that a blow from a dagger was given by a child to a dragoon. The fact is, that three shots were suddenly discharged: the first killed Cholet, chief of the squadron, the second killed an old deaf woman who was in the act of closing her window, the third singed the shoulder of an officer; a woman screamed: "They are beginning too soon!" and all at once, a squadron of dragoons which had remained in the barracks up to this time, was seen to debouch at a gallop with bared swords, through the Rue Bassompierre and the Boulevard Bourdon, sweeping all before them.

Then all is said, the tempest is loosed, stones rain down, a fusillade breaks forth, many precipitate themselves to the bottom of the bank, and pass the small arm of the Seine, now filled in, the timber-yards of the Isle Louviers, that vast citadel ready to hand, bristle with combatants, stakes are torn up, pistol-shots fired, a barricade begun, the young men who are thrust back pass the Austerlitz bridge with the hearse at a run, and the municipal guard, the carabinieri rush up, the dragoons ply their swords, the crowd disperses in all directions, a rumor of war flies to all four quarters of Paris, men shout: "To arms!" they run, tumble down, flee, resist. Wrath spreads abroad the riot as wind spreads a fire.

CHAPTER IV

THE EBULLITIONS OF FORMER DAYS

NOTHING is more extraordinary than the first breaking out of a riot. Everything bursts forth everywhere at once. Was it foreseen? Yes. Was it prepared? No. Whence comes it? From the pavements. Whence falls it? From the clouds. Here insurrection assumes the character of a plot; there of an improvisation. The first comer seizes a current of the throng and leads it whither he wills. A beginning full of terror, in which is mingled a sort of formidable gayety. First come clamors, the shops are closed, the displays of the merehants

disappear; then come isolated shots; people flee; blows from gun-stocks beat against portes cochères, servants can be heard laughing in the courtyards of houses and saying: "There's going to be a row!"

A quarter of an hour had not elapsed when this is what was taking place at twenty different spots in Paris at once.

In the Rue Sainte-Croix-de-la-Bretonnerie, twenty young men, bearded and with long hair, entered a dram-shop and emerged a moment later, carrying a horizontal tricolored flag covered with crape, and having at their head three men armed, one with a sword, one with a gun, and the third with a pike.

In the Rue des Nonaindières, a very well-dressed bourgeois, who had a prominent belly, a sonorous voice, a bald head, a lofty brow, a black beard, and one of these stiff mustaches which will not lie flat, offered cartridges publicly to passers-by.

In the Rue Saint-Pierre-Montmartre, men with bare arms carried about a black flag, on which could be read in white letters this inscription: "Republic or Death!" In the Rue des Jeûneurs, Rue du Cadran, Rue Montorgueil, Rue Mandar, groups appeared waving flags on which could be distinguished in gold letters, the word *section* with a number. One of these flags was red and blue with an almost imperceptible stripe of white between.

They pillaged a factory of small-arms on the Boulevard Saint-Martin, and three armorers' shops, the first in the Rue Beaubourg, the second in the Rue Michel-le-Comte, the other in the Rue du Temple. In a few minutes, the thousand hands of the crowd had seized and carried off two hundred and thirty guns, nearly all doubled-barrelled, sixty-four swords, and eighty-three pistols. In order to provide more arms, one man took the gun, the other the bayonet.

Opposite the Quai de la Grève, young men armed with muskets installed themselves in the houses of some women for the purpose of firing. One of them had a flint-lock. They rang, entered, and set about making cartridges. One of these women relates: "I did not know what cartridges were; it was my husband who told me."

One cluster broke into a curiosity shop in the Rue des Vieilles Haudriettes, and seized yataghans and Turkish arms.

The body of a mason who had been killed by a gun-shot lay in the Rue de la Perle.

And then, on the right bank, the left bank, on the quays, on the boulevards, in the Latin country, in the quarter of the Halles, panting men, artisans, students, members of sections read proclamations and shouted: "To arms!" broke street lanterns, unharnessed carriages, unpaved the streets, broke in the doors of houses, uprooted trees, rummaged cellars, rolled out hogsheads, heaped up paving-stones, rough slabs, furniture and planks, and made barricades.

They forced the bourgeois to assist them in this. They entered the dwellings of women, they forced them to hand over the swords and guns of their absent husbands, and they wrote on the door, with whiting: "The arms have been delivered"; some signed "their names" to receipts for the guns and swords, and said: "Send for them to-morrow at the Mayor's office." They disarmed isolated sentinels and National Guardsmen in the streets on their way to the Town-hall. They tore the epaulets from officers. In the Rue du Cimetière-Saint-Nicholas, an officer of the National Guard, on being pursued by a crowd armed with clubs and foils, took refuge with difficulty in a house, whence he was only able to emerge at nightfall and in disguise.

In the Quartier Saint-Jacques, the students swarmed out of their hotels and ascended the Rue Saint-Hyacinthe to the Café du Progrès, or descended to the Café des Sept-Billards, in the Rue des Mathurins. There, in front of the door, young men mounted on the stone corner-posts, distributed arms. They plundered the timber-yard in the Rue Transnonain in order to obtain material for barricades. On a single point the inhabitants resisted, at the corner of the Rue Sainte-Avoye and the Rue Simon-Le-Franc, where they destroyed the barricade with their own hands. At a single point the insurgents yielded; they abandoned a barricade begun in the Rue de Temple after having fired on a detachment of the National

Guard, and fled through the Rue de la Corderie. The detachment picked up in the barricade a red flag, a package of cartridges, and three hundred pistol-balls. The National Guardsmen tore up the flag, and carried off its tattered remains on the points of their bayonets.

All that we are here relating slowly and successively took place simultaneously at all points of the city in the midst of a vast tumult, like a mass of tongues of lightning in one clap of thunder. In less than an hour, twenty-seven barricades sprang out of the earth in the quarter of the Halles alone. In the centre was that famous house No. 50, which was the fortress of Jeanne and her six hundred companions, and which, flanked on the one hand by a barricade at Saint-Merry, and on the other by a barricade of the Rue Maubuée, commanded three streets, the Rue des Arcis, the Rue Saint-Martin, and the Rue Aubry-le-Boucher, which it faced. The barricades at right angles fell back, the one of the Rue Montorgueil on the Grande-Truanderie, the other of the Rue Geoffroy-Langevin on the Rue Sainte-Avoye. Without reckoning innumerable barricades in twenty other quarters of Paris, in the Marais, at Mont-Sainte-Geneviève; one in the Rue Ménilmontant, where was visible a porte cochère torn from its hinges; another near the little bridge of the Hôtel-Dieu made with an "écossais," which had been unharnessed and overthrown, three hundred paces from the Prefecture of Police.

At the barricade of the Rue des Ménétriers, a well-dressed man distributed money to the workmen. At the barricade of the Rue Grenetat, a horseman made his appearance and handed to the one who seemed to be the commander of the barricade what had the appearance of a roll of silver. "Here," said he, "this is to pay expenses, wine, et cætera." A light-haired young man, without a cravat, went from barricade to barricade, carrying pass-words. Another, with a naked sword, a blue police cap on his head, placed sentinels. In the interior, beyond the barricades, the wine-shops and porters' lodges were converted into guard-houses. Otherwise the riot was conducted after the most scientific military tactics. The narrow,

uneven, sinuous streets, full of angles and turns, were admirably chosen; the neighborhood of the Halles, in particular, a network of streets more intricate than a forest. The Society of the Friends of the People had, it was said, undertaken to direct the insurrection in the Quartier Sainte-Avoye. A man killed in the Rue du Ponceau who was searched had on his person a plan of Paris.

That which had really undertaken the direction of the uprising was a sort of strange impetuosity which was in the air. The insurrection had abruptly built barricades with one hand, and with the other seized nearly all the posts of the garrison. In less than three hours, like a train of powder catching fire, the insurgents had invaded and occupied, on the right bank, the Arsenal, the Mayoralty of the Place Royale, the whole of the Marais, the Popincourt arms manufactory, la Galiote, the Château-d'Eau, and all the streets near the Halles; on the left bank, the barracks of the Veterans, Sainte-Pélagie, the Place Maubert, the powder magazine of the Deux-Moulins, and all the barriers. At five o'clock in the evening, they were masters of the Bastille, of the Lingerie, of the Blancs-Manteaux; their scouts had reached the Place des Victoires, and menaced the Bank, the Petits-Pères barracks, and the Post-Office. A third of Paris was in the hands of the rioters.

The conflict had been begun on a gigantic scale at all points; and, as a result of the disarming, domiciliary visits, and armorers' shops hastily invaded, was, that the combat which had begun with the throwing of stones was continued with gun-shots.

About six o'clock in the evening, the Passage du Saumon became the field of battle. The uprising was at one end, the troops were at the other. They fired from one gate to the other. An observer, a dreamer, the author of this book, who had gone to get a near view of this volcano, found himself in the passage between the two fires. All that he had to protect him from the bullets was the swell of the two half-columns which separate the shops; he remained in this delicate situation for nearly half an hour.

Meanwhile the call to arms was beaten, the National Guard armed in haste, the legions emerged from the Mayoralties, the regiments from their barraeks. Opposite the passage de l'Ancre a drummer received a blow from a dagger. Another, in the Rue du Cygne, was assailed by thirty young men who broke his instrument, and took away his sword. Another was killed in the Rue Grenier-Saint-Lazare. In the Rue-Michelle-Comte, three officers fell dead one after the other. Many of the Municipal Guards, on being wounded, in the Rue des Lombards, retreated.

In front of the Cour-Batave, a detachment of National Guards found a red flag bearing the following inscription: *Republican revolution, No. 127.* Was this a revolution, in fact?

The insurrection had made of the centre of Paris a sort of inextricable, tortuous, colossal eitadel.

There was the hearth; there, evidently, was the question. All the rest was nothing but skirmishes. The proof that all would be decided there lay in the fact that there was no fighting going on there as yet.

In some regiments, the soldiers were uncertain, which added to the fearful uncertainty of the erisis. They recalled the popular ovation which had greeted the neutrality of the 53d of the Line in July, 1830. Two intrepid men, tried in great wars, the Marshal Lobau and General Bugeaud, were in command, Bugeaud under Lobau. Enormous patrols, composed of battalions of the Line, enclosed in entire companies of the National Guard, and preceded by a commissary of police wearing his searf of office, went to reconnoitre the streets in rebellion. The insurgents, on their side, placed videttes at the corners of all open spaces, and audaciously sent their patrols outside the barricades. Each side was watching the other. The Government, with an army in its hand, hesitated; the night was almost upon them, and the Saint-Merry tocsin began to make itself heard. The Minister of War at that time, Marshal Soult, who had seen Austerlitz, regarded this with a gloomy air.

These old sailors, accustomed to correct manœuvres and having as resource and guide only tactics, that compass of battles, are utterly disconcerted in the presence of that immense foam which is called public wrath.

The National Guards of the suburbs rushed up in haste and disorder. A battalion of the 12th Light came at a run from Saint-Denis, the 14th of the Line arrived from Courbevoie, the batteries of the Military School had taken up their position on the Carrousel; cannons were descending from Vincennes.

Solitude was formed around the Tuileries. Louis Philippe was perfectly serene.

CHAPTER V

ORIGINALITY OF PARIS

DURING the last two years, as we have said, Paris had witnessed more than one insurrection. Nothing is, generally, more singularly calm than the physiognomy of Paris during an uprising beyond the bounds of the rebellious quarters. Paris very speedily accustoms herself to anything,—it is only a riot,—and Paris has so many affairs on hand, that she does not put herself out for so small a matter. These colossal cities alone can offer such spectacles. These immense enclosures alone can contain at the same time civil war and an odd and indescribable tranquillity. Ordinarily, when an insurrection commences, when the shop-keeper hears the drum, the call to arms, the general alarm, he contents himself with the remark:—

“There appears to be a squabble in the Rue Saint-Martin.”

Or:—

“In the Faubourg Saint-Antoine.”

Often he adds carelessly:—

“Or somewhere in that direction.”

Later on, when the heart-rending and mournful hubbub of musketry and firing by platoons becomes audible, the shop-keeper says:—

"It's getting hot! Hullo, it's getting hot!"

A moment later, the riot approaches and gains in force, he shuts up his shop precipitately, hastily dons his uniform, that is to say, he places his merchandise in safety and risks his own person.

Men fire in a square, in a passage, in a blind alley; they take and re-take the barricade; blood flows, the grape-shot riddles the fronts of the houses, the balls kill people in their beds, corpses encumber the streets. A few streets away, the shoek of billiard-balls can be heard in the cafés.

The theatres open their doors and present vaudevilles; the curious laugh and chat a couple of paces distant from these streets filled with war. Hackney-carriages go their way; passers-by are going to a dinner somewhere in town. Sometimes in the very quarter where the fighting is going on.

In 1831, a fusillade was stopped to allow a wedding party to pass.

At the time of the insurrection of 1839, in the Rue Saint-Martin, a little, infirm old man, pushing a hand-cart surmounted by a tricolored rag, in which he had carafes filled with some sort of liquid, went and came from barricade to troops and from troops to the barricade, offering his glasses of cocoa impartially,—now to the Government, now to anarchy.

Nothing can be stranger; and this is the peculiar character of uprisings in Paris, which cannot be found in any other capital. To this end, two things are requisite, the size of Paris and its gayety. The city of Voltaire and Napoleon is necessary.

On this occasion, however, in the resort to arms of June 25th, 1832, the great city felt something which was, perhaps, stronger than itself. It was afraid.

Closed doors, windows, and shutters were to be seen everywhere, in the most distant and most "disinterested" quarters. The courageous took to arms, the poltroons hid. The busy and heedless passer-by disappeared. Many streets were empty at four o'clock in the morning.

Alarming details were hawked about, fatal news was disseminated,—that *they* were masters of the Bank;—that there were six hundred of them in the Cloister of Saint-Merry alone, entrenched and embattled in the church; that the line was not to be depended on; that Armand Carrel had been to see Marshal Clausel and that the Marshal had said: “Get a regiment first”; that Lafayette was ill, but that he had said to them, nevertheless: “I am with you. I will follow you wherever there is room for a chair”; that one must be on one’s guard; that at night there would be people pillaging isolated dwellings in the deserted corners of Paris (there the imagination of the police, that Anne Radcliffe mixed up with the Government was recognizable); that a battery had been established in the Rue Aubry le Boucher; that Lobau and Bugeaud were putting their heads together, and that, at midnight, or at daybreak at latest, four columns would march simultaneously on the centre of the uprising, the first coming from the Bastille, the second from the Porte Saint-Martin, the third from the Grève, the fourth from the Halles; that perhaps, also, the troops would evacuate Paris and withdraw to the Champ-de-Mars; that no one knew what would happen, but that this time, it certainly was serious.

People busied themselves over Marshal Soult’s hesitations. Why did not he attack at once? It is certain that he was profoundly absorbed. The old lion seemed to scent an unknown monster in that gloom.

Evening came, the theatres did not open; the patrols circulated with an air of irritation; passers-by were searched; suspicious persons were arrested. By nine o’clock, more than eight hundred persons had been arrested, the Prefecture of Police was encumbered with them, so was the Conciergerie, so was La Force.

At the Conciergerie in particular, the long vault which is called the Rue de Paris was littered with trusses of straw upon which lay a heap of prisoners, whom the man of Lyons, Lagrange, harangued valiantly. All that straw rustled by all these men, produced the sound of a heavy shower. Elsewhere

prisoners slept in the open air in the meadows, piled on top of each other.

Anxiety reigned everywhere, and a certain tremor which was not habitual with Paris.

People barricaded themselves in their houses; wives and mothers were uneasy; nothing was to be heard but this: "Ah! my God! He has not come home!" There was hardly even the distant rumble of a vehicle to be heard.

People listened on their thresholds, to the rumors, the shouts, the tumult, the dull and indistinct sounds, to the things that were said: "It is cavalry," or: "Those are the caissons galloping," to the trumpets, the drums, the firing, and, above all, to that lamentable alarm peal from Saint-Merry.

They waited for the first cannon-shot. Men sprang up at the corners of the streets and disappeared, shouting: "Go home!" And people made haste to bolt their doors. They said: "How will all this end?" From moment to moment, in proportion as the darkness descended, Paris seemed to take on a more mournful hue from the formidable flaming of the revolt.

BOOK ELEVENTH. — THE ATOM FRATERNIZES WITH THE HURRICANE

CHAPTER I

SOME EXPLANATIONS WITH REGARD TO THE ORIGIN OF GAV-
ROCHIE'S POETRY. THE INFLUENCE OF AN ACADEMICIAN ON
THIS POETRY

AT the instant when the insurrection, arising from the shock of the populace and the military in front of the Arsenal, started a movement in advance and towards the rear in the multitude which was following the hearse and which, through the whole length of the boulevards, weighed, so to speak, on the head of the procession, there arose a frightful ebb. The rout was shaken, their ranks were broken, all ran, fled, made their escape, some with shouts of attack, others with the pallor of flight. The great river which covered the boulevards divided in a twinkling, overflowed to right and left, and spread in torrents over two hundred streets at once with the roar of a sewer that has broken loose.

At that moment, a ragged child who was coming down through the Rue Ménilmontant, holding in his hand a branch of blossoming laburnum which he had just plucked on the heights of Belleville, caught sight of an old holster-pistol in the show-window of a bric-à-brac merchant's shop.

"Mother What's-your-name, I'm going to borrow your machine."

And off he ran with the pistol.

Two minutes later, a flood of frightened bourgeois who were

fleeing through the Rue Amelot and the Rue Basse, encountered the lad brandishing his pistol and singing:—

La nuit on ne voit rien,
 Le jour on voit très bien,
 D'un écrit apocryphe
 Le bourgeois s'ébouriffe,
 Pratiquez la vertu,
 Tutu, chapeau pointu!¹

It was little Gavroche on his way to the wars.

On the boulevard he noticed that the pistol had no trigger.

Who was the author of that couplet which served to punctuate his march, and of all the other songs which he was fond of singing on occasion? We know not. Who does know? Himself, perhaps. However, Gavroche was well up in all the popular tunes in circulation, and he mingled with them his own chirpings. An observing urchin and a rogue, he made a potpourri of the voices of nature and the voices of Paris. He combined the repertory of the birds with the repertory of the workshops. He was acquainted with thieves, a tribe contiguous to his own. He had, it appears, been for three months apprenticed to a printer. He had one day executed a commission for M. Baour-Lormian, one of the Forty. Gavroche was a gamin of letters.

Moreover, Gavroche had no suspicion of the fact that when he had offered the hospitality of his elephant to two brats on that villanously rainy night, it was to his own brothers that he had played the part of Providence. His brothers in the evening, his father in the morning; that is what his night had been like. On quitting the Rue des Ballets at daybreak, he had returned in haste to the elephant, had artistically extracted from it the two brats, had shared with them some sort of breakfast which he had invented, and had then gone away, confiding them to that good mother, the street, who had brought him up, almost entirely. On leaving them, he had appointed to meet them at the same spot in the evening, and

¹At night one sees nothing, by day one sees very well; the bourgeois gets flurried over an apocryphal scrawl, practice virtue, tutu, pointed hat!

had left them this discourse by way of a farewell: "I break a cane, otherwise expressed, I cut my stick, or, as they say at the court, I file off. If you don't find papa and mamma, young 'uns, come back here this evening. I'll scramble you up some supper, and I'll give you a shakedown." The two children, picked up by some policeman and placed in the refuge, or stolen by some mountebank, or having simply strayed off in that immense Chinese puzzle of a Paris, did not return. The lowest depths of the actual social world are full of these lost traces. Gavroche did not see them again. Ten or twelve weeks had elapsed since that night. More than once he had scratched the back of his head and said: "Where the devil are my two children?"

In the meantime, he had arrived, pistol in hand, in the Rue du Pont-aux-Choux. He noticed that there was but one shop open in that street, and, a matter worthy of reflection, that was a pastry-cook's shop. This presented a providential occasion to eat another apple-turnover before entering the unknown. Gavroche halted, fumbled in his fob, turned his pocket inside out, found nothing, not even a sou, and began to shout: "Help!"

It is hard to miss the last cake.

Nevertheless, Gavroche pursued his way.

Two minutes later he was in the Rue Saint-Louis. While traversing the Rue du Parc-Royal, he felt called upon to make good the loss of the apple-turnover which had been impossible, and he indulged himself in the immense delight of tearing down the theatre posters in broad daylight.

A little further on, on catching sight of a group of comfortable-looking persons, who seemed to be landed proprietors, he shrugged his shoulders and spit out at random before him this mouthful of philosophical bile as they passed:

"How fat those moneyed men are! They're drunk! They just wallow in good dinners. Ask 'em what they do with their money. They don't know. They eat it, that's what they do! As much as their bellies will hold."

CHAPTER II

GAVROCHE ON THE MARCH

THE brandishing of a triggerless pistol, grasped in one's hand in the open street, is so much of a public function that Gavroche felt his fervor increasing with every moment. Amid the seraps of the Marseillaise which he was singing, he shouted:—

“All goes well. I suffer a great deal in my left paw, I'm all broken up with rheumatism, but I'm satisfied, citizens. All that the bourgeois have to do is to bear themselves well, I'll sneeze them out subversive couplets. What are the police spies? Dogs. And I'd just like to have one of them at the end of my pistol. I'm just from the boulevard, my friends. It's getting hot there, it's getting into a little boil, it's simmering. It's time to skim the pot. Forward march, men! Let an impure blood inundate the furrows! I give my days to my country, I shall never see my concubine more, Nini, finished, yes, Nini? But never mind! Long live joy! Let's fight, crebleu! I've had enough of despotism.”

At that moment, the horse of a laneer of the National Guard having fallen, Gavroche laid his pistol on the pavement, and picked up the man, then he assisted in raising the horse. After which he picked up his pistol and resumed his way. In the Rue de Thorigny, all was peace and silence. This apathy, peenliar to the Marais, presented a contrast with the vast surrounding uproar. Four gossips were ehatting in a doorway.

Scotland has trios of witehes, Paris has quartettes of old gossiping hags; and the “Thou shalt be King” could be quite as mournfully hurled at Bonaparte in the Carrefour Bandoyer as at Macbeth on the heath of Armmyr. The croak would be almost identical.

The gossips of the Rue de Thorigny busied themselves only with their own concerns. Three of them were portresses.

and the fourth was a rag-picker with her basket on her back.

All four of them seemed to be standing at the four corners of old age, which are decrepitude, decay, ruin, and sadness.

The rag-picker was humble. In this open-air society, it is the rag-picker who salutes and the portress who patronizes. This is caused by the corner for refuse, which is fat or lean, according to the will of the portresses, and after the fancy of the one who makes the heap. There may be kindness in the broom.

This rag-picker was a grateful creature, and she smiled, with what a smile! on the three portresses. Things of this nature were said:—

“Ah, by the way, is your cat still cross?”

“Good gracious, cats are naturally the enemies of dogs, you know. It’s the dogs who complain.”

“And people also.”

“But the fleas from a cat don’t go after people.”

“That’s not the trouble, dogs are dangerous. I remember one year when there were so many dogs that it was necessary to put it in the newspapers. That was at the time when there were at the Tuileries great sheep that drew the little carriage of the King of Rome. Do you remember the King of Rome?”

“I liked the Duc de Bordeau better.”

“I knew Louis XVIII. I prefer Louis XVIII.”

“Meat is awfully dear, isn’t it, Mother Patagon?”

“Ah! don’t mention it, the butcher’s shop is a horror. A horrible horror—one can’t afford anything but the poor cuts nowadays.”

Here the rag-picker interposed:—

“Ladies, business is dull. The refuse heaps are miserable. No one throws anything away any more. They eat everything.”

“There are poorer people than you, la Vargoulême.”

“Ah, that’s true,” replied the rag-picker, with deference, “I have a profession.”

A pause succeeded, and the rag-picker, yielding to that necessity for boasting which lies at the bottom of man, added:—

“In the morning, on my return home, I pick over my basket, I sort my things. This makes heaps in my room. I put the rags in a basket, the cores and stalks in a bucket, the linen in my cupboard, the woollen stuff in my commode, the old papers in the corner of the window, the things that are good to eat in my bowl, the bits of glass in my fireplace, the old shoes behind my door, and the bones under my bed.”

Gavroche had stopped behind her and was listening.

“Old ladies,” said he, “what do you mean by talking politics?”

He was assailed by a broadside, composed of a quadruple howl.

“Here’s another rascal.”

“What’s that he’s got in his paddle? A pistol?”

“Well, I’d like to know what sort of a beggar’s brat this is?”

“That sort of animal is never easy unless he’s overturning the authorities.”

Gavroche disdainfully contented himself, by way of reprisal, with elevating the tip of his nose with his thumb and opening his hand wide.

The rag-picker cried:—

“You malicious, bare-pawed little wretch!”

The one who answered to the name of Patagon clapped her hands together in horror.

“There’s going to be evil doings, that’s certain. The errand-boy next door has a little pointed beard, I have seen him pass every day with a young person in a pink bonnet on his arm; to-day I saw him pass, and he had a gun on his arm. Mame Bacheux says, that last week there was a revolution at—at—at—where’s the calf!—at Pontoise. And then, there you see him, that horrid scamp, with his pistol! It seems that the Célestins are full of pistols. What do you suppose the Government can do with good-for-nothings who don’t know how to do

anything but contrive ways of upsetting the world, when we had just begun to get a little quiet after all the misfortunes that have happened, good Lord! to that poor queen whom I saw pass in the tumbril! And all this is going to make tobacco dearer. It's infamous! And I shall certainly go to see him beheaded on the guillotine, the wretch!"

"You've got the sniffles, old lady," said Gavroche. "Blow your promontory."

And he passed on. When he was in the Rue Pavée, the rag-picker occurred to his mind, and he indulged in this soliloquy:—

"You're in the wrong to insult the revolutionists, Mother Dust-Heap-Corner. This pistol is in your interests. It's so that you may have more good things to eat in your basket."

All at once, he heard a shout behind him; it was the portress Patagon who had followed him, and who was shaking her fist at him in the distance and crying:—

"You're nothing but a bastard."

"Oh! Come now," said Gavroche, "I don't care a brass farthing for that!"

Shortly afterwards, he passed the Hotel Lamoignon. There he uttered this appeal:—

"Forward march to the battle!"

And he was seized with a fit of melancholy. He gazed at his pistol with an air of reproach which seemed an attempt to appease it:—

"I'm going off," said he, "but you won't go off!"

One dog may distract the attention from another dog.¹ A very gaunt poodle came along at the moment. Gavroche felt compassion for him.

"My poor doggy," said he, "you must have gone and swallowed a cask, for all the hoops are visible."

Then he directed his course towards l'Orme-Saint-Gervais.

¹*Chien*, dog, trigger.

CHAPTER III

JUST INDIGNATION OF A HAIR-DRESSER

THE worthy hair-dresser who had chased from his shop the two little fellows to whom Gavroche had opened the paternal interior of the elephant was at that moment in his shop engaged in shaving an old soldier of the legion who had served under the Empire. They were talking. The hair-dresser had, naturally, spoken to the veteran of the riot, then of General Lamarque, and from Lamarque they had passed to the Emperor. Thence sprang up a conversation between barber and soldier which Prudhomme, had he been present, would have enriched with arabesques, and which he would have entitled: "Dialogue between the razor and the sword."

"How did the Emperor ride, sir?" said the barber.

"Badly. He did not know how to fall—so he never fell."

"Did he have fine horses? He must have had fine horses!"

"On the day when he gave me my cross, I noticed his beast. It was a racing mare, perfectly white. Her ears were very wide apart, her saddle deep, a fine head marked with a black star, a very long neck, strongly articulated knees, prominent ribs, oblique shoulders and a powerful erupper. A little more than fifteen hands in height."

"A pretty horse," remarked the hair-dresser.

"It was His Majesty's beast."

The hair-dresser felt, that after this observation, a short silence would be fitting, so he conformed himself to it, and then went on:—

"The Emperor was never wounded but once, was he, sir?"

The old soldier replied with the calm and sovereign tone of a man who had been there:—

"In the heel. At Ratisbon. I never saw him so well dressed as on that day. He was as neat as a new sou."

"And you, Mr. Veteran, you must have been often wounded?"

"I?" said the soldier, "ah! not to amount to anything. At Marengo, I received two sabre-blows on the back of my neck, a bullet in the right arm at Austerlitz, another in the left hip at Jena. At Friedland, a thrust from a bayonet, there,— at the Moskowa seven or eight lance-thrusts, no matter where, at Lutzen a splinter of a shell crushed one of my fingers. Ah! and then at Waterloo, a ball from a biseaïen in the thigh, that's all."

"How fine that is!" exclaimed the hair-dresser, in Pindaric accents, "to die on the field of battle! On my word of honor, rather than die in bed, of an illness, slowly, a bit by bit each day, with drugs, cataplasms, syringes, medicines, I should prefer to receive a cannon-ball in my belly!"

"You're not over fastidious," said the soldier.

He had hardly spoken when a fearful crash shook the shop. The show-window had suddenly been fractured.

The wig-maker turned pale.

"Ah, good God!" he exclaimed, "it's one of them!"

"What?"

"A cannon-ball."

"Here it is," said the soldier.

And he picked up something that was rolling about the floor. It was a pebble.

The hair-dresser ran to the broken window and beheld Gavroche fleeing at the full speed, towards the Marché Saint-Jean. As he passed the hair-dresser's shop Gavroche, who had the two brats still in his mind, had not been able to resist the impulse to say good day to him, and had flung a stone through his panes.

"You see!" shrieked the hair-dresser, who from white had turned blue, "that fellow returns and does mischief for the pure pleasure of it. What has any one done to that gamin?"

CHAPTER IV

THE CHILD IS AMAZED AT THE OLD MAN

IN the meantime, in the *Marché Saint-Jean*, where the post had already been disarmed, Gavroche had just "effected a junction" with a band led by Enjolras, Courfeyrac, Comberferre, and Feuilly. They were armed after a fashion. Bahorel and Jean Prouvaire had found them and swelled the group. Enjolras had a double-barrelled hunting-gun, Comberferre the gun of a National Guard bearing the number of his legion, and in his belt, two pistols which his unbuttoned coat allowed to be seen, Jean Prouvaire an old cavalry musket, Bahorel a rifle; Courfeyrac was brandishing an unsheathed sword-cane. Feuilly, with a naked sword in his hand, marched at their head shouting: "Long live Poland!"

They reached the *Quai Morland*. Cravatless, hatless, breathless, soaked by the rain, with lightning in their eyes. Gavroche accosted them calmly:—

"Where are we going?"

"Come along," said Courfeyrac.

Behind Feuilly marched, or rather bounded, Bahorel, who was like a fish in water in a riot. He wore a scarlet waistcoat, and indulged in the sort of words which break everything. His waistcoat astounded a passer-by, who cried in bewilderment:—

"Here are the reds!"

"The reds, the reds!" retorted Bahorel. "A queer kind of fear, bourgeois. For my part I don't tremble before a poppy, the little red hat inspires me with no alarm. Take my advice, bourgeois, let's leave fear of the red to horned cattle."

He caught sight of a corner of the wall on which was placarded the most peaceable sheet of paper in the world, a permission to eat eggs, a Lenten admonition addressed by the Archbishop of Paris to his "flock."

Bahorel exclaimed:—

“‘Flock’; a polite way of saying geese.”

And he tore the charge from the nail. This conquered Gavroche. From that instant Gavroche set himself to study Bahorel.

“Bahorel,” observed Enjolras, “you are wrong. You should have let that charge alone, he is not the person with whom we have to deal, you are wasting your wrath to no purpose. Take care of your supply. One does not fire out of the ranks with the soul any more than with a gun.”

“Each one in his own fashion, Enjolras,” retorted Bahorel. “This bishop’s prose shocks me; I want to eat eggs without being permitted. Your style is the hot and cold; I am amusing myself. Besides, I’m not wasting myself, I’m getting a start; and if I tore down that charge, Herele! ’twas only to whet my appetite.”

This word, *Herele*, struck Gavroche. He sought all occasions for learning, and that tearer-down of posters possessed his esteem. He inquired of him:—

“What does *Herele* mean?”

Bahorel answered:—

“It means cursed name of a dog, in Latin.”

Here Bahorel recognized at a window a pale young man with a black beard who was watching them as they passed, probably a Friend of the A B C. He shouted to him:—

“Quick, cartridges, *para bellum*.”

“A fine man! that’s true,” said Gavroche, who now understood Latin.

A tumultuous retinue accompanied them,—students, artists, young men affiliated to the Cougourde of Aix, artisans, long-shoremen, armed with clubs and bayonets; some, like Combeferre, with pistols thrust into their trousers.

An old man, who appeared to be extremely aged, was walking in the band.

He had no arms, and he made great haste, so that he might not be left behind, although he had a thoughtful air.

Gavroche caught sight of him:—

“Keksekça?” said he to Courfeyrac.

“He’s an old duffer.”

It was M. Mabeuf.

CHAPTER V

THE OLD MAN

LET us recount what had taken place.

Enjolras and his friends had been on the Boulevard Bourdon, near the public storehouses, at the moment when the dragoons had made their charge. Enjolras, Courfeyrac, and Combeferre were among those who had taken to the Rue Bassompierre, shouting: “To the barricades!” In the Rue Lesdiguières they had met an old man walking along. What had attracted their attention was, that the goodman was walking in a zig-zag, as though he were intoxicated. Moreover, he had his hat in his hand, although it had been raining all the morning, and was raining pretty briskly at the very time. Courfeyrac had recognized Father Mabeuf. He knew him through having many times accompanied Marius as far as his door. As he was acquainted with the peaceful and more than timid habits of the old beadle-book-collector, and was amazed at the sight of him in the midst of that uproar, a couple of paces from the cavalry charges, almost in the midst of a fusillade, hatless in the rain, and strolling about among the bullets, he had accosted him, and the following dialogue had been exchanged between the rioter of fire and the octogenarian:—

“M. Mabeuf, go to your home.”

“Why?”

“There’s going to be a row.”

“That’s well.”

“Thrusts with the sword and firing. M. Mabeuf.”

“That is well.”

“Firing from cannon.”

“That is good. Where are the rest of you going?”

“We are going to fling the government to the earth.”

“That is good.”

And he had set out to follow them. From that moment forth he had not uttered a word. His step had suddenly become firm; artisans had offered him their arms; he had refused with a sign of the head. He advanced nearly to the front rank of the column, with the movement of a man who is marching and the countenance of a man who is sleeping.

“What a fierce old fellow!” muttered the students. The rumor spread through the troop that he was a former member of the Convention,—an old regicide. The mob had turned in through the Rue de la Verrerie.

Little Gavroche marched in front with that deafening song which made of him a sort of trumpet.

He sang:—

“Voici la lune qui paraît,
Quand irons-nous dans la forêt?
Demandait Charlot à Charlotte.

Tou tou tou
Pour Chatou.

Je n'ai qu'un Dieu, qu'un roi, qu'un liard, et qu'une botte.

“Pour avoir bu de grand matin
La rosée à même le thym,
Deux moineaux étaient en ribotte.

Zi zi zi
Pour Passy.

Je n'ai qu'un Dieu, qu'un roi, qu'un liard, et qu'une botte.

“Et ces deux pauvres petits loups,
Comme deux grives étaient soûls;
Une tigre en riait dans sa grotte.

Don don don
Pour Meudon.

Je n'ai qu'un Dieu, qu'un roi, qu'un liard, et qu'une botte.

“L'un jurait et l'autre sacrait.
Quand irons nous dans la forêt?
Demandait Charlot à Charlotte.

Tin tin tin
 Pour Pantin.
 Je n'ai qu'un Dieu, qu'un roi, qu'un liard, et qu'une botte."¹

They directed their course towards Saint-Merry.

CHAPTER VI

RECRUITS

THE band augmented every moment. Near the Rue des Billettes, a man of lofty stature, whose hair was turning gray, and whose bold and daring mien was remarked by Courfeyrac, Enjolras, and Combeferre, but whom none of them knew, joined them. Gavroche, who was occupied in singing, whistling, humming, running on ahead and pounding on the shutters of the shops with the butt of his triggerless pistol, paid no attention to this man.

It chanced that in the Rue de la Verrerie, they passed in front of Courfeyrac's door.

"This happens just right," said Courfeyrac, "I have forgotten my purse, and I have lost my hat."

He quitted the mob and ran up to his quarters at full speed. He seized an old hat and his purse.

He also seized a large square coffer, of the dimensions of a large valise, which was concealed under his soiled linen.

As he descended again at a run, the portress hailed him:—

"Monsieur de Courfeyrac!"

"What's your name, portress?"

The portress stood bewildered.

¹Here is the morn appearing. When shall we go to the forest, Charlot asked Charlotte. Tou, tou, tou, for Chatou, I have but one God, one King, one half-farthing, and one boot. And these two poor little wolves were as tipsy as sparrows from having drunk dew and thyme very early in the morning. And these two poor little things were as drunk as thrushes in a vineyard; a tiger laughed at them in his cave. The one cursed, the other swore. When shall we go to the forest? Charlot asked Charlotte.

“Why, you know perfectly well, I’m the concierge ; my name is Mother Veuvain.”

“Well, if you call me Monsieur de Courfeyrac again, I shall call you Mother de Veuvain. Now speak, what’s the matter? What do you want?”

“There is some one who wants to speak with you.”

“Who is it?”

“I don’t know.”

“Where is he?”

“In my lodge.”

“The devil!” ejaculated Courfeyrac.

“But the person has been waiting your return for over an hour,” said the portress.

At the same time, a sort of pale, thin, small, freckled, and youthful artisan, clad in a tattered blouse and patched trousers of ribbed velvet, and who had rather the air of a girl accoutred as a man than of a man, emerged from the lodge and said to Courfeyrac in a voice which was not the least in the world like a woman’s voice:—

“Monsieur Marius, if you please.”

“He is not here.”

“Will he return this evening?”

“I know nothing about it.”

And Courfeyrac added:—

“For my part, I shall not return.”

The young man gazed steadily at him and said:—

“Why not?”

“Because.”

“Where are you going, then?”

“What business is that of yours?”

“Would you like to have me carry your coffer for you?”

“I am going to the barricades.”

“Would you like to have me go with you?”

“If you like!” replied Courfeyrac. “The street is free, the pavements belong to every one.”

And he made his escape at a run to join his friends. When he had rejoined them, he gave the coffer to one of them to

carry. It was only a quarter of an hour after this that he saw the young man, who had actually followed them.

A mob does not go precisely where it intends. We have explained that a gust of wind carries it away. They overshot Saint-Merry and found themselves, without precisely knowing how, in the Rue Saint-Denis.

BOOK TWELFTH.—CORINTHE

CHAPTER I

HISTORY OF CORINTHE FROM ITS FOUNDATION

THE Parisians who nowadays on entering on the Rue Rambuteau at the end near the Halles, notice on their right, opposite the Rue Mondétour, a basket-maker's shop having for its sign a basket in the form of Napoleon the Great with this inscription:—

NAPOLEON IS MADE
WHOLLY OF WILLOW,

have no suspicion of the terrible scenes which this very spot witnessed hardly thirty years ago.

It was there that lay the Rue de la Chanvrerie, which ancient deeds spell Chanverrerie, and the celebrated public-house called *Corinthe*.

The reader will remember all that has been said about the barricade effected at this point, and eclipsed, by the way, by the barricade Saint-Merry. It was on this famous barricade of the Rue de la Chanvrerie, now fallen into profound obscurity, that we are about to shed a little light.

May we be permitted to recur, for the sake of clearness in the recital, to the simple means which we have already employed in the case of Waterloo. Persons who wish to picture to themselves in a tolerably exact manner the constitution of the houses which stood at that epoch near the Pointe Saint-Eustache, at the northeast angle of the Halles of Paris, where to-day lies the embouchure of the Rue Rambuteau, have only to imagine an N touching the Rue Saint-Denis with its sum-

mit and the Halles with its base, and whose two vertical bars should form the Rue de la Grande-Truanderie, and the Rue de la Chanvrerie, and whose transverse bar should be formed by the Rue de la Petite-Truanderie. The old Rue Mondétour cut the three strokes of the N at the most crooked angles. So that the labyrinthine confusion of these four streets sufficed to form, on a space three fathoms square, between the Halles and the Rue Saint-Denis on the one hand, and between the Rue du Cygne and the Rue des Prêcheurs on the other, seven islands of houses, oddly cut up, of varying sizes, placed cross-wise and hap-hazard, and barely separated, like the blocks of stone in a dock, by narrow crannies.

We say narrow crannies, and we can give no more just idea of those dark, contracted, many-angled alleys, lined with eight-story buildings. These buildings were so decrepit that, in the Rue de la Chanvrerie and the Rue de la Petite-Truanderie, the fronts were shored up with beams running from one house to another. The street was narrow and the gutter broad, the pedestrian there walked on a pavement that was always wet, skirting little stalls resembling cellars, big posts encircled with iron hoops, excessive heaps of refuse, and gates armed with enormous, century-old gratings. The Rue Rambuteau has devastated all that.

The name of Mondétour paints marvellously well the sinuosities of that whole set of streets. A little further on, they are found still better expressed by the *Rue Pirouette*, which ran into the Rue Mondétour.

The passer-by who got entangled from the Rue Saint-Denis in the Rue de la Chanvrerie beheld it gradually close in before him as though he had entered an elongated funnel. At the end of this street, which was very short, he found further passage barred in the direction of the Halles by a tall row of houses, and he would have thought himself in a blind alley, had he not perceived on the right and left two dark cuts through which he could make his escape. This was the Rue Mondétour, which on one side ran into the Rue de Prêcheurs, and on the other into the Rue du Cygne and the Petite-Truan-

derie. At the bottom of this sort of cul-de-sac, at the angle of the cutting on the right, there was to be seen a house which was not so tall as the rest, and which formed a sort of cape in the street. It is in this house, of two stories only, that an illustrious wine-shop had been merrily installed three hundred years before. This tavern created a joyous noise in the very spot which old Theophilus described in the following couplet:—

Là branle le squelette horrible
D'un pauvre amant qui se pendit.¹

The situation was good, and tavern-keepers succeeded each other there, from father to son.

In the time of Mathurin Regnier, this cabaret was called the *Pot-aux-Roses*, and as the rebus was then in fashion, it had for its sign-board, a post (*poteau*) painted rose-color. In the last century, the worthy Natoire, one of the fantastic masters nowadays despised by the stiff school, having got drunk many times in this wine-shop at the very table where Regnier had drunk his fill, had painted, by way of gratitude, a bunch of Corinth grapes on the pink post. The keeper of the cabaret, in his joy, had changed his device and had caused to be placed in gilt letters beneath the bunch these words: "At the Bunch of Corinth Grapes" ("*Au Raisin de Corinthe*"). Hence the name of Corinthe. Nothing is more natural to drunken men than ellipses. The ellipsis is the zig-zag of the phrase. Corinthe gradually dethroned the Pot-aux-Roses. The last proprietor of the dynasty, Father Hucheloup, no longer acquainted even with the tradition, had the post painted blue.

A room on the ground floor, where the bar was situated, one on the first floor containing a billiard-table, a wooden spiral staircase piercing the ceiling, wine on the tables, smoke on the walls, candles in broad daylight,—this was the style of this cabaret. A staircase with a trap-door in the lower room led to the cellar. On the second floor were the lodgings of the Hucheloup family. They were reached by a staircase which

¹There swings the horrible skeleton of a poor lover who hung himself.

was a ladder rather than a staircase, and had for their entrance only a private door in the large room on the first floor. Under the roof, in two mansard attics, were the nests for the servants. The kitchen shared the ground-floor with the tap-room.

Father Hucheloup had, possibly, been born a chemist, but the fact is that he was a cook; people did not confine themselves to drinking alone in his wine-shop, they also ate there. Hucheloup had invented a capital thing which could be eaten nowhere but in his house, stuffed carps, which he called *carpes au gras*. These were eaten by the light of a tallow candle or of a lamp of the time of Louis XVI., on tables to which were nailed waxed cloths in lieu of table-cloths. People came thither from a distance. Hucheloup, one fine morning, had seen fit to notify passers-by of this "specialty"; he had dipped a brush in a pot of black paint, and as he was an orthographer on his own account, as well as a cook after his own fashion, he had improvised on his wall this remarkable inscription:—

CARPES HO GRAS.

One winter, the rain-storms and the showers had taken a fancy to obliterate the S which terminated the first word, and the G which began the third; this is what remained:—

CARPE HO RAS.

Time and rain assisting, a humble gastronomical announcement had become a profound piece of advice.

In this way it came about, that though he knew no French, Father Hucheloup understood Latin, that he had evoked philosophy from his kitchen, and that, desirous simply of effacing Lent, he had equalled Horace. And the striking thing about it was, that that also meant: "Enter my wine-shop."

Nothing of all this is in existence now. The Mondétour labyrinth was disembowelled and widely opened in 1847, and probably no longer exists at the present moment. The Rue

de la Chanvrerie and Corinthe have disappeared beneath the pavement of the Rue Rambuteau.

As we have already said, Corinthe was the meeting-place if not the rallying-point, of Courfeyrac and his friends. It was Grantaire who had discovered Corinthe. He had entered it on account of the *Carpe horas*, and had returned thither on account of the *Carpes au gras*. There they drank, there they ate, there they shouted; they did not pay much, they paid badly, they did not pay at all, but they were always welcome. Father Hucheloup was a jovial host.

Hucheloup, that amiable man, as was just said, was a wine-shop-keeper with a mustache; an amusing variety. He always had an ill-tempered air, seemed to wish to intimidate his customers, grumbled at the people who entered his establishment, and had rather the mien of seeking a quarrel with them than of serving them with soup. And yet, we insist upon the word, people were always welcome there. This oddity had attracted customers to his shop, and brought him young men, who said to each other: "Come hear Father Hucheloup growl." He had been a fencing-master. All of a sudden, he would burst out laughing. A big voice, a good fellow. He had a comie foundation under a tragic exterior, he asked nothing better than to frighten you, very much like those snuff-boxes which are in the shape of a pistol. The detonation makes one sneeze.

Mother Hucheloup, his wife, was a bearded and a very homely creature.

About 1830, Father Hucheloup died. With him disappeared the secret of stuffed carps. His inconsolable widow continued to keep the wine-shop. But the cooking deteriorated, and became execrable; the wine, which had always been bad, became fearfully bad. Nevertheless, Courfeyrac and his friends continued to go to Corinthe,—out of pity, as Bossuet said.

The Widow Hucheloup was breathless and misshapen and given to rustie recollections. She deprived them of their flatness by her pronunciation. She had a way of her own of say-

ing things, which spiced her reminiscences of the village and of her springtime. It had formerly been her delight, so she affirmed, to hear the *loups-de-gorge* (*rouges-gorges*) *chanter dans les ogrepines* (*aubépines*)—to hear the redbreasts sing in the hawthorn-trees.

The hall on the first floor, where “the restaurant” was situated, was a large and long apartment encumbered with stools, chairs, benches, and tables, and with a crippled, lame, old billiard-table. It was reached by a spiral staircase which terminated in the corner of the room at a square hole like the hatchway of a ship.

This room, lighted by a single narrow window, and by a lamp that was always burning, had the air of a garret. All the four-footed furniture comported itself as though it had but three legs—the whitewashed walls had for their only ornament the following quatrain in honor of Mame Hucheloup:—

Elle étonne à dix pas, elle épouvente à deux,
 Une verrue habite en son nez hasardeux;
 On tremble à chaque instant qu'elle ne vous la mouche
 Et qu'un beau jour son nez ne tombe dans sa bouche.¹

This was scrawled in charcoal on the wall.

Mame Hucheloup, a good likeness, went and came from morning till night before this quatrain with the most perfect tranquillity. Two serving-maids, named Matelote and Gibelotte,² and who had never been known by any other names, helped Mame Hucheloup to set on the tables the jugs of poor wine, and the various broths which were served to the hungry patrons in earthenware bowls. Matelote, large, plump, red-haired, and noisy, the favorite ex-sultana of the defunct Hucheloup, was homelier than any mythological monster, be

¹She astounds at ten paces, she frightens at two, a wart inhabits her hazardous nose; you tremble every instant lest she should blow it at you, and lest, some fine day, her nose should tumble into her mouth.

²*Matelote*: a culinary preparation of various fishes. *Gibelotte*: stewed rabbits.

it what it may; still, as it becomes the servant to always keep in the rear of the mistress, she was less homely than Mame Hucheloup. Gibelotte, tall, delicate, white with a lymphatic pallor, with circles round her eyes, and drooping lids, always languid and weary, afflicted with what may be called chronic lassitude, the first up in the house and the last in bed, waited on every one, even the other maid, silently and gently, smiling through her fatigue with a vague and sleepy smile.

Before entering the restaurant room, the visitor read on the door the following line written there in chalk by Courfeyrac:—

Régale si tu peux et mange si tu l'oses.¹

CHAPTER II

PRELIMINARY GAYETIES

LAIGLE DE MEAUX, as the reader knows, lived more with Joly than elsewhere. He had a lodging, as a bird has one on a branch. The two friends lived together, ate together, slept together. They had everything in common, even Musichetta, to some extent. They were, what the subordinate monks who accompany monks are called, *bini*. On the morning of the 5th of June, they went to Corinthe to breakfast. Joly, who was all stuffed up, had a catarrh which Laigle was beginning to share. Laigle's coat was threadbare, but Joly was well dressed.

It was about nine o'clock in the morning, when they opened the door of Corinthe.

They ascended to the first floor.

Matelote and Gibelotte received them.

"Oysters, cheese, and ham," said Laigle.

And they seated themselves at a table.

The wine-shop was empty; there was no one there but themselves.

¹Treat if you can, and eat if you dare.

Gibelotte, knowing Joly and Laigle, set a bottle of wine on the table.

While they were busy with their first oysters, a head appeared at the hatchway of the staircase, and a voice said:—

“I am passing by. I smell from the street a delicious odor of Brie cheese. I enter.” It was Grantaire.

Grantaire took a stool and drew up to the table.

At the sight of Grantaire, Gibelotte placed two bottles of wine on the table.

That made three.

“Are you going to drink those two bottles?” Laigle inquired of Grantaire.

Grantaire replied:—

“All are ingenious, thou alone art ingenuous. Two bottles never yet astonished a man.”

The others had begun by eating, Grantaire began by drinking. Half a bottle was rapidly gulped down.

“So you have a hole in your stomach?” began Laigle again.

“You have one in your elbow,” said Grantaire.

And after having emptied his glass, he added:—

“Ah, by the way, Laigle of the funeral oration, your coat is old.”

“I should hope so,” retorted Laigle. “That’s why we get on well together, my coat and I. It has acquired all my folds, it does not bind me anywhere, it is moulded on my deformities, it falls in with all my movements, I am only conscious of it because it keeps me warm. Old coats are just like old friends.”

“That’s true,” ejaculated Joly, striking into the dialogue, “an old goat is an old *ami*” (*ami*, friend).

“Especially in the mouth of a man whose head is stuffed up,” said Grantaire.

“Grantaire,” demanded Laigle, “have you just come from the boulevard?”

“No.”

"We have just seen the head of the procession pass, Joly and I."

"It's a marvellous sight," said Joly.

"How quiet this street is!" exclaimed Laigle. "Who would suspect that Paris was turned upside down? How plainly it is to be seen that in former days there were nothing but convents here! In this neighborhood! Du Breul and Sauval give a list of them, and so does the Abbé Lebeuf. They were all round here, they fairly swarmed, booted and barefooted, shaven, bearded, gray, black, white, Franciscans, Minims, Capuchins, Carmelites, Little Augustines, Great Augustines, old Augustines—there was no end of them."

"Don't let's talk of monks," interrupted Grantaire, "it makes one want to scratch one's self."

Then he exclaimed:—

"Bouh! I've just swallowed a bad oyster. Now hypochondria is taking possession of me again. The oysters are spoiled, the servants are ugly. I hate the human race. I just passed through the Rue Richelieu, in front of the big public library. That pile of oyster-shells which is called a library is disgusting even to think of. What paper! What ink! What scrawling! And all that has been written! What rascal was it who said that man was a featherless biped?¹ And then, I met a pretty girl of my acquaintance, who is as beautiful as the spring, worthy to be called Floréal, and who is delighted, enraptured, as happy as the angels, because a wretch yesterday, a frightful banker all spotted with small-pox, deigned to take a fancy to her! Alas! woman keeps on the watch for a protector as much as for a lover; cats chase mice as well as birds. Two months ago that young woman was virtuous in an attic, she adjusted little brass rings in the eyelet-holes of corsets, what do you call it? She sewed, she had a camp bed, she dwelt beside a pot of flowers, she was contented. Now here she is a bankeress. This transformation took place last night. I met the victim this morning in high spirits. The hideous point about it is, that the jade is as pretty to-day as she was yester-

¹*Bipède sans plume*: biped without feathers—or pen.

day. Her financier did not show in her face. Roses have this advantage or disadvantage over women, that the traces left upon them by caterpillars are visible. Ah! there is no morality on earth. I call to witness the myrtle, the symbol of love, the laurel, the symbol of air, the olive. that ninny, the symbol of peace, the apple-tree which came nearest rangling Adam with its pips, and the fig-tree, the grandfather of petticoats. As for right, do you know what right is? The Gauls covet Clusium, Rome protects Clusium, and demands what wrong Clusium has done to them. Brennus answers: 'The wrong that Alba did to you, the wrong that Fidenæ did to you, the wrong that the Eques, the Volsei, and the Sabines have done to you. They were your neighbors. The Clusians are ours. We understand neighborliness just as you do. You have stolen Alba, we shall take Clusium.' Rome said: 'You shall not take Clusium.' Brennus took Rome. Then he cried: 'Væ vietis!' That is what right is. Ah! what beasts of prey there are in this world! What eagles! It makes my flesh creep."

He held out his glass to Joly, who filled it, then he drank and went on, having hardly been interrupted by this glass of wine, of which no one, not even himself, had taken any notice:—

"Brennus, who takes Rome, is an eagle; the banker who takes the grisette is an eagle. There is no more modesty in the one case than in the other. So we believe in nothing. There is but one reality: drink. Whatever your opinion may be in favor of the lean cock, like the Canton of Uri, or in favor of the fat cock, like the Canton of Glaris, it matters little, drink. You talk to me of the boulevard, of that procession, *et cætera, et cætera*. Come now, is there going to be another revolution? This poverty of means on the part of the good God astonnds me. He has to keep greasing the groove of events every moment. There is a hitch, it won't work. Quick, a revolution! The good God has his hands perpetually blaek with that eart-grease. If I were in his place, I'd be perfectly simple about it, I would not wind up my meehanism

every minute, I'd lead the human race in a straightforward way, I'd weave matters mesh by mesh, without breaking the thread. I would have no provisional arrangements, I would have no extraordinary repertory. What the rest of you call progress advances by means of two motors, men and events. But, sad to say, from time to time, the exceptional becomes necessary. The ordinary troupe suffices neither for event nor for men: among men geniuses are required, among events revolutions. Great accidents are the law; the order of things cannot do without them; and, judging from the apparition of comets, one would be tempted to think that Heaven itself finds actors needed for its performance. At the moment when one expects it the least, God placards a meteor on the wall of the firmament. Some queer star turns up, underlined by an enormous tail. And that causes the death of Cæsar. Brutus deals him a blow with a knife, and God a blow with a comet. *Crac*, and behold an aurora borealis, behold a revolution. behold a great man; '93 in big letters, Napoleon on guard, the comet of 1811 at the head of the poster. Ah! what a beautiful blue theatre all studded with unexpected flashes! Boun! Boum! extraordinary show! Raise your eyes, boobies. Everything is in disorder, the star as well as the drama. Good God, it is too much and not enough. These resources, gathered from exception, seem magnificence and poverty. My friends, Providence has come down to expedients. What does a revolution prove? That God is in a quandry. He effects a *coup d'état* because he, God, has not been able to make both ends meet. In fact, this confirms me in my conjectures as to Jehovah's fortune; and when I see so much distress in heaven and on earth, from the bird who has not a grain of millet to myself without a hundred thousand livres of income, when I see human destiny, which is very badly worn, and even royal destiny, which is threadbare, witness the Prince de Condé hung, when I see winter, which is nothing but a rent in the zenith through which the wind blows, when I see so many rags even in the perfectly new purple of the morning on the crests of hills, when I see the drops of dew, those mock pearls, when

I see the frost, that paste, when I see humanity ripped apart and events patched up, and so many spots on the sun and so many holes in the moon, when I see so much misery everywhere, I suspect that God is not rich. The appearance exists, it is true, but I feel that he is hard up. He gives a revolution as a tradesman whose money-box is empty gives a ball. God must not be judged from appearances. Beneath the gilding of heaven I perceive a poverty-stricken universe. Creation is bankrupt. That is why I am discontented. Here it is the 4th of June, it is almost night; ever since this morning I have been waiting for daylight to come; it has not come, and I bet that it won't come all day. This is the inexactness of an ill-paid clerk. Yes, everything is badly arranged, nothing fits anything else, this old world is all warped, I take my stand on the opposition, everything goes awry; the universe is a tease. It's like children, those who want them have none, and those who don't want them have them. Total: I'm vexed. Besides, Laigle de Meaux, that bald-head, offends my sight. It humiliates me to think that I am of the same age as that baldy. However, I criticise, but I do not insult. The universe is what it is. I speak here without evil intent and to ease my conscience. Receive, Eternal Father, the assurance of my distinguished consideration. Ah! by all the saints of Olympus and by all the gods of paradise, I was not intended to be a Parisian, that is to say, to rebound forever, like a shuttlecock between two battledores, from the group of the loungers to the group of the roysterers. I was made to be a Turk, watching oriental houris all day long, executing those exquisite Egyptian dances, as sensuous as the dream of a chaste man, or a Beauceron peasant, or a Venetian gentleman surrounded by gentlewomen, or a petty German prince, furnishing the half of a foot-soldier to the Germanic confederation, and occupying his leisure with drying his breeches on his hedge, that is to say, his frontier. Those are the positions for which I was born! Yes, I have said a Turk, and I will not retract. I do not understand how people can habitually take Turks in bad part; Mohammed had his good points; respect for the

inventor of seraglios with houris and paradises with odalisques! Let us not insult Mohammedanism, the only religion which is ornamented with a hen-roost! Now, I insist on a drink. The earth is a great piece of stupidity. And it appears that they are going to fight, all those imbeciles, and to break each other's profiles and to massacre each other in the heart of summer, in the month of June, when they might go off with a creature on their arm, to breathe the immense heaps of new-mown hay in the meadows! Really, people do commit altogether too many follies. An old broken lantern which I have just seen at a brie-à-brac merchant's suggests a reflection to my mind; it is time to enlighten the human race. Yes, behold me sad again. That's what comes of swallowing an oyster and a revolution the wrong way! I am growing melancholy once more. Oh! frightful old world. People strive, turn each other out, prostitute themselves, kill each other, and get used to it!"

And Grantaire, after this fit of eloquence, had a fit of coughing, which was well earned.

"À propos of revolution," said Joly, "it is decidedly abbatent that Barius is in lub."

"Does any one know with whom?" demanded Laigle.

"Do."

"No?"

"Do! I tell you."

"Marius' love affairs!" exclaimed Grantaire. "I can imagine it. Marius is a fog, and he must have found a vapor. Marius is of the race of poets. He who says poet, says fool, madman, *Tymbræus Apollo*. Marius and his Marie, or his Marion, or his Maria, or his Mariette. They must make a queer pair of lovers. I know just what it is like. Ecstasies in which they forget to kiss. Pure on earth, but joined in heaven. They are souls possessed of senses. They lie among the stars."

Grantaire was attacking his second bottle and, possibly, his second harangue, when a new personage emerged from the square aperture of the stairs. It was a boy less than ten years

of age, ragged, very small, yellow, with an odd phiz, a vivacious eye, an enormous amount of hair drenched with rain, and wearing a contented air.

The child unhesitatingly making his choice among the three, addressed himself to Laigle de Meaux.

“Are you Monsieur Bossuet?”

“That is my nickname,” replied Laigle. “What do you want with me?”

“This. A tall blonde fellow on the boulevard said to me: ‘Do you know Mother Hueheloup?’ I said: ‘Yes, Rue Chanvrière, the old man’s widow;’ he said to me: ‘Go there. There you will find M. Bossuet. Tell him from me: “A B C”.’ It’s a joke that they’re playing on you, isn’t it. He gave me ten sous.”

“Joly, lend me ten sous,” said Laigle; and, turning to Grantaire: “Grantaire, lend me ten sous.”

This made twenty sous, which Laigle handed to the lad.

“Thank you, sir,” said the urchin.

“What is your name?” inquired Laigle.

“Navet, Gavroche’s friend.”

“Stay with us,” said Laigle.

“Breakfast with us,” said Grantaire.

The child replied:—

“I can’t, I belong in the procession, I’m the one to shout ‘Down with Polignae!’”

And executing a prolonged scrape of his foot behind him, which is the most respectful of all possible salutes, he took his departure.

The child gone, Grantaire took the word:—

“That is the pure-bred gamin. There are a great many varieties of the gamin species. The notary’s gamin is called Skip-the-Gutter, the cook’s gamin is called a seullion, the baker’s gamin is called a *mitron*, the laekey’s gamin is called a groom, the marine gamin is called the cabin-boy, the soldier’s gamin is called the drummer-boy, the painter’s gamin is called paint-grinder, the tradesman’s gamin is called an errand-boy, the courtesan gamin is called the minion, the kingly gamin

is called the dauphin, the god gamin is called the bambino."

In the meantime, Laigle was engaged in reflection; he said half aloud:—

"A B C, that is to say: the burial of Lamarque."

"The tall blonde," remarked Grantaire, "is Enjolras, who is sending you a warning."

"Shall we go?" ejaculated Bossuet.

"It's raiding," said Joly. "I have sworn to go through fire, but not through water. I don't want to get a gold."

"I shall stay here," said Grantaire. "I prefer a breakfast to a hearse."

"Conclusion: we remain," said Laigle. "Well, then, let us drink. Besides, we might miss the funeral without missing the riot."

"Ah! the riot, I am with you!" cried Joly.

Laigle rubbed his hands.

"Now we're going to touch up the revolution of 1830. As a matter of fact, it does hurt the people along the seams."

"I don't think much of your revolution," said Grantaire. "I don't execrate this Government. It is the crown tempered by the cotton night-cap. It is a sceptre ending in an umbrella. In fact, I think that to-day, with the present weather, Louis Philippe might utilize his royalty in two directions, he might extend the tip of the sceptre end against the people, and open the umbrella end against heaven."

The room was dark, large clouds had just finished the extinction of daylight. There was no one in the wine-shop, or in the street, every one having gone off "to watch events."

"Is it mid-day or midnight?" cried Bossuet. "You can't see your hand before your face. Gibelotte, fetch a light."

Grantaire was drinking in a melancholy way.

"Enjolras disdains me," he muttered. "Enjolras said: 'Joly is ill, Grantaire is drunk.' It was to Bossuet that he sent Navet. If he had come for me, I would have followed him. So much the worse for Enjolras! I won't go to his funeral."

This resolution once arrived at, Bossuet, Joly, and Grantaire did not stir from the wine-shop. By two o'clock in the afternoon, the table at which they sat was covered with empty bottles. Two candles were burning on it, one in a flat copper candlestick which was perfectly green, the other in the neck of a cracked caraffe. Grantaire had seduced Joly and Bossuet to wine; Bossuet and Joly had conducted Grantaire back towards cheerfulness.

As for Grantaire, he had got beyond wine, that merely moderate inspirer of dreams, ever since mid-day. Wine enjoys only a conventional popularity with serious drinkers. There is, in fact, in the matter of inebriety, white magic and black magic; wine is only white magic. Grantaire was a daring drinker of dreams. The blackness of a terrible fit of drunkenness yawning before him, far from arresting him, attracted him. He had abandoned the bottle and taken to the beer-glass. The beer-glass is the abyss. Having neither opium nor hashish on hand, and being desirous of filling his brain with twilight, he had had recourse to that fearful mixture of brandy, stout, absinthe, which produces the most terrible of lethargies. It is of these three vapors, beer, brandy, and absinthe, that the lead of the soul is composed. They are three grooms; the celestial butterfly is drowned in them; and there are formed there in a membranous smoke, vaguely condensed into the wing of the bat, three mute furies, Nightmare, Night, and Death, which hover about the slumbering Psyche.

Grantaire had not yet reached that lamentable phase; far from it. He was tremendously gay, and Bossuet and Joly retorted. They clinked glasses. Grantaire added to the eccentric accentuation of words and ideas, a peculiarity of gesture; he rested his left fist on his knee with dignity, his arm forming a right angle, and, with cravat untied, seated astride a stool, his full glass in his right hand, he hurled solemn words at the big maid-servant Matelote:—

“Let the doors of the palace be thrown open! Let every one be a member of the French Academy and have the right to embrace Madame Hucheloup. Let us drink.”

And turning to Madame Hueheloup, he added:—

“Woman ancient and consecrated by use, draw near that I may contemplate thee!”

And Joly exclaimed:—

“Matelote and Gibelotte, dod’t gib Grantaire anything more to drink. He has already devoured, since this bording, in wild prodigality, two franes and ninety-five centibes.”

And Grantaire began again:—

“Who has been unhooking the stars without my permission, and putting them on the table in the guise of candles?”

Bossuet, though very drunk, preserved his equanimity.

He was seated on the sill of the open window, wetting his back in the falling rain, and gazing at his two friends.

All at once, he heard a tumult behind him, hurried footsteps, eries of “To arms!” He turned round and saw in the Rue Saint-Denis, at the end of the Rue de la Chanvrerie, Enjolras passing, gun in hand, and Gavroche with his pistol, Feuilly with his sword, Courfeyrac with his sword, and Jean Prouvaire with his blunderbuss, Combeferre with his gun, Bahorel with his gun, and the whole armed and stormy rabble which was following them.

The Rue de la Chanvrerie was not more than a gunshot long. Bossuet improvised a speaking-trumpet from his two hands placed around his mouth, and shouted:—

“Courfeyrac! Courfeyrac! Hohée!”

Courfeyrac heard the shout, caught sight of Bossuet, and advanced a few paces into the Rue de la Chanvrerie, shouting: “What do you want?” which crossed a “Where are you going?”

“To make a barriade,” replied Courfeyrac.

“Well, here! This is a good place! Make it here!”

“That’s true, Aigle,” said Courfeyrac.

And at a signal from Courfeyrac, the mob flung themselves into the Rue de la Chanvrerie.

CHAPTER III

NIGHT BEGINS TO DESCEND UPON GRANTAIRE

THE spot was, in fact, admirably adapted, the entrance to the street widened out, the other extremity narrowed together into a pocket without exit. Corinthe created an obstacle, the Rue Mondétour was easily barricaded on the right and the left, no attack was possible except from the Rue Saint-Denis, that is to say, in front, and in full sight. Bossuet had the comprehensive glance of a fasting Hannibal.

Terror had seized on the whole street at the irruption of the mob. There was not a passer-by who did not get out of sight. In the space of a flash of lightning, in the rear, to right and left, shops, stables, area-doors, windows, blinds, attic skylights, shutters of every description were closed, from the ground floor to the roof. A terrified old woman fixed a mattress in front of her window on two clothes-poles for drying linen, in order to deaden the effect of musketry. The wine-shop alone remained open; and that for a very good reason, that the mob had rushed into it.—“Ah my God! Ah my God!” sighed Mame Hucheloup.

Bossuet had gone down to meet Courfeyrac.

Joly, who had placed himself at the window, exclaimed:—

“Courfeyrac, you ought to have brought an umbrella. You will gatch gold.”

In the meantime, in the space of a few minutes, twenty iron bars had been wrenched from the grated front of the wine-shop, ten fathoms of street had been unpaved; Gavroche and Bahorel had seized in its passage, and overturned, the dray of a lime-dealer named Anceau; this dray contained three barrels of lime, which they placed beneath the piles of paving-stones: Enjolras raised the cellar trap, and all the widow Hucheloup's empty casks were used to flank the barrels of lime; Fenilly, with his fingers skilled in painting the delicate sticks of fans, had backed up the barrels and the dray

with two massive heaps of blocks of rough stone. Blocks which were improvised like the rest and procured no one knows where. The beams which served as props were torn from the neighboring house-fronts and laid on the casks. When Bossuet and Courfeyrae turned round, half the street was already barred with a rampart higher than a man. There is nothing like the hand of the populace for building everything that is built by demolishing.

Matelote and Gibelotte had mingled with the workers. Gibelotte went and came loaded with rubbish. Her lassitude helped on the barricade. She served the barricade as she would have served wine, with a sleepy air.

An omnibus with two white horses passed the end of the street.

Bossuet strode over the paving-stones, ran to it, stopped the driver, made the passengers alight, offered his hand to "the ladies," dismissed the conductor, and returned, leading the vehicle and the horses by the bridle.

"Omnibuses," said he, "do not pass the Corinthe. *Non licet omnibus adire Corinthum.*"

An instant later, the horses were unharnessed and went off at their will, through the Rue Mondétour, and the omnibus lying on its side completed the bar across the street.

Mame Hucheloup, quite upset, had taken refuge in the first story.

Her eyes were vague, and stared without seeing anything, and she cried in a low tone. Her terrified shrieks did not dare to emerge from her throat.

"The end of the world has come," she muttered.

Joly deposited a kiss on Mame Hucheloup's fat, red, wrinkled neck, and said to Grantaire: "My dear fellow, I have always regarded a woman's neck as an infinitely delicate thing."

But Grantaire attained to the highest regions of dithyramb. Matelote had mounted to the first floor once more, Grantaire seized her round her waist, and gave vent to long bursts of laughter at the window.

“Matelote is homely!” he cried: “Matelote is of a dream of ugliness! Matelote is a chimæra. This is the secret of her birth: a Gothic Pygmalion, who was making gargoyles for cathedrals, fell in love with one of them, the most horrible, one fine morning. He besought Love to give it life, and this produced Matelote. Look at her, citizens! She has chromate-of-lead-colored hair, like Titian’s mistress, and she is a good girl. I guarantee that she will fight well. Every good girl contains a hero. As for Mother Hueheloup, she’s an old warrior. Look at her moustaches! She inherited them from her husband. A hussar indeed! She will fight too. These two alone will strike terror to the heart of the banlieue. Comrades, we shall overthrow the government as true as there are fifteen intermediary acids between margaric acid and formic acid; however, that is a matter of perfect indifference to me. Gentlemen, my father always detested me because I could not understand mathematics. I understand only love and liberty. I am Grantaire, the good fellow. Having never had any money, I never acquired the habit of it, and the result is that I have never lacked it; but, if I had been rich, there would have been no more poor people! You would have seen! Oh, if the kind hearts only had fat purses, how much better things would go! I picture myself Jesus Christ with Rothschild’s fortune! How much good he would do! Matelote, embrace me! You are voluptuous and timid! You have cheeks which invite the kiss of a sister, and lips which elaim the kiss of a lover.”

“Hold your tongue, you cask!” said Courfeyrac.

Grantaire retorted:—

“I am the capiton¹ and the master of the floral games!”

Enjolras, who was standing on the crest of the barricade, gun in hand, raised his beautiful, austere face. Enjolras, as the reader knows, had something of the Spartan and of the Puritan in his composition. He would have perished at Thermopylæ with Leonidas, and burned at Drogheda with Cromwell.

¹Municipal officer of Toulouse.

“Grantaire,” he shouted, “go get rid of the fumes of your wine somewhere else than here. This is the place for enthusiasm, not for drunkenness. Don’t disgrace the barricade!”

This angry speech produced a singular effect on Grantaire. One would have said that he had had a glass of cold water flung in his face. He seemed to be rendered suddenly sober.

He sat down, put his elbows on a table near the window, looked at Enjolras with indescribable gentleness, and said to him:—

“Let me sleep here.”

“Go and sleep somewhere else,” cried Enjolras.

But Grantaire, still keeping his tender and troubled eyes fixed on him, replied:—

“Let me sleep here,—until I die.”

Enjolras regarded him with disdainful eyes:—

“Grantaire, you are incapable of believing, of thinking, of willing, of living, and of dying.”

Grantaire replied in a grave tone:—

“You will see.”

He stammered a few more unintelligible words, then his head fell heavily on the table, and, as is the usual effect of the second period of inebriety, into which Enjolras had roughly and abruptly thrust him, an instant later he had fallen asleep.

CHAPTER IV

AN ATTEMPT TO CONSOLE THE WIDOW HUCHELOUP

BAHOREL, in ecstasies over the barricade, shouted:—

“Here’s the street in its low-necked dress! How well it looks!”

Courfeyrac, as he demolished the wine-shop to some extent, sought to console the widowed proprietress.

“Mother Hucheloup, weren’t you complaining the other

day because you had had a notice served on you for infringing the law, because Gibelotte shook a counterpane out of your window?"

"Yes, my good Monsieur Courfeyrac. Ah! good Heavens, are you going to put that table of mine in your horror, too? And it was for the counterpane, and also for a pot of flowers which fell from the attic window into the street, that the government collected a fine of a hundred francs. If that isn't an abomination, what is!"

"Well, Mother Hucheloup, we are avenging you."

Mother Hucheloup did not appear to understand very clearly the benefit which she was to derive from these reprisals made on her account. She was satisfied after the manner of that Arab woman, who, having received a box on the ear from her husband, went to complain to her father, and cried for vengeance, saying: "Father, you owe my husband affront for affront." The father asked: "On which cheek did you receive the blow?" "On the left cheek." The father slapped her right cheek and said: "Now you are satisfied. Go tell your husband that he boxed my daughter's ears, and that I have accordingly boxed his wife's."

The rain had ceased. Recruits had arrived. Workmen had brought under their blouses a barrel of powder, a basket containing bottles of vitriol, two or three carnival torches, and a basket filled with fire-pots, "left over from the King's festival." This festival was very recent, having taken place on the 1st of May. It was said that these munitions came from a grocer in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine named Pépin. They smashed the only street lantern in the Rue de la Chanvrerie, the lantern corresponding to one in the Rue Saint-Denis, and all the lanterns in the surrounding streets, de Mondétour, du Cygne, des Prêcheurs, and de la Grande and de la Petite-Truanderie.

Enjolras, Combeferre, and Courfeyrac directed everything. Two barricades were now in process of construction at once, both of them resting on the Corinthe house and forming a right angle; the larger shut off the Rue de la Chanvrerie, the

other closed the Rue Mondétour, on the side of the Rue de Cygne. This last barricade, which was very narrow, was constructed only of casks and paving-stones. There were about fifty workers on it; thirty were armed with guns; for, on their way, they had effected a wholesale loan from an armorer's shop.

Nothing could be more bizarre and at the same time more motley than this troop. One had a round-jacket, a cavalry sabre, and two holster-pistols, another was in his shirt-sleeves, with a round hat, and a powder-horn slung at his side, a third wore a plastron of nine sheets of gray paper and was armed with a saddler's awl. There was one who was shouting: "Let us exterminate them to the last man and die at the point of our bayonet." This man had no bayonet. Another spread out over his coat the cross-belt and cartridge-box of a National Guardsman, the cover of the cartridge-box being ornamented with this inscription in red worsted: *Public Order*. There were a great many guns bearing the numbers of the legions, few hats, no cravats, many bare arms, some pikes. Add to this, all ages, all sorts of faces, small, pale young men, and bronzed longshoremen. All were in haste; and as they helped each other, they discussed the possible chances. That they would receive succor about three o'clock in the morning—that they were sure of one regiment, that Paris would rise. Terrible sayings with which was mingled a sort of cordial joviality. One would have pronounced them brothers, but they did not know each other's names. Great perils have this fine characteristic, that they bring to light the fraternity of strangers. A fire had been lighted in the kitchen, and there they were engaged in moulding into bullets, pewter mugs, spoons, forks, and all the brass table-ware of the establishment. In the midst of it all, they drank. Caps and buck-shot were mixed pell-mell on the tables with glasses of wine. In the billiard-hall, Mame Hucheloup, Matelote, and Gibelotte, variously modified by terror, which had stupefied one, rendered another breathless, and roused the third, were tearing up old dish-cloths and making lint; three insurgents were

assisting them, three bushy-haired, jolly blades with beards and moustaches, who plucked away at the linen with the fingers of seamstresses and who made them tremble.

The man of lofty stature whom Courfeyrac, Combeferre, and Enjolras had observed at the moment when he joined the mob at the corner of the Rue des Billettes, was at work on the smaller barriade and was making himself useful there. Gavroche was working on the larger one. As for the young man who had been waiting for Courfeyrac at his lodgings, and who had inquired for M. Marius, he had disappeared at about the time when the omnibus had been overturned.

Gavroche, completely carried away and radiant, had undertaken to get everything in readiness. He went, came, mounted, descended, re-mounted, whistled, and sparkled. He seemed to be there for the encouragement of all. Had he any incentive? Yes, certainly, his poverty; had he wings? yes, certainly, his joy. Gavroche was a whirlwind. He was constantly visible, he was incessantly audible. He filled the air, as he was everywhere at once. He was a sort of almost irritating ubiquity; no halt was possible with him. The enormous barricade felt him on its haunches. He troubled the loungers, he excited the idle, he reanimated the weary, he grew impatient over the thoughtful, he inspired gayety in some, and breath in others, wrath in others, movement in all, now pricking a student, now biting an artisan; he alighted, paused, flew off again, hovered over the tumult, and the effort, sprang from one party to another, murmuring and humming, and harassed the whole company; a fly on the immense revolutionary coach.

Perpetual motion was in his little arms and perpetual clamor in his little lungs.

“Courage! more paving-stones! more easks! more machines! Where are you now? A hod of plaster for me to stop this hole with! Your barriade is very small. It must be carried up. Put everything on it, fling everything there, stick it all in. Break down the house. A barriade is Mother Gibou’s tea. Hullo, here’s a glass door.”

This elicited an exclamation from the workers.

"A glass door? what do you expect us to do with a glass door, tubercle?"

"Hercules yourselves!" retorted Gavroche. "A glass door is an excellent thing in a barricade. It does not prevent an attack, but it prevents the enemy taking it. So you've never prigged apples over a wall where there were broken bottles? A glass door cuts the corns of the National Guard when they try to mount on the barricade. Pardi! glass is a treacherous thing. Well, you haven't a very wildly lively imagination, comrades."

However, he was furious over his triggerless pistol. He went from one to another, demanding: "A gun, I want a gun! Why don't you give me a gun?"

"Give you a gun!" said Combeferre.

"Come now!" said Gavroche. "why not? I had one in 1830 when we had a dispute with Charles X."

Enjolras shrugged his shoulders.

"When there are enough for the men, we will give some to the children."

Gavroche wheeled round haughtily, and answered:—

"If you are killed before me, I shall take yours."

"Gamin!" said Enjolras.

"Greenhorn!" said Gavroche.

A dandy who had lost his way and who lounged past the end of the street created a diversion! Gavroche shouted to him:—

"Come with us, young fellow! well now, don't we do anything for this old country of ours?"

The dandy fled.

CHAPTER V

PREPARATIONS

THE journals of the day which said that that *nearly impregnable structure*, of the barricade of the Rue de la Chanvrière, as they call it, reached to the level of the first floor, were mistaken. The fact is, that it did not exceed an average height of

six or seven feet. It was built in such a manner that the combatants could, at their will, either disappear behind it or dominate the barrier and even scale its crest by means of a quadruple row of paving-stones placed on top of each other and arranged as steps in the interior. On the outside, the front of the barricade, composed of piles of paving-stones and casks bound together by beams and planks, which were entangled in the wheels of Anceau's dray and of the overturned omnibus, had a bristling and inextricable aspect.

An aperture large enough to allow a man to pass through had been made between the wall of the houses and the extremity of the barricade which was furthest from the wine-shop, so that an exit was possible at this point. The pole of the omnibus was placed upright and held up with ropes, and a red flag, fastened to this pole, floated over the barricade.

The little Mondétour barricade, hidden behind the wine-shop building, was not visible. The two barricades united formed a veritable redoubt. Enjolras and Courfeyrac had not thought fit to barricade the other fragment of the Rue Mondétour which opens through the Rue des Prêcheurs an issue into the Halles, wishing, no doubt, to preserve a possible communication with the outside, and not entertaining much fear of an attack through the dangerous and difficult street of the Rue des Prêcheurs.

With the exception of this issue which was left free, and which constituted what Folard in his strategical style would have termed a branch, and taking into account, also, the narrow cutting arranged on the Rue de la Chanvrerie, the interior of the barricade, where the wine-shop formed a salient angle, presented an irregular square, closed on all sides. There existed an interval of twenty paces between the grand barrier and the lofty houses which formed the background of the street, so that one might say that the barricade rested on these houses, all inhabited, but closed from top to bottom.

All this work was performed without any hindrance, in less than an hour, and without this handful of bold men seeing a single bear-skin cap or a single bayonet make their appearance.

The very bourgeois who still ventured at this hour of riot to enter the Rue Saint-Denis cast a glance at the Rue de la Chanvrerie, caught sight of the barricade, and redoubled their pace.

The two barricades being finished, and the flag run up, a table was dragged out of the wine-shop; and Courfeyrac mounted on the table. Enjolras brought the square coffer, and Courfeyrac opened it. This coffer was filled with cartridges. When the mob saw the cartridges, a tremor ran through the bravest, and a momentary silence ensued.

Courfeyrac distributed them with a smile.

Each one received thirty cartridges. Many had powder, and set about making others with the bullets which they had run. As for the barrel of powder, it stood on a table on one side, near the door, and was held in reserve.

The alarm beat which ran through all Paris, did not cease, but it had finally come to be nothing more than a monotonous noise to which they no longer paid any attention. This noise retreated at times, and again drew near, with melancholy undulations.

They loaded the guns and carbines, all together, without haste, with solemn gravity. Enjolras went and stationed three sentinels outside the barricades, one in the Rue de la Chanvrerie, the second in the Rue des Prêcheurs, the third at the corner of the Rue de la Petite Truanderie.

Then, the barricades having been built, the posts assigned, the guns loaded, the sentinels stationed, they waited, alone in those redoubtable streets through which no one passed any longer, surrounded by those dumb houses which seemed dead and in which no human movement palpitated, enveloped in the deepening shades of twilight which was drawing on, in the midst of that silence through which something could be felt advancing, and which had about it something tragic and terrifying, isolated, armed, determined, and tranquil.

CHAPTER VI

WAITING

DURING those hours of waiting, what did they do?

We must needs tell, since this is a matter of history.

While the men made bullets and the women lint, while a large saucepan of melted brass and lead, destined to the bullet-mould smoked over a glowing brazier, while the sentinels watched, weapon in hand, on the barricade, while Enjolras, whom it was impossible to divert, kept an eye on the sentinels, Combeferre, Courfeyrae, Jean Prouvaire, Feuilly, Bossuet, Joly, Bahorel, and some others, sought each other out and united as in the most peaceful days of their conversations in their student life, and, in one corner of this wine-shop which had been converted into a easement, a couple of paces distant from the redoubt which they had built, with their carbines loaded and primed resting against the backs of their chairs, these fine young fellows, so close to a supreme hour, began to recite love verses.

What verses? These:—

Vous rappelez-vous notre douce vie,
Lorsque nous étions si jeunes tous deux,
Et que nous n'avions au cœur d'autre envie
Que d'être bien mis et d'être amoureux,

Lorsqu'en ajoutant votre age à mon age,
Nous ne comptions pas à deux quarante ans,
Et que, dans notre humble et petit ménage,
Tout, même l'hiver, nous était printemps?

Beaux jours! Manuel était fier et sage,
Paris s'asseyait à de saints banquets,
Foy lançait la foudre, et votre corsage
Avait une épingle où je me piquais.

Tout vous contemplait. Avocat sans causes,
Quand je vous menais au Prado dîner,
Vous étiez jolie au point que les roses
Me faisaient l'effet de se retourner.

Je les entendais dire : Est elle belle !
 Comme elle sent bon ! Quels cheveux à flots !
 Sous son mantelet elle cache une aile,
 Son bonnet charmant est à peine éelos.

J'errais avec toi, pressant ton bras souple.
 Les passants crovaient que l'amour echarmé
 Avait inarié, dans notre heureux couple,
 Le doux mois d'avril au beau mois de mai.

Nous vivions cachés, contents, porte eclose,
 Dévorant l'amour, bon fruit défendu,
 Ma bouche n'avait pas dit une chose
 Que déjà ton cœur avait répondu.

La Sorbonne était l'endroit bucolique
 Où je t'adorais du soir au matin.
 C'est ainsi qu'une âme amoureuse applique
 La carte du Tendre au pays Latin.

Ô place Maubert ! ô place Dauphine !
 Quand, dans le taudis frais et printanier,
 Tu tirais ton bas sur ton jambe fine,
 Je voyais un astre au fond du grenier.

J'ai fort lu Platon, mais rien ne m'en reste ;
 Mieux que Malebranche et que Lamennais,
 Tu me démontrais la bonté céleste
 Avec une fleur que tu me donnais.

Je t'obéissais, tu m' étais soumise ;
 O grenier doré ! te lacer ! te voir
 Aller et venir dès l'aube en chemise,
 Mirant ton jeune front à ton vieux miroir.

Et qui donc pourrait perde la mémoire
 De ces temps d'aurore et de firmament,
 De rubans, de fleurs, de gaze et de moire,
 Où l'amour bégaye un argot charmant ?

Nos jardins étaient un pot de tulipe ;
 Tu masquais la vitre avec un jupon ;
 Je prenais le bol de terre de pipe,
 Et je te donnais le tasse en japon.

Et ces grands malheurs qui nous faisaient rire !
 Ton manchon brûlé, ton boa perdu !
 Et ce cher portrait du divin Shakespeare
 Qu'un soir pour souper nous avons vendu !

J'étais mendiant et toi eharitable.

Je baisais au vol tes bras frais et ronds.

Dante in folio nous servait de table

Pour manger gaïment un cent de marrons.

La première fois qu'en mon joyeux bouge

Je pris un baiser a ton lèvres en feu,

Quand tu t'en allais décoiffée et rouge,

Je restai tout pâle et je crus en Dieu!

Te rappelles-tu nos bonheurs sans nombre,

Et tous ces fichus echangés en chiffons?

Oh que de soupirs, de nos cœurs pleins d'ombre,

Se sont envolés dans les cieus profonds!¹

¹Do you remember our sweet life, when we were both so young, and when we had no other desire in our hearts than to be well dressed and in love? When, by adding your age to my age, we could not count forty years between us, and when, in our humble and tiny household, everything was spring to us even in winter. Fair days! Manuel was proud and wise, Paris sat at sacred banquets, Foy launched thunderbolts, and your corsage had a pin on which I pricked myself. Everything gazed upon you. A briefless lawyer, when I took you to the Prado to dine, you were so beautiful that the roses seemed to me to turn round, and I heard them say: Is she not beautiful! How good she smells! What billowing hair! Beneath her mantle she hides a wing. Her charming bonnet is hardly unfolded. I wandered with thee, pressing thy supple arm. The passers-by thought that love bewitched had wedded, in our happy couple, the gentle month of April to the fair month of May. We lived concealed, content, with closed doors, devouring love, that sweet forbidden fruit. My mouth had not uttered a thing when thy heart had already responded. The Sorbonne was the bucolic spot where I adored thee from eve till morn. 'Tis thus that an amorous soul applies the chart of the Tender to the Latin country. O Place Maubert! O Place Dauphine! When in the fresh spring-like hut thou didst draw thy stocking on thy delicate leg, I saw a star in the depths of the garret. I have read a great deal of Plato, but nothing of it remains by me; better than Malebranche and then Lamennais thou didst demonstrate to me celestial goodness with a flower which thou gavest to me, I obeyed thee, thou didst submit to me; oh gilded garret! to lace thee! to behold thee going and coming from dawn in thy chemise, gazing at thy young brow in thine ancient mirror! And who, then, would forego the memory of those days of aurora and the firmament, of flowers, of gauze and of moire, when love stammers a charming slang? Our gardens consisted of a pot of tulips; thou didst mask the window with thy petticoat; I took the earthenware bowl and I gave thee the Japanese eup. And those great misfortunes which made us laugh! Thy cuff scorched, thy boa lost! And that dear portrait of

The hour, the spot, these souvenirs of youth recalled, a few stars which began to twinkle in the sky, the funeral repose of those deserted streets, the imminence of the inexorable adventure, which was in preparation, gave a pathetic charm to these verses murmured in a low tone in the dusk by Jean Prouvaire, who, as we have said, was a gentle poet.

In the meantime, a lamp had been lighted in the small barriade, and in the large one, one of those wax torches such as are to be met with on Shrove-Tuesday in front of vehicles loaded with masks, on their way to la Courtille. These torches, as the reader has seen, came from the Faubourg Saint-Antoine.

The torch had been placed in a sort of cage of paving-stones closed on three sides to shelter it from the wind, and disposed in such a fashion that all the light fell on the flag. The street and the barricade remained sunk in gloom, and nothing was to be seen except the red flag formidably illuminated as by an enormous dark-lantern.

This light enhanced the scarlet of the flag, with an indescribable and terrible purple.

CHAPTER VII

THE MAN RECRUITED IN THE RUE DES BILLETES

NIGHT was fully come, nothing made its appearance. All that they heard was confused noises, and at intervals, fusillades; but these were rare, badly sustained and distant. This respite, which was thus prolonged, was a sign that the Govern-

the divine Shakespeare which we sold one evening that we might sup! I was a beggar and thou wert charitable. I kissed thy fresh round arms in haste. A folio Danto served us as a table on which to eat merrily a centime's worth of chestnuts. The first time that, in my joyous den, I snatched a kiss from thy fiery lip, when thou wentest forth, dishevelled and blushing, I turned deathly pale and I believed in God. Dost thou recall our innumerable joys, and all those fichus changed to rags? Oh! what sighs from our hearts full of gloom fluttered forth to the heavenly depths!

ment was taking its time, and collecting its forces. These fifty men were waiting for sixty thousand.

Enjolras felt attacked by that impatience which seizes on strong souls on the threshold of redoubtable events. He went in search of Gavroche, who had set to making cartridges in the tap-room, by the dubious light of two candles placed on the counter by way of precaution, on account of the powder which was scattered on the tables. These two candles cast no gleam outside. The insurgents had, moreover, taken pains not to have any light in the upper stories.

Gavroche was deeply preoccupied at that moment, but not precisely with his cartridges. The man of the Rue des Billettes had just entered the tap-room and had seated himself at the table which was the least lighted. A musket of large model had fallen to his share, and he held it between his legs. Gavroche, who had been, up to that moment, distracted by a hundred "amusing" things, had not even seen this man.

When he entered, Gavroche followed him mechanically with his eyes, admiring his gun; then, all at once, when the man was seated, the street urchin sprang to his feet. Any one who had spied upon that man up to that moment, would have seen that he was observing everything in the barricade and in the band of insurgents, with singular attention; but, from the moment when he had entered this room, he had fallen into a sort of brown study, and no longer seemed to see anything that was going on. The gamin approached this pensive personage, and began to step around him on tiptoe, as one walks in the vicinity of a person whom one is afraid of waking. At the same time, over his childish countenance, which was, at once so impudent and so serious, so giddy and so profound, so gay and so heart-breaking, passed all those grimaces of an old man which signify: Ah bah! impossible! My sight is bad! I am dreaming! can this be? no, it is not! but yes! why, no! etc. Gavroche balanced on his heels, clenched both fists in his pockets, moved his neck around like a bird, expended in a gigantic pout all the sagacity of his lower lip. He was

astounded, uncertain, incredulous, convinced, dazzled. He had the mien of the chief of the eunuuchs in the slave mart, discovering a Venus among the blowsy females, and the air of an amateur recognizing a Raphael in a heap of daubs. His whole being was at work, the instinct which scents out, and the intelligence which combines. It was evident that a great event had happened in Gavroche's life.

It was at the most intense point of this preoccupation that Enjolras accosted him.

"You are small," said Enjolras, "you will not be seen. Go out of the barricade, slip along close to the houses, skirmish about a bit in the streets, and come back and tell me what is going on."

Gavroche raised himself on his haunches.

"So the little chaps are good for something! that's very lucky! I'll go! In the meanwhile, trust to the little fellows, and distrust the big ones." And Gavroche, raising his head and lowering his voice, added, as he indicated the **man** of the Rue des Billettes:—

"Do you see that big fellow there?"

"Well?"

"He's a police spy."

"Are you sure of it?"

"It isn't two weeks since he pulled me off the cornice of the Port Royal, where I was taking the air, by my ear."

Enjolras hastily quitted the urchin and murmured a few words in a very low tone to a longshoreman from the wine-docks who chanced to be at hand. The man left the room, and returned almost immediately, accompanied by three others. The four men, four porters with broad shoulders, went and placed themselves without doing anything to attract his attention, behind the table on which the man of the Rue des Billettes was leaning with his elbows. They were evidently ready to hurl themselves upon him.

Then Enjolras approached the **man** and demanded of him:—

"Who are you?"

At this abrupt query, the man started. He plunged his gaze deep into Enjolras' clear eyes and appeared to grasp the latter's meaning. He smiled with a smile than which nothing more disdainful, more energetic, and more resolute could be seen in the world, and replied with haughty gravity:—

“I see what it is. Well, yes!”

“You are a police spy?”

“I am an agent of the authorities.”

“And your name?”

“Javert.”

Enjolras made a sign to the four men. In the twinkling of an eye, before Javert had time to turn round, he was collared, thrown down, pinioned and searched.

They found on him a little round card pasted between two pieces of glass, and bearing on one side the arms of France, engraved, and with this motto: *Supervision and vigilance*, and on the other this note: “JAVERT, inspector of police, aged fifty-two,” and the signature of the Prefect of Police of that day, M. Gisquet.

Besides this, he had his watch and his purse, which contained several gold pieces. They left him his purse and his watch. Under the watch, at the bottom of his fob, they felt and seized a paper in an envelope, which Enjolras unfolded, and on which he read these five lines, written in the very hand of the Prefect of Police:—

“As soon as his political mission is accomplished, Inspector Javert will make sure, by special supervision, whether it is true that the malefactors have instituted intrigues on the right bank of the Seine, near the Jena bridge.”

The search ended, they lifted Javert to his feet, bound his arms behind his back, and fastened him to that celebrated post in the middle of the room which had formerly given the wine-shop its name.

Gavroche, who had looked on at the whole of this scene and had approved of everything with a silent toss of his head, stepped up to Javert and said to him:—

“It's the mouse who has caught the cat.”

All this was so rapidly executed, that it was all over when those about the wine-shop noticed it.

Javert had not uttered a single cry.

At the sight of Javert bound to the post. Courfeyrac, Bossuet, Joly, Combeferre, and the men scattered over the two barricades came running up.

Javert, with his back to the post, and so surrounded with ropes that he could not make a movement, raised his head with the intrepid serenity of the man who has never lied.

"He is a police spy," said Enjolras.

And turning to Javert: "You will be shot ten minutes before the barricade is taken."

Javert replied in his most imperious tone:—

"Why not at once?"

"We are saving our powder."

"Then finish the business with a blow from a knife."

"Spy," said the handsome Enjolras, "we are judges and not assassins."

Then he called Gavroche:—

"Here you! go about your business! Do what I told you!"

"I'm going!" cried Gavroche.

And halting as he was on the point of setting out:—

"By the way, you will give me his gun!" and he added: "I leave you the musician, but I want the clarionet."

The gamin made the military salute and passed gayly through the opening in the large barricade.

CHAPTER VIII

MANY INTERROGATION POINTS WITH REGARD TO A CERTAIN
LE CABUC WHOSE NAME MAY NOT HAVE BEEN LE CABUC

THE tragic picture which we have undertaken would not be complete, the reader would not see those grand moments of social birth-pangs in a revolutionary birth, which contain convulsion mingled with effort, in their exact and real relief,

were we to omit, in the sketch here outlined, an incident full of epic and savage horror which occurred almost immediately after Gavroche's departure.

Mobs, as the reader knows, are like a snowball, and collect as they roll along, a throng of tumultuous men. These men do not ask each other whence they come. Among the passers-by who had joined the rabble led by Enjolras, Combeferre, and Courfeyrac, there had been a person wearing the jacket of a street porter, which was very threadbare on the shoulders, who gesticulated and vociferated, and who had the look of a drunken savage. This man, whose name or nickname was *Le Cabuc*, and who was, moreover, an utter stranger to those who pretended to know him, was very drunk, or assumed the appearance of being so, and had seated himself with several others at a table which they had dragged outside of the wine-shop. This *Cabuc*, while making those who vied with him drunk, seemed to be examining with a thoughtful air the large house at the extremity of the barricade, whose five stories commanded the whole street and faced the *Rue Saint-Denis*. All at once he exclaimed:—

“Do you know, comrades, it is from that house yonder that we must fire. When we are at the windows, the deuce is in it if any one can advance into the street!”

“Yes, but the house is closed,” said one of the drinkers.

“Let us knock!”

“They will not open.”

“Let us break in the door!”

Le Cabuc runs to the door, which had a very massive knocker, and knocks. The door opens not. He strikes a second blow. No one answers. A third stroke. The same silence.

“Is there any one here?” shouts *Cabuc*.

Nothing stirs.

Then he seizes a gun and begins to batter the door with the butt end.

It was an ancient alley door, low, vaulted, narrow, solid, entirely of oak, lined on the inside with a sheet of iron and

iron stays, a genuine prison postern. The blows from the butt end of the gun made the house tremble, but did not shake the door.

Nevertheless, it is probable that the inhabitants were disturbed, for a tiny, square window was finally seen to open on the third story, and at this aperture appeared the reverend and terrified face of a gray-haired old man, who was the porter, and who held a candle.

The man who was knocking paused.

"Gentlemen," said the porter, "what do you want?"

"Open!" said Cabue.

"That cannot be, gentlemen."

"Open, nevertheless."

"Impossible, gentlemen."

Le Cabue took his gun and aimed at the porter; but as he was below, and as it was very dark, the porter did not see him.

"Will you open, yes or no?"

"No, gentlemen."

"Do you say no?"

"I say no, my good—"

The porter did not finish. The shot was fired; the ball entered under his chin and came out at the nape of his neck, after traversing the jugular vein.

The old man fell back without a sigh. The candle fell and was extinguished, and nothing more was to be seen except a motionless head lying on the sill of the small window, and a little whitish smoke which floated off towards the roof.

"There!" said Le Cabue, dropping the butt end of his gun to the pavement.

He had hardly uttered this word, when he felt a hand laid on his shoulder with the weight of an eagle's talon, and he heard a voice saying to him:—

"On your knees."

The murderer turned round and saw before him Enjolras' cold, white face.

Enjolras held a pistol in his hand.

He had hastened up at the sound of the discharge.

He had seized Cabuc's collar, blouse, shirt, and suspender with his left hand.

"On your knees!" he repeated.

And, with an imperious motion, the frail young man of twenty years bent the thickset and sturdy porter like a reed, and brought him to his knees in the mire.

Le Cabuc attempted to resist, but he seemed to have been seized by a superhuman hand.

Enjolras, pale, with bare neck and dishevelled hair, and his woman's face, had about him at that moment something of the antique Themis. His dilated nostrils, his downcast eyes, gave to his implacable Greek profile that expression of wrath and that expression of Chastity which, as the ancient world viewed the matter, befit Justice.

The whole barricade hastened up, then all ranged themselves in a circle at a distance, feeling that it was impossible to utter a word in the presence of the thing which they were about to behold.

Le Cabuc, vanquished, no longer tried to struggle, and trembled in every limb.

Enjolras released him and drew out his watch.

"Collect yourself," said he. "Think or pray. You have one minute."

"Merely!" murmured the murderer; then he dropped his head and stammered a few inarticulate oaths.

Enjolras never took his eyes off of him: he allowed a minute to pass, then he replaced his watch in his fob. That done, he grasped Le Cabuc by the hair, as the latter coiled himself into a ball at his knees and shrieked, and placed the muzzle of the pistol to his ear. Many of those intrepid men, who had so tranquilly entered upon the most terrible of adventures, turned aside their heads.

An explosion was heard. the assassin fell to the pavement face downwards.

Enjolras straightened himself up, and cast a convinced and severe glance around him. Then he spurned the corpse with his foot and said:—

“Throw that outside.”

Three men raised the body of the unhappy wretch, which was still agitated by the last mechanical convulsions of the life that had fled, and flung it over the little barricade into the Rue Mondétour.

Enjolras was thoughtful. It is impossible to say what grandiose shadows slowly spread over his redoubtable serenity. All at once he raised his voice.

A silence fell upon them.

“Citizens,” said Enjolras, “what that man did is frightful, what I have done is horrible. He killed, therefore I killed him. I had to do it, because insurrection must have its discipline. Assassination is even more of a crime here than elsewhere; we are under the eyes of the Revolution, we are the priests of the Republic, we are the victims of duty, and must not be possible to slander our combat. I have, therefore, tried that man, and condemned him to death. As for myself, constrained as I am to do what I have done, and yet abhorring it, I have judged myself also, and you shall soon see to what I have condemned myself.”

Those who listened to him shuddered.

“We will share thy fate,” cried Combeferre.

“So be it,” replied Enjolras. “One word more. In executing this man, I have obeyed necessity; but necessity is a monster of the old world, necessity’s name is Fatality. Now, the law of progress is, that monsters shall disappear before the angels, and that Fatality shall vanish before Fraternity. It is a bad moment to pronounce the word love. No matter, I do pronounce it. And I glorify it. Love, the future is thine. Death, I make use of thee, but I hate thee. Citizens, in the future there will be neither darkness nor thunderbolts; neither ferocious ignorance, nor bloody retaliation. As there will be no more Satan, there will be no more Michael. In the future no one will kill any one else, the earth will beam with radiance, the human race will love. The day will come, citizens, when all will be concord, harmony, light, joy and life; it

will come, and it is in order that it may come that we are about to die.”

Enjolras ceased. His virgin lips closed; and he remained for some time standing on the spot where he had shed blood, in marble immobility. His staring eye caused those about him to speak in low tones.

Jean Prouvaire and Combeferre pressed each other's hands silently, and, leaning against each other in an angle of the barricade, they watched with an admiration in which there was some compassion, that grave young man, executioner and priest, composed of light, like crystal, and also of rock.

Let us say at once that later on, after the action, when the bodies were taken to the morgue and searched, a police agent's card was found on Le Cabuc. The author of this book had in his hands, in 1848, the special report on this subject made to the Prefect of Police in 1832.

We will add, that if we are to believe a tradition of the police, which is strange but probably well founded, Le Cabuc was Claquesous. The fact is, that dating from the death of Le Cabuc, there was no longer any question of Claquesous. Claquesous had nowhere left any trace of his disappearance; he would seem to have amalgamated himself with the invisible. His life had been all shadows, his end was night.

The whole insurgent group was still under the influence of the emotion of that tragic case which had been so quickly tried and so quickly terminated, when Courfeyrac again beheld on the barricade, the small young man who had inquired of him that morning for Marius.

This lad, who had a bold and reckless air, had come by night to join the insurgents.

BOOK THIRTEENTH.—MARIUS ENTERS THE SHADOW

CHAPTER I

FROM THE RUE PLUMET TO THE QUARTIER SAINT-DENIS

THE voice which had summoned Marius through the twilight to the barricade of the Rue de la Chanvrerie, had produced on him the effect of the voice of destiny. He wished to die; the opportunity presented itself; he knocked at the door of the tomb, a hand in the darkness offered him the key. These melancholy openings which take place in the gloom before despair, are tempting. Marius thrust aside the bar which had so often allowed him to pass, emerged from the garden, and said: "I will go."

Mad with grief, no longer conscious of anything fixed or solid in his brain, incapable of accepting anything thenceforth of fate after those two months passed in the intoxication of youth and love, overwhelmed at once by all the reveries of despair, he had but one desire remaining, to make a speedy end of all.

He set out at rapid pace. He found himself most opportunely armed, as he had Javert's pistols with him.

The young man of whom he thought that he had caught a glimpse, had vanished from his sight in the street.

Marius, who had emerged from the Rue Plumet by the boulevard, traversed the Esplanade and the bridge of the Invalides, the Champs Élysées, the Place Louis XV., and reached the Rue de Rivoli. The shops were open there, the gas was burning under the arcades, women were making their purchases in the stalls, people were eating ices in the Café

Laiter, and nibbling small cakes at the English pastry-cook's shop. Only a few posting-chaises were setting out at a gallop from the Hôtel des Princes and the Hôtel Meurice.

Marius entered the Rue Saint-Honoré through the Passage Delorme. There the shops were closed, the merchants were chatting in front of their half-open doors, people were walking about, the street lanterns were lighted, beginning with the first floor, all the windows were lighted as usual. There was cavalry on the Place du Palais-Royal.

Marius followed the Rue Saint-Honoré. In proportion as he left the Palais-Royal behind him, there were fewer lighted windows, the shops were fast shut, no one was chatting on the thresholds, the street grew sombre, and, at the same time, the crowd increased in density. For the passers-by now amounted to a crowd. No one could be seen to speak in this throng, and yet there arose from it a dull, deep murmur.

Near the fountain of the Arbre-Sec, there were "assemblages" motionless and gloomy groups which were to those who went and came as stones in the midst of running water.

At the entrance to the Rue des Prouvaires, the crowd no longer walked. It formed a resisting, massive, solid, compact, almost impenetrable block of people who were huddled together, and conversing in low tones. There were hardly any black coats or round hats now, but smock frocks, blouses, caps, and bristling and cadaverous heads. This multitude undulated confusedly in the nocturnal gloom. Its whisperings had the hoarse accent of a vibration. Although not one of them was walking, a dull trampling was audible in the mire. Beyond this dense portion of the throng, in the Rue du Roule, in the Rue des Prouvaires, and in the extension of the Rue Saint-Honoré, there was no longer a single window in which a candle was burning. Only the solitary and diminishing rows of lanterns could be seen vanishing into the street in the distance. The lanterns of that date resembled large red stars, hanging to ropes, and shed upon the pavement a shadow which had the form of a huge spider. These streets were not deserted. There could be descried piles of guns,

moving bayonets, and troops bivouacking. No curious observer passed that limit. There circulation ceased. There the rabble ended and the army began.

Marius willed with the will of a man who hopes no more. He had been summoned, he must go. He found a means to traverse the throng and to pass the bivouac of the troops, he shunned the patrols, he avoided the sentinels. He made a circuit, reached the Rue de Béthisy, and directed his course towards the Halles. At the corner of the Rue des Bourdonnais, there were no longer any lanterns.

After having passed the zone of the crowd, he had passed the limits of the troops; he found himself in something startling. There was no longer a passer-by, no longer a soldier, no longer a light, there was no one; solitude, silence, night, I know not what chill which seized hold upon one. Entering a street was like entering a cellar.

He continued to advance.

He took a few steps. Some one passed close to him at a run. Was it a man? Or a woman? Were there many of them? he could not have told. It had passed and vanished.

Proceeding from circuit to circuit, he reached a lane which he judged to be the Rue de la Poterie; near the middle of this street, he came in contact with an obstacle. He extended his hands. It was an overturned wagon; his foot recognized pools of water, gullies, and paving-stones scattered and piled up. A barricade had been begun there and abandoned. He climbed over the stones and found himself on the other side of the barrier. He walked very near the street-posts, and guided himself along the walls of the houses. A little beyond the barricade, it seemed to him that he could make out something white in front of him. He approached, it took on a form. It was two white horses; the horses of the omnibus harnessed by Bossuet in the morning, who had been straying at random all day from street to street, and had finally halted there, with the weary patience of brutes who no more understand the actions of men, than **man** understands the actions of Providence.

Marius left the horses behind him. As he was approaching a street which seemed to him to be the Rue du Contrat-Social, a shot coming no one knows whence, and traversing the darkness at random, whistled close by him, and the bullet pierced a brass shaving-dish suspended above his head over a hair-dresser's shop. This pierced shaving-dish was still to be seen in 1848, in the Rue du Contrat-Social, at the corner of the pillars of the market.

This shot still betokened life. From that instant forth he encountered nothing more.

The whole of this itinerary resembled a descent of black steps.

Nevertheless, Marius pressed forward.

CHAPTER II

AN OWL'S VIEW OF PARIS

A BEING who could have hovered over Paris that night with the wing of the bat or the owl would have had beneath his eyes a gloomy spectacle.

All that old quarter of the Halles, which is like a city within a city, through which run the Rues Saint-Denis and Saint-Martin, where a thousand lanes cross, and of which the insurgents had made their redoubt and their stronghold, would have appeared to him like a dark and enormous cavity hollowed out in the centre of Paris. There the glance fell into an abyss. Thanks to the broken lanterns, thanks to the closed windows, there all radiance, all life, all sound, all movement ceased. The invisible police of the insurrection were on the watch everywhere, and maintained order, that is to say, night. The necessary tactics of insurrection are to drown small numbers in a vast obscurity, to multiply every combatant by the possibilities which that obscurity contains. At dusk, every window where a candle was burning received a shot. The light was extinguished, sometimes the inhabitant

was killed. Hence nothing was stirring. There was nothing but fright, mourning, stupor in the houses; and in the streets, a sort of sacred horror. Not even the long rows of windows and stores, the indentations of the chimneys, and the roofs, and the vague reflections which are cast back by the wet and muddy pavements, were visible. An eye cast upward at that mass of shadows might, perhaps, have caught a glimpse here and there, at intervals, of indistinct gleams which brought out broken and eccentric lines, and profiles of singular buildings, something like the lights which go and come in ruins; it was at such points that the barricades were situated. The rest was a lake of obscurity, foggy, heavy, and funereal, above which, in motionless and melancholy outlines, rose the tower of Saint-Jacques, the church of Saint-Merry, and two or three more of those grand edifices of which man makes giants and the night makes phantoms.

All around this deserted and disquieting labyrinth, in the quarters where the Parisian circulation had not been annihilated, and where a few street lanterns still burned, the aerial observer might have distinguished the metallic gleam of swords and bayonets, the dull rumble of artillery, and the swarming of silent battalions whose ranks were swelling from minute to minute; a formidable girdle which was slowly drawing in and around the insurrection.

The invested quarter was no longer anything more than a monstrous cavern; everything there appeared to be asleep or motionless, and, as we have just seen, any street which one might come to offered nothing but darkness.

A wild darkness, full of traps, full of unseen and formidable shocks, into which it was alarming to penetrate, and in which it was terrible to remain, where those who entered shivered before those whom they awaited, where those who waited shuddered before those who were coming. Invisible combatants were intrenched at every corner of the street; snares of the sepulchre concealed in the density of night. All was over. No more light was to be hoped for, henceforth, except the lightning of guns, no further encounter except

the abrupt and rapid apparition of death. Where? How? When? No one knew, but it was certain and inevitable. In this place which had been marked out for the struggle, the Government and the insurrection, the National Guard, and popular societies, the bourgeois and the uprising, groping their way, were about to come into contact. The necessity was the same for both. The only possible issue thenceforth was to emerge thence killed or conquerors. A situation so extreme, an obscurity so powerful, that the most timid felt themselves seized with resolution, and the most daring with terror.

Moreover, on both sides, the fury, the rage, and the determination were equal. For the one party, to advance meant death, and no one dreamed of retreating; for the other, to remain meant death, and no one dreamed of flight.

It was indispensable that all should be ended on the following day, that triumph should rest either here or there, that the insurrection should prove itself a revolution or a skirmish. The Government understood this as well as the parties; the most insignificant bourgeois felt it. Hence a thought of anguish which mingled with the impenetrable gloom of this quarter where all was at the point of being decided; hence a redoubled anxiety around that silence whence a catastrophe was on the point of emerging. Here only one sound was audible, a sound as heart-rending as the death rattle, as menacing as a malediction, the tocsin of Saint-Merry. Nothing could be more blood-curdling than the clamor of that wild and desperate bell, wailing amid the shadows.

As it often happens, nature seemed to have fallen into accord with what men were about to do. Nothing disturbed the harmony of the whole effect. The stars had disappeared, heavy clouds filled the horizon with their melancholy folds. A black sky rested on these dead streets, as though an immense winding-sheet were being outspread over this immense tomb.

While a battle that was still wholly political was in preparation in the same locality which had already witnessed so

many revolutionary events, while youth, the secret associations, the schools, in the name of principles, and the middle classes, in the name of interests, were approaching preparatory to dashing themselves together, clasping and throwing each other, while each one hastened and invited the last and decisive hour of the crisis, far away and quite outside of this fatal quarter, in the most profound depths of the unfathomable cavities of that wretched old Paris which disappears under the splendor of happy and opulent Paris, the sombre voice of the people could be heard giving utterance to a dull roar.

A fearful and sacred voice which is composed of the roar of the brute and of the word of God, which terrifies the weak and which warns the wise, which comes both from below like the voice of the lion, and from on high like the voice of the thunder.

CHAPTER III

THE EXTREME EDGE

MARIUS had reached the Halles.

There everything was still calmer, more obscure and more motionless than in the neighboring streets. One would have said that the glacial peace of the sepulchre had sprung forth from the earth and had spread over the heavens.

Nevertheless, a red glow brought out against this black background the lofty roofs of the houses which barred the Rue de la Chanvrerie on the Saint-Eustache side. It was the reflection of the torch which was burning in the Corinthe barricade. Marius directed his steps towards that red light. It had drawn him to the Marché-aux-Poirées, and he caught a glimpse of the dark mouth of the Rue des Prêcheurs. He entered it. The insurgents' sentinel, who was guarding the other end, did not see him. He felt that he was very close to that which he had come in search of, and he walked on tip-

toe. In this manner he reached the elbow of that short section of the Rue Mondétour which was, as the reader will remember, the only communication which Enjolras had preserved with the outside world. At the corner of the last house, on his left, he thrust his head forward, and looked into the fragment of the Rue Mondétour.

A little beyond the angle of the lane and the Rue de la Chanvrerie which cast a broad curtain of shadow, in which he was himself engulfed, he perceived some light on the pavement, a bit of the wine-shop, and beyond, a flickering lamp within a sort of shapeless wall, and men crouching down with guns on their knees. All this was ten fathoms distant from him. It was the interior of the barricade.

The houses which bordered the lane on the right concealed the rest of the wine-shop, the large barricade, and the flag from him.

Marius had but a step more to take.

Then the unhappy young man seated himself on a post, folded his arms, and fell to thinking about his father.

He thought of that heroic Colonel Pontmercy, who had been so proud a soldier, who had guarded the frontier of France under the Republic, and had touched the frontier of Asia under Napoleon, who had beheld Genoa, Alexandria, Milan, Turin, Madrid, Vienna, Dresden, Berlin, Moscow, who had left on all the victorious battle-fields of Europe drops of that same blood, which he, Marius, had in his veins, who had grown gray before his time in discipline and command, who had lived with his sword-belt buckled, his epaulets falling on his breast, his cockade blackened with powder, his brow furrowed with his helmet, in barracks, in camp, in the bivouac, in ambulances, and who, at the expiration of twenty years, had returned from the great wars with a scarred cheek, a smiling countenance, tranquil, admirable, pure as a child, having done everything for France and nothing against her.

He said to himself that his day had also come now, that his hour had struck, that following his father, he too was about to show himself brave, intrepid, bold, to run to meet

the bullets, to offer his breast to bayonets, to shed his blood, to seek the enemy, to seek death, that he was about to wage war in his turn and descend to the field of battle, and that the field of battle upon which he was to descend was the street, and that the war in which he was about to engage was civil war!

He beheld civil war laid open like a gulf before him, and into this he was about to fall. Then he shuddered.

He thought of his father's sword, which his grandfather had sold to a second-hand dealer, and which he had so mournfully regretted. He said to himself that that chaste and valiant sword had done well to escape from him, and to depart in wrath into the gloom; that if it had thus fled, it was because it was intelligent and because it had foreseen the future; that it had had a presentiment of this rebellion, the war of the gutters, the war of the pavements, fusillades through cellar-windows, blows given and received in the rear; it was because, coming from Marengo and Friedland, it did not wish to go to the Rue de la Chanvrière; it was because, after what it had done with the father, it did not wish to do this for the son! He told himself that if that sword were there, if after taking possession of it at his father's pillow, he had dared to take it and carry it off for this combat of darkness between Frenchmen in the streets, it would assuredly have scorched his hands and burst out aflame before his eyes, like the sword of the angel! He told himself that it was fortunate that it was not there and that it had disappeared, that that was well, that that was just, that his grandfather had been the true guardian of his father's glory, and that it was far better that the colonel's sword should be sold at auction, sold to the old-clothes man, thrown among the old junk, than that it should, to-day, wound the side of his country.

And then he fell to weeping bitterly.

This was horrible. But what was he to do? Live without Cosette he could not. Since she was gone, he must needs die. Had he not given her his word of honor that he would die? She had gone knowing that; this meant that it pleased

her that Marius should die. And then, it was clear that she no longer loved him, since she had departed thus without warning, without a word, without a letter, although she knew his address! What was the good of living, and why should he live now? And then, what! should he retreat after going so far? should he flee from danger after having approached it? should he slip away after having come and peeped into the barricade? slip away, all in a tremble, saying: "After all, I have had enough of it as it is. I have seen it, that suffices, this is civil war, and I shall take my leave!" Should he abandon his friends who were expecting him? Who were in need of him possibly! who were a mere handful against an army! Should he be untrue at once to his love, to country, to his word? Should he give to his cowardice the pretext of patriotism? But this was impossible, and if the phantom of his father was there in the gloom, and beheld him retreating, he would beat him on the loins with the flat of his sword, and shout to him: "March on, you poltroon!"

Thus a prey to the conflicting movements of his thoughts, he dropped his head.

All at once he raised it. A sort of splendid reetification had just been effected in his mind. There is a widening of the sphere of thought which is peculiar to the vicinity of the grave; it makes one see clearly to be near death. The vision of the action into which he felt that he was, perhaps, on the point of entering, appeared to him no more as lamentable, but as superb. The war of the street was suddenly transfigured by some unfathomable inward working of his soul, before the eye of his thought. All the tumultuous interrogation points of revery recurred to him in throngs, but without troubling him. He left none of them unanswered.

Let us see, why should his father be indignant? Are there not cases where insurrection rises to the dignity of duty? What was there that was degrading for the son of Colonel Pontmercy in the combat which was about to begin? It is no longer Montmirail nor Champaubert; it is something quite different. The question is no longer one of sacred territory,—

but of a holy idea. The country wails, that may be, but humanity applauds. But is it true that the country does wail? France bleeds, but liberty smiles; and in the presence of liberty's smile, France forgets her wound. And then if we look at things from a still more lofty point of view, why do we speak of civil war?

Civil war—what does that mean? Is there a foreign war? Is not all war between men war between brothers? War is qualified only by its object. There is no such thing as foreign or civil war; there is only just and unjust war. Until that day when the grand human agreement is concluded, war, that at least which is the effort of the future, which is hastening on against the past, which is lagging in the rear, may be necessary. What have we to reproach that war with? War does not become a disgrace, the sword does not become a disgrace, except when it is used for assassinating the right, progress, reason, civilization, truth. Then war, whether foreign or civil, is iniquitous; it is called crime. Outside the pale of that holy thing, justice, by what right does one form of man despise another? By what right should the sword of Washington disown the pike of Camille Desmoulins? Leonidas against the stranger, Timoleon against the tyrant, which is the greater? the one is the defender, the other the liberator. Shall we brand every appeal to arms within a city's limits without taking the object into a consideration? Then note the infamy of Brutus, Marcel, Arnould von Blankenheim, Coligny, Hedgerow war? War of the streets? Why not? That was the war of Ambiorix, of Artevelde, of Marnix, of Pelagius. But Ambiorix fought against Rome, Artevelde against France, Marnix against Spain, Pelagius against the Moors; all against the foreigner. Well, the monarchy is a foreigner; oppression is a stranger; the right divine is a stranger. Despotism violates the moral frontier, an invasion violates the geographical frontier. Driving out the tyrant or driving out the English, in both cases, regaining possession of one's own territory. There comes an hour when protestation no longer suffices; after philosophy, action is required; live force finishes

what the idea has sketched out; Prometheus chained begins, Arostogeiton ends; the encyclopedia enlightens souls, the 10th of August electrifies them. After Æschylus, Thrasybulus; after Diderot, Danton. Multitudes have a tendency to accept the master. Their mass bears witness to apathy. A crowd is easily led as a whole to obedience. Men must be stirred up, pushed on, treated roughly by the very benefit of their deliverance, their eyes must be wounded by the true, light must be hurled at them in terrible handfuls. They must be a little thunderstruck themselves at their own well-being; this dazzling awakens them. Hence the necessity of tocsins and wars. Great combatants must rise, must enlighten nations with audacity, and shake up that sad humanity which is covered with gloom by the right divine, Cæsarian glory, force, fanaticism, irresponsible power, and absolute majesty; a rabble stupidly occupied in the contemplation, in their twilight splendor, of these sombre triumphs of the night. Down with the tyrant! Of whom are you speaking? Do you call Louis Philippe the tyrant? No; no more than Louis XVI. Both of them are what history is in the habit of calling good kings; but principles are not to be parcelled out, the logic of the true is rectilinear, the peculiarity of truth is that it lacks complaisance; no concessions, then: all encroachments on man should be repressed. There is a divine right in Louis XVI., there is *because a Bourbon* in Louis Philippe; both represent in a certain measure the confiscation of right, and, in order to clear away universal insurrection, they must be combated; it must be done, France being always the one to begin. When the master falls in France, he falls everywhere. In short, what cause is more just, and consequently, what war is greater, than that which re-establishes social truth, restores her throne to liberty, restores the people to the people, restores sovereignty to man, replaces the purple on the head of France, restores equity and reason in their plenitude, suppresses every germ of antagonism by restoring each one to himself, annihilates the obstacle which royalty presents to the whole immense universal concord, and places the human race once more on a level with

the right? These wars build up peace. An enormous fortress of prejudices, privileges, superstitions, lies, exactions, abuses, violenees, iniquities, and darkness still stands erect in this world, with its towers of hatred. It must be east down. This monstrous mass must be made to crumble. To conquer at Austerlitz is grand; to take the Bastille is immense.

There is no one who has not noticed it in his own ease—the soul,—and therein lies the marvel of its unity complicated with ubiquity, has a strange aptitude for reasoning almost coldly in the most violent extremities, and it often happens that heartbroken passion and profound despair in the very agony of their blackest monologues, treat subjects and discuss theses. Logic is mingled with convulsion, and the thread of the syllogism floats, without breaking, in the mournful storm of thought. This was the situation of Marius' mind.

As he meditated thus, dejected but resolute, hesitating in every direction, and, in short, shuddering at what he was about to do, his glance strayed to the interior of the barriade. The insurgents were here conversing in a low voice, without moving, and there was perceptible that quasi-silence which marks the last stage of expectation. Overhead, at the small window in the third story, Marius descried a sort of spectator who appeared to him to be singularly attentive. This was the porter who had been killed by Le Cabue. Below, by the lights of the toreh, which was thrust between the paving-stones, this head could be vaguely distinguished. Nothing could be stranger, in that sombre and uncertain gleam, than that livid, motionless, astonished face, with its bristling hair, its eyes fixed and staring, and its yawning mouth, bent over the street in an attitude of euriosity. One would have said that the man who was dead was surveying those who were about to die. A long trail of blood which had flowed from that head, descended in reddish threads from the window to the height of the first floor, where it stopped.

BOOK FOURTEENTH.—THE GRANDEURS OF
DESPAIR

CHAPTER I

THE FLAG: ACT FIRST

As yet, nothing had come. Ten o'clock had sounded from Saint-Merry. Enjolras and Combeferre had gone and seated themselves, carbines in hand, near the outlet of the grand barricade. They no longer addressed each other, they listened, seeking to catch even the faintest and most distant sound of marching.

Suddenly, in the midst of the dismal calm, a clear, gay, young voice, which seemed to come from the Rue Saint-Denis, rose and began to sing distinctly, to the old popular air of "By the Light of the Moon," this bit of poetry, terminated by a cry like the crow of a cock:—

Mon nez est en larmes,
Mon ami Bugeaud,
Prête moi tes gendarmes
Pour leur dire un mot.

En capote bleue,
La poule au shako,
Voici la banlieue!
Co-cocorico!¹

They pressed each other's hands.

"That is Gavroche," said Enjolras.

"He is warning us," said Combeferre.

¹My nose is in tears, my friend Bugead, lend me thy gendarmes that I may say a word to them. With a blue capote and a chicken in his shako, here's the banlieue, co-cocorico.

A hasty rush troubled the deserted street; they beheld a being more agile than a clown climb over the omnibus, and Gavroche bounded into the barricade, all breathless, saying:—

“My gun! Here they are!”

An electric quiver shot through the whole barricade, and the sound of hands seeking their guns became audible.

“Would you like my carbine?” said Enjolras to the lad.

“I want a big gun,” replied Gavroche.

And he seized Javert’s gun.

Two sentinels had fallen back, and had come in almost at the same moment as Gavroche. They were the sentinels from the end of the street, and the vidette of the Rue de la Petite-Truanderie. The vidette of the Lane des Prêcheurs had remained at his post, which indicated that nothing was approaching from the direction of the bridges and Halles.

The Rue de la Chanvrerie, of which a few paving-stones alone were dimly visible in the reflection of the light projected on the flag, offered to the insurgents the aspect of a vast black door vaguely opened into a smoke.

Each man had taken up his position for the conflict.

Forty-three insurgents, among whom were Enjolras, Comberre, Courfeyrac, Bossuet, Joly, Bahorel, and Gavroche, were kneeling inside the large barricade, with their heads on a level with the crest of the barrier, the barrels of their guns and carbines aimed on the stones as though at loop-holes, attentive, mute, ready to fire. Six, commanded by Feuilly, had installed themselves, with their guns levelled at their shoulders, at the windows of the two stories of Corinthe.

Several minutes passed thus, then a sound of footsteps, measured, heavy, and numerous, became distinctly audible in the direction of Saint-Leu. This sound, faint at first, then precise, then heavy and sonorous, approached slowly, without halt, without intermission, with a tranquil and terrible continuity. Nothing was to be heard but this. It was that combined silence and sound, of the statue of the commander, but this stony step had something indescribably enormous and

multiple about it which awakened the idea of a throng, and, at the same time, the idea of a spectre. One thought one heard the terrible statue Legion marching onward. This tread drew near; it drew still nearer, and stopped. It seemed as though the breathing of many men could be heard at the end of the street. Nothing was to be seen, however, but at the bottom of that dense obscurity there could be distinguished a multitude of metallic threads, as fine as needles and almost imperceptible, which moved about like those indescribable phosphoric networks which one sees beneath one's closed eyelids, in the first mists of slumber at the moment when one is dropping off to sleep. These were bayonets and gun-barrels confusedly illuminated by the distant reflection of the torch.

A pause ensued, as though both sides were waiting. All at once, from the depths of this darkness, a voice, which was all the more sinister, since no one was visible, and which appeared to be the gloom itself speaking, shouted:—

“Who goes there?”

At the same time, the click of guns, as they were lowered into position, was heard.

Enjolras replied in a haughty and vibrating tone:—

“The French Revolution!”

“Fire!” shouted the voice.

A flash empurpled all the façades in the street as though the door of a furnace had been flung open, and hastily closed again.

A fearful detonation burst forth on the barricade. The red flag fell. The discharge had been so violent and so dense that it had cut the staff, that is to say, the very tip of the omnibus pole.

Bullets which had rebounded from the cornices of the houses penetrated the barricade and wounded several men.

The impression produced by this first discharge was freezing. The attack had been rough, and of a nature to inspire reflection in the boldest. It was evident that they had to deal with an entire regiment at the very least.

“Comrades!” shouted Courfeyrac, “let us not waste our powder. Let us wait until they are in the street before replying.”

“And, above all,” said Enjolras, “let us raise the flag again.”

He picked up the flag, which had fallen precisely at his feet.

Outside, the elatter of the ramrods in the guns could be heard; the troops were re-loading their arms.

Enjolras went on:—

“Who is there here with a bold heart? Who will plant the flag on the barricade again?”

Not a man responded. To mount on the barricade at the very moment when, without any doubt, it was again the object of their aim, was simply death. The bravest hesitated to pronounce his own condemnation. Enjolras himself felt a thrill. He repeated:—

“Does no one volunteer?”

CHAPTER II

THE FLAG: ACT SECOND

SINCE they had arrived at Corinthe, and had begun the construction of the barricade, no attention had been paid to Father Mabeuf. M. Mabeuf had not quitted the mob, however; he had entered the ground-floor of the wine-shop and had seated himself behind the counter. There he had, so to speak, retreated into himself. He no longer seemed to look or to think. Courfeyrac and others had accosted him two or three times, warning him of his peril, beseeching him to withdraw, but he did not hear them. When they were not speaking to him, his mouth moved as though he were replying to some one, and as soon as he was addressed, his lips became motionless and his eyes no longer had the appearance of being alive.

Several hours before the barricade was attacked, he had assumed an attitude which he did not afterwards abandon, with both fists planted on his knees and his head thrust forward as though he were gazing over a precipice. Nothing had been able to move him from this attitude; it did not seem as though his mind were in the barricade. When each had gone to take up his position for the combat, there remained in the tap-room where Javert was bound to the post, only a single insurgent with a naked sword, watching over Javert, and himself, Mabeuf. At the moment of the attack, at the detonation, the physical shock had reached him and had, as it were, awakened him; he started up abruptly, crossed the room, and at the instant when Enjolras repeated his appeal: "Does no one volunteer?" the old man was seen to make his appearance on the threshold of the wine-shop. His presence produced a sort of commotion in the different groups. A shout went up:—

"It is the voter! It is the member of the Convention! It is the representative of the people!"

It is probable that he did not hear them.

He strode straight up to Enjolras, the insurgents withdrawing before him with a religious fear; he tore the flag from Enjolras, who recoiled in amazement, and then, since no one dared to stop or to assist him, this old man of eighty, with shaking head but firm foot, began slowly to ascend the staircase of paving-stones arranged in the barricade. This was so melancholy and so grand that all around him cried: "Off with your hats!" At every step that he mounted, it was a frightful spectacle; his white locks, his decrepit face, his lofty, bald, and wrinkled brow, his amazed and open mouth, his aged arm upholding the red banner, rose through the gloom and were enlarged in the bloody light of the torch, and the bystanders thought that they beheld the spectre of '93 emerging from the earth, with the flag of terror in his hand.

When he had reached the last step, when this trembling and terrible phantom, erect on that pile of rubbish in the presence of twelve hundred invisible guns, drew himself up in the face

of death and as though he were more powerful than it, the whole barricade assumed amid the darkness, a supernatural and colossal form.

There ensued one of those silences which occur only in the presence of prodigies. In the midst of this silence, the old man waved the red flag and shouted:—

“Long live the Revolution! Long live the Republic! Fraternity! Equality! and Death!”

Those in the barricade heard a low and rapid whisper, like the murmur of a priest who is despatching a prayer in haste. It was probably the commissary of police who was making the legal summons at the other end of the street.

Then the same piercing voice which had shouted: “Who goes there?” shouted:—

“Retire!”

M. Mabeuf, pale, haggard, his eyes lighted up with the mournful flame of aberration, raised the flag above his head and repeated:—

“Long live the Republic!”

“Fire!” said the voice.

A second discharge, similar to the first, rained down upon the barricade.

The old man fell on his knees, then rose again, dropped the flag and fell backwards on the pavement, like a log, at full length, with outstretched arms.

Rivulets of blood flowed beneath him. His aged head, pale and sad, seemed to be gazing at the sky.

One of those emotions which are superior to man, which make him forget even to defend himself, seized upon the insurgents, and they approached the body with respectful awe.

“What men these regicides were!” said Enjolras.

Courfeyrac bent down to Enjolras’ ear:—

“This is for yourself alone, I do not wish to dampen the enthusiasm. But this man was anything rather than a regicide. I knew him. His name was Father Mabeuf. I do not know what was the matter with him to-day. But he was a brave blockhead. Just look at his head.”

"The head of a blockhead and the heart of a Brutus," replied Enjolras.

Then he raised his voice:—

"Citizens! This is the example which the old give to the young. We hesitated, he came! We were drawing back, he advanced! This is what those who are trembling with age teach to those who tremble with fear! This aged man is august in the eyes of his country. He has had a long life and a magnificent death! Now, let us place the body under cover, that each one of us may defend this old man dead as he would his father living, and may his presence in our midst render the barricade impregnable!"

A murmur of gloomy and energetic assent followed these words.

Enjolras bent down, raised the old man's head, and fierce as he was, he kissed him on the brow, then, throwing wide his arms, and handling this dead man with tender precaution, as though he feared to hurt it, he removed his coat, showed the bloody holes in it to all, and said:—

"This is our flag now."

CHAPTER III

GAVROCHE WOULD HAVE DONE BETTER TO ACCEPT ENJOLRAS' CARBINE

THEY threw a long black shawl of Widow Hucheloup's over Father Mabeuf. Six men made a litter of their guns; on this they laid the body, and bore it, with bared heads, with solemn slowness, to the large table in the tap-room.

These men, wholly absorbed in the grave and sacred task in which they were engaged, thought no more of the perilous situation in which they stood.

When the corpse passed near Javert, who was still impassive, Enjolras said to the spy:—

"It will be your turn presently!"

During all this time, Little Gavroche, who alone had not quitted his post, but had remained on guard, thought he espied some men stealthily approaching the barricade. All at once he shouted:—

“Look out!”

Courfeyrac, Enjolras, Jean Prouvaire, Combeferre, Joly, Bahorel, Bossuet, and all the rest ran tumultuously from the wine-shop. It was almost too late. They saw a glistening density of bayonets undulating above the barricade. Municipal guards of lofty stature were making their way in, some striding over the omnibus, others through the cut, thrusting before them the urchin, who retreated, but did not flee.

The moment was critical. It was that first, redoubtable moment of inundation, when the stream rises to the level of the levee and when the water begins to filter through the fissures of dike. A second more and the barricade would have been taken.

Bahorel dashed upon the first municipal guard who was entering, and killed him on the spot with a blow from his gun; the second killed Bahorel with a blow from his bayonet. Another had already overthrown Courfeyrac, who was shouting: “Follow me!” The largest of all, a sort of colossus, marched on Gavroche with his bayonet fixed. The urchin took in his arms Javert’s immense gun, levelled it resolutely at the giant, and fired. No discharge followed. Javert’s gun was not loaded. The municipal guard burst into a laugh and raised his bayonet at the child.

Before the bayonet had touched Gavroche, the gun slipped from the soldier’s grasp, a bullet had struck the municipal guardsman in the centre of the forehead, and he fell over on his back. A second bullet struck the other guard, who had assaulted Courfeyrac in the breast, and laid him low on the pavement.

This was the work of Marius, who had just entered the barricade.

CHAPTER IV

THE BARREL OF POWDER

MARIUS, still concealed in the turn of the Rue Mondétour, had witnessed, shuddering and irresolute, the first phase of the combat. But he had not long been able to resist that mysterious and sovereign vertigo which may be designated as the call of the abyss. In the presence of the imminence of the peril, in the presence of the death of M. Mabeuf, that melancholy enigma, in the presence of Bahorel killed, and Courfeyrac shouting: "Follow me!" of that child threatened, of his friends to succor or to avenge, all hesitation had vanished, and he had flung himself into the conflict, his two pistols in hand. With his first shot he had saved Gavroche, and with the second delivered Courfeyrac.

Amid the sound of the shots, amid the cries of the assaulted guards, the assailants had climbed the entrenchment, on whose summit Municipal Guards, soldiers of the line and National Guards from the suburbs could now be seen, gun in hand, rearing themselves to more than half the height of their bodies.

They already covered more than two-thirds of the barrier, but they did not leap into the enclosure, as though wavering in the fear of some trap. They gazed into the dark barricade as one would gaze into a lion's den. The light of the torch illuminated only their bayonets, their bear-skin caps, and the upper part of their uneasy and angry faces.

Marius had no longer any weapons; he had flung away his discharged pistols after firing them; but he had caught sight of the barrel of powder in the tap-room, near the door.

As he turned half round, gazing in that direction, a soldier took aim at him. At the moment when the soldier was sighting Marius, a hand was laid on the muzzle of the gun and obstructed it. This was done by some one who had darted

forward,—the young workman in velvet trousers. The shot sped, traversed the hand and possibly, also, the workman, since he fell, but the ball did not strike Marius. All this, which was rather to be apprehended than seen through the smoke, Marius, who was entering the tap-room, hardly noticed. Still, he had, in a confused way, perceived that gun-barrel aimed at him, and the hand which had blocked it, and he had heard the discharge. But in moments like this, the things which one sees vacillate and are precipitated, and one pauses for nothing. One feels obscurely impelled towards more darkness still, and all is cloud.

The insurgents, surprised but not terrified, had rallied. Enjolras had shouted: "Wait! Don't fire at random!" In the first confusion, they might, in fact, wound each other. The majority of them had ascended to the window on the first story and to the attic windows, whence they commanded the assailants.

The most determined, with Enjolras, Courfeyrac, Jean Prouvaire, and Combeferre, had proudly placed themselves with their backs against the houses at the rear, unsheltered and facing the ranks of soldiers and guards who crowned the barricade.

All this was accomplished without haste, with that strange and threatening gravity which precedes engagements. They took aim, point blank, on both sides: they were so close that they could talk together without raising their voices.

When they had reached this point where the spark is on the brink of darting forth, an officer in a gorget extended his sword and said:—

"Lay down your arms!"

"Fire!" replied Enjolras.

The two discharges took place at the same moment, and all disappeared in smoke.

An acrid and stifling smoke in which dying and wounded lay with weak, dull groans. When the smoke cleared away, the combatants on both sides could be seen to be thinned out, but

still in the same positions, reloading in silence. All at once, a thundering voice was heard, shouting:—

“Be off with you, or I’ll blow up the barricade!”

All turned in the direction whence the voice proceeded.

Marius had entered the tap-room, and had seized the barrel of powder, then he had taken advantage of the smoke, and the sort of obscure mist which filled the entrenched enclosure, to glide along the barricade as far as that eage of paving-stones where the torch was fixed. To tear it from the torch, to replace it by the barrel of powder, to thrust the pile of stones under the barrel, which was instantly staved in, with a sort of horrible obedience,—all this had cost Marius but the time necessary to stoop and rise again; and now all, National Guards, Municipal Guards, officers, soldiers, huddled at the other extremity of the barricade, gazed stupidly at him, as he stood with his foot on the stones, his torch in his hand, his haughty face illuminated by a fatal resolution, drooping the flame of the torch towards that redoubtable pile where they could make out the broken barrel of powder, and giving vent to that startling cry:—

“Be off with you, or I’ll blow up the barricade!”

Marius on that barricade after the octogenarian was the vision of the young revolution after the apparition of the old.

“Blow up the barricade!” said a sergeant, “and yourself with it!”

Marius retorted: “And myself also.”

And he dropped the torch towards the barrel of powder.

But there was no longer any one on the barrier. The assailants, abandoning their dead and wounded, flowed back pell-mell and in disorder towards the extremity of the street, and there were again lost in the night. It was a headlong flight.

The barricade was free

CHAPTER V

END OF THE VERSES OF JEAN PROUVAIRE

ALL flocked around Marius. Courfeyrac flung himself on his neck.

“Here you are!”

“What luck!” said Combeferre.

“You came in opportunely!” ejaculated Bossuet.

“If it had not been for you, I should have been dead!” began Courfeyrac again.

“If it had not been for you, I should have been gobbled up!” added Gavroche.

Marius asked:—

“Where is the chief?”

“You are he!” said Enjolras.

Marius had had a furnace in his brain all day long; now it was a whirlwind. This whirlwind which was within him, produced on him the effect of being outside of him and of bearing him away. It seemed to him that he was already at an immense distance from life. His two luminous months of joy and love, ending abruptly at that frightful precipice, Cosette lost to him, that barricade, M. Mabeuf getting himself killed for the Republic, himself the leader of the insurgents,—all these things appeared to him like a tremendous nightmare. He was obliged to make a mental effort to recall the fact that all that surrounded him was real. Marius had already seen too much of life not to know that nothing is more imminent than the impossible, and that what it is always necessary to foresee is the unforeseen. He had looked on at his own drama as a piece which one does not understand.

In the mists which enveloped his thoughts, he did not recognize Javert, who, bound to his post, had not so much as moved his head during the whole of the attack on the barricade, and who had gazed on the revolt seething around him with the resignation of a martyr and the majesty of a judge. Marius had not even seen him.

In the meanwhile, the assailants did not stir, they could be heard marching and swarming through at the end of the street, but they did not venture into it, either because they were awaiting orders or because they were awaiting reinforcements before hurling themselves afresh on this impregnable redoubt. The insurgents had posted sentinels, and some of them, who were medical students, set about earing for the wounded.

They had thrown the tables out of the wine-shop, with the exception of the two tables reserved for lint and cartridges, and of the one on which lay Father Mabeuf; they had added them to the barricade, and had replaced them in the tap-room with mattresses from the bed of the widow Hueheloup and her servants. On these mattresses they had laid the wounded. As for the three poor creatures who inhabited Corinthe, no one knew what had become of them. They were finally found, however, hidden in the cellar.

A poignant emotion clouded the joy of the disencumbered barricade.

The roll was called. One of the insurgents was missing. And who was it? One of the dearest. One of the most valiant. Jean Prouvaire. He was sought among the wounded, he was not there. He was sought among the dead, he was not there. He was evidently a prisoner. Combeferre said to Enjolras:—

“They have our friend; we have their agent. Are you set on the death of that spy?”

“Yes,” replied Enjolras; “but less so than on the life of Jean Prouvaire.”

This took place in the tap-room near Javert’s post.

“Well,” resumed Combeferre, “I am going to fasten my handkerchief to my cane, and go as a flag of truce, to offer to exchange our man for theirs.”

“Listen,” said Enjolras, laying his hand on Combeferre’s arm.

At the end of the street there was a significant clash of arms.

They heard a manly voice shout:—

“Vive la France! Long live France! Long live the future!”

They recognized the voice of Prouvaire.

A flash passed, a report rang out.

Silence fell again.

“They have killed him,” exclaimed Combeferre.

Enjolras glanced at Javert, and said to him:—

“Your friends have just shot you.”

CHAPTER VI

THE AGONY OF DEATH AFTER THE AGONY OF LIFE

A PECULIARITY of this species of war is, that the attack of the barricades is almost always made from the front, and that the assailants generally abstain from turning the position, either because they fear ambushes, or because they are afraid of getting entangled in the tortuous streets. The insurgents' whole attention had been directed, therefore, to the grand barricade, which was, evidently, the spot always menaced, and there the struggle would infallibly recommence. But Marius thought of the little barricade, and went thither. It was deserted and guarded only by the fire-pot which trembled between the paving-stones. Moreover, the Mondétour alley, and the branches of the Rue de la Petite Truanderie and the Rue du Cygne were profoundly calm.

As Marius was withdrawing, after concluding his inspection, he heard his name pronounced feebly in the darkness.

“Monsieur Marius!”

He started, for he recognized the voice which had called to him two hours before through the gate in the Rue Plumet.

Only, the voice now seemed to be nothing more than a breath.

He looked about him, but saw no one.

Marius thought he had been mistaken, that it was an illu-

sion added by his mind to the extraordinary realities which were clashing around him. He advanced a step, in order to quit the distant recess where the barricade lay.

"Monsieur Marius!" repeated the voice.

This time he could not doubt that he had heard it distinctly; he looked and saw nothing.

"At your feet," said the voice.

He bent down, and saw in the darkness a form which was dragging itself towards him.

It was crawling along the pavement. It was this that had spoken to him.

The fire-pot allowed him to distinguish a blouse, torn trousers of coarse velvet, bare feet, and something which resembled a pool of blood. Marius indistinctly made out a pale head which was lifted towards him and which was saying to him:—

"You do not recognize me?"

"No."

"Éponine."

Marius bent hastily down. It was, in fact, that unhappy child. She was dressed in men's clothes.

"How come you here? What are you doing here?"

"I am dying," said she.

There are words and incidents which arouse dejected beings. Marius cried out with a start:—

"You are wounded! Wait, I will carry you into the room! They will attend to you there. Is it serious? How must I take hold of you in order not to hurt you? Where do you suffer? Help! My God! But why did you come hither?"

And he tried to pass his arm under her, in order to raise her. She uttered a feeble cry.

"Have I hurt you?" asked Marius.

"A little."

"But I only touched your hand."

She raised her hand to Marius, and in the middle of that hand Marius saw a black hole.

"What is the matter with your hand?" said he.

"It is pierced."

"Pierced?"

"Yes."

"What with?"

"A bullet."

"How?"

"Did you see a gun aimed at you?"

"Yes, and a hand stopping it."

"It was mine."

Marius was seized with a shudder.

"What madness! Poor child! But so much the better, if that is all, it is nothing, let me carry you to a bed. They will dress your wound; one does not die of a pierced hand."

She murmured:—

"The bullet traversed my hand, but it came out through my back. It is useless to remove me from this spot. I will tell you how you can care for me better than any surgeon. Sit down near me on this stone."

He obeyed; she laid her head on Marius' knees, and, without looking at him, she said:—

"Oh! How good this is! How comfortable this is! There; I no longer suffer."

She remained silent for a moment, then she turned her face with an effort, and looked at Marius.

"Do you know what, Monsieur Marius? It puzzled me because you entered that garden; it was stupid, because it was I who showed you that house; and then, I ought to have said to myself that a young man like you—"

She paused, and overstepping the sombre transitions that undoubtedly existed in her mind, she resumed with a heart-rending smile:—

"You thought me ugly, didn't you?"

She continued:—

"You see, you are lost! Now, no one can get out of the barriade. It was I who led you here, by the way! You are going to die. I count upon that. And yet, when I saw them taking aim at you, I put my hand on the muzzle of the gun.



"I AM DYING. SAID SHE

How queer it is! But it was because I wanted to die before you. When I received that bullet, I dragged myself here, no one saw me, no one picked me up, I was waiting for you, I said: 'So he is not coming!' Oh, if you only knew. I bit my blouse, I suffered so! Now I am well. Do you remember the day I entered your chamber and when I looked at myself in your mirror, and the day when I came to you on the boulevard near the washerwomen? How the birds sang! That was a long time ago. You gave me a hundred sous, and I said to you: 'I don't want your money.' I hope you picked up your coin? You are not rich. I did not think to tell you to pick it up. The sun was shining bright, and it was not cold. Do you remember, Monsieur Marius? Oh! How happy I am! Every one is going to die."

She had a mad, grave, and heart-breaking air. Her torn blouse disclosed her bare throat.

As she talked, she pressed her pierced hand to her breast, where there was another hole, and whence there spurted from moment to moment a stream of blood, like a jet of wine from an open bung-hole.

Marius gazed at this unfortunate creature with profound compassion.

"Oh!" she resumed. "it is coming again, I am stifling!"

She caught up her blouse and bit it, and her limbs stiffened on the pavement.

At that moment the young cock's crow executed by little Gavroche resounded through the barricade.

The child had mounted a table to load his gun, and was singing gayly the song then so popular:—

"En voyant Lafayette,
Le gendarme répète:—
Sauvons nous! sauvons nous!
sauvons nous!"

"On beholding Lafayette,
The gendarme repeats:—
Let us flee! let us flee!
let us flee!"

Éponine raised herself and listened; then she murmured:—
"It is he."

And turning to Marius:—

"My brother is here. He must not see me. He would scold me."

"Your brother?" inquired Marius, who was meditating in the most bitter and sorrowful depths of his heart on the duties to the Thénardiens which his father had bequeathed to him; "who is your brother?"

"That little fellow."

"The one who is singing?"

"Yes."

Marius made a movement.

"Oh! don't go away," said she, "it will not be long now."

She was sitting almost upright, but her voice was very low and broken by hiccoughs.

At intervals, the death rattle interrupted her. She put her face as near that of Marius as possible. She added with a strange expression:—

"Listen, I do not wish to play you a trick. I have a letter in my pocket for you. I was told to put it in the post. I kept it. I did not want to have it reach you. But perhaps you will be angry with me for it when we meet again presently? Take your letter."

She grasped Marius' hand convulsively with her pierced hand, but she no longer seemed to feel her sufferings. She put Marius' hand in the pocket of her blouse. There, in fact, Marius felt a paper.

"Take it," said she.

Marius took the letter.

She made a sign of satisfaction and contentment.

"Now, for my trouble, promise me—"

And she stopped.

"What?" asked Marius.

"Promise me!"

"I promise."

"Promise to give me a kiss on my brow when I am dead.—I shall feel it."

She dropped her head again on Marius' knees, and her eyelids closed. He thought the poor soul had departed. Éponine

remained motionless. All at once, at the very moment when Marius fancied her asleep forever, she slowly opened her eyes in which appeared the sombre profundity of death, and said to him in a tone whose sweetness seemed already to proceed from another world:—

“And by the way, Monsieur Marius, I believe that I was a little bit in love with you.”

She tried to smile once more and expired.

CHAPTER VII

GAVROCHE AS A PROFOUND CALCULATOR OF DISTANCES

MARIUS kept his promise. He dropped a kiss on that livid brow, where the icy perspiration stood in beads.

This was no infidelity to Cosette; it was a gentle and pensive farewell to an unhappy soul.

It was not without a tremor that he had taken the letter which Éponine had given him. He had immediately felt that it was an event of weight. He was impatient to read it. The heart of man is so constituted that the unhappy child had hardly closed her eyes when Marius began to think of unfolding this paper.

He laid her gently on the ground, and went away. Something told him that he could not peruse that letter in the presence of that body.

He drew near to a candle in the tap-room. It was a small note, folded and sealed with a woman's elegant care. The address was in a woman's hand and ran:—

“To Monsieur, Monsieur Marius Pontmercy, at M. Courfeyrac's, Rue de la Verrerie. No. 16.”

He broke the seal and read:—

“My dearest, alas! my father insists on our setting out immediately. We shall be this evening in the Rue de l'Homme Armé, No. 7. In a week we shall be in England. COSETTE. June 4th.”

Such was the innocence of their love that Marius was not even acquainted with Cosette's handwriting.

What had taken place may be related in a few words. Éponine had been the cause of everything. After the evening of the 3d of June she had cherished a double idea, to defeat the projects of her father and the ruffians on the house of the Rue Plumet, and to separate Marius and Cosette. She had exchanged rags with the first young scamp she came across who had thought it amusing to dress like a woman, while Éponine disguised herself like a man. It was she who had conveyed to Jean Valjean in the Champ de Mars the expressive warning: "Leave your house." Jean Valjean had, in fact, returned home, and had said to Cosette: "We set out this evening and we go to the Rue de l'Homme Armé with Toussaint. Next week, we shall be in London." Cosette, utterly overwhelmed by this unexpected blow, had hastily penned a couple of lines to Marius. But how was she to get the letter to the post? She never went out alone, and Toussaint, surprised at such a commission, would certainly show the letter to M. Fauchelevent. In this dilemma, Cosette had caught sight through the fence of Éponine in man's clothes, who now prowled incessantly around the garden. Cosette had called to "this young workman" and had handed him five francs and the letter, saying: "Carry this letter immediately to its address." Éponine had put the letter in her pocket. The next day, on the 5th of June, she went to Courfeyrac's quarters to inquire for Marius, not for the purpose of delivering the letter, but,—a thing which every jealous and loving soul will comprehend,—"to see." There she had waited for Marius, or at least for Courfeyrac, still for the purpose of *seeing*. When Courfeyrac had told her: "We are going to the barricades." an idea flashed through her mind, to fling herself into that death, as she would have done into any other, and to thrust Marius into it also. She had followed Courfeyrac, had made sure of the locality where the barricade was in process of construction; and, quite certain, since Marius had received no warning, and since she had intercepted the letter, that he

would go at dusk to his trysting place for every evening, she had betaken herself to the Rue Plumet, had there awaited Marius, and had sent him, in the name of his friends, the appeal which would, she thought, lead him to the barricade. She reckoned on Marius' despair when he should fail to find Cosette; she was not mistaken. She had returned to the Rue de la Chanvrerie herself. What she did there the reader has just seen. She died with the tragic joy of jealous hearts who drag the beloved being into their own death, and who say: "No one shall have him!"

Marius covered Cosette's letter with kisses. So she loved him! For one moment the idea occurred to him that he ought not to die now. Then he said to himself: "She is going away. Her father is taking her to England, and my grandfather refuses his consent to the marriage. Nothing is changed in our fates." Dreamers like Marius are subject to supreme attacks of dejection, and desperate resolves are the result. The fatigue of living is insupportable; death is sooner over with. Then he reflected that he had still two duties to fulfil: to inform Cosette of his death and send her a final farewell, and to save from the impending catastrophe which was in preparation, that poor child, Éponine's brother and Thénardier's son.

He had a pocket-book about him; the same one which had contained the note-book in which he had inscribed so many thoughts of love for Cosette. He tore out a leaf and wrote on it a few lines in pencil:—

"Our marriage was impossible. I asked my grandfather, he refused; I have no fortune, neither hast thou. I hastened to thee, thou wert no longer there. Thou knowest the promise that I gave thee, I shall keep it. I die. I love thee. When thou readest this, my soul will be near thee, and thou wilt smile."

Having nothing wherewith to seal this letter, he contented himself with folding the paper in four, and added the address:—

“To Mademoiselle Cosette Fauehelevent, at M. Fauehelevent’s, Rue de l’Homme Armé, No. 7.”

Having folded the letter, he stood in thought for a moment, drew out his pocket-book again, opened it, and wrote, with the same pencil, these four lines on the first page:—

“My name is Marius Pontmercy. Carry my body to my grandfather, M. Gillenormand, Rue des Filles-du-Calvaire, No. 6, in the Marais.”

He put his pocket-book back in his pocket, then he called Gavroche.

The gamin, at the sound of Marius’ voice, ran up to him with his merry and devoted air.

“Will you do something for me?”

“Anything,” said Gavroche. “Good God! if it had not been for you, I should have been done for.”

“Do you see this letter?”

“Yes.”

“Take it. Leave the barricade instantly” (Gavroche began to scratch his ear uneasily) “and to-morrow morning, you will deliver it at its address to Mademoiselle Cosette, at M. Fauehelevent’s, Rue de l’Homme Armé, No. 7.”

The heroic child replied:—

“Well, but! in the meanwhile the barricade will be taken, and I shall not be there.”

“The barricade will not be attacked until daybreak, according to all appearances, and will not be taken before to-morrow noon.”

The fresh respite which the assailants were granting to the barricade had, in fact, been prolonged. It was one of those intermissions which frequently occur in nocturnal combats, which are always followed by an increase of rage.

“Well,” said Gavroche, “what if I were to go and carry your letter to-morrow?”

“It will be too late. The barricade will probably be blockaded, all the streets will be guarded, and you will not be able to get out. Go at once.”

Gavroche could think of no reply to this, and stood there in indecision, scratching his ear sadly.

All at once, he took the letter with one of those birdlike movements which were common with him.

“All right,” said he.

And he started off at a run through Mondétour lane.

An idea had occurred to Gavroche which had brought him to a decision, but he had not mentioned it for fear that Marius might offer some objection to it.

This was the idea:—

“It is barely midnight, the Rue de l’Homme Armé is not far off; I will go and deliver the letter at once, and I shall get back in time.”

BOOK FIFTEENTH.—THE RUE DE L'HOMME ARMÉ

CHAPTER I

A DRINKER IS A BABBLER

WHAT are the convulsions of a city in comparison with the insurrections of the soul? Man is a depth still greater than the people. Jean Valjean at that very moment was the prey of a terrible upheaval. Every sort of gulf had opened again within him. He also was trembling, like Paris, on the brink of an obscure and formidable revolution. A few hours had sufficed to bring this about. His destiny and his conscience had suddenly been covered with gloom. Of him also, as well as of Paris, it might have been said: "Two principles are face to face. The white angel and the black angel are about to seize each other on the bridge of the abyss. Which of the two will hurl the other over? Who will carry the day?"

On the evening preceding this same 5th of June, Jean Valjean, accompanied by Cosette and Toussaint had installed himself in the Rue de l'Homme Armé. A change awaited him there.

Cosette had not quitted the Rue Plumet without making an effort at resistance. For the first time since they had lived side by side, Cosette's will and the will of Jean Valjean had proved to be distinct, and had been in opposition, at least, if they had not clashed. There had been objections on one side and inflexibility on the other. The abrupt advice: "Leave your house," hurled at Jean Valjean by a stranger, had alarmed him to the extent of rendering him peremptory. He thought that he had been traced and followed. Cosette had been obliged to give way.

Both had arrived in the Rue de l'Homme Armé without opening their lips, and without uttering a word, each being absorbed in his own personal preoccupation; Jean Valjean so uneasy that he did not notice Cosette's sadness, Cosette so sad that she did not notice Jean Valjean's uneasiness.

Jean Valjean had taken Toussaint with him, a thing which he had never done in his previous absences. He perceived the possibility of not returning to the Rue Plumet, and he could neither leave Toussaint behind nor confide his secret to her. Besides, he felt that she was devoted and trustworthy. Treachery between master and servant begins in curiosity. Now Toussaint, as though she had been destined to be Jean Valjean's servant, was not curious. She stammered in her peasant dialect of Barneville: "I am made so; I do my work; the rest is no affair of mine."

In this departure from the Rue Plumet, which had been almost a flight, Jean Valjean had carried away nothing but the little embalmed valise, baptized by Cosette "the inseparable." Full trunks would have required porters, and porters are witnesses. A *fiacre* had been summoned to the door on the Rue de Babylone, and they had taken their departure.

It was with difficulty that Toussaint had obtained permission to pack up a little linen and clothes and a few toilet articles. Cosette had taken only her portfolio and her blotting-book.

Jean Valjean, with a view to augmenting the solitude and the mystery of this departure, had arranged to quit the pavilion of the Rue Plumet only at dusk, which had allowed Cosette time to write her note to Marius. They had arrived in the Rue de l'Homme Armé after night had fully fallen.

They had gone to bed in silence.

The lodgings in the Rue de l'Homme Armé were situated on a back court, on the second floor, and were composed of two sleeping-rooms, a dining-room and a kitchen adjoining the dining-room, with a garret where there was a folding-bed, and which fell to Toussaint's share. The dining-room was an

antechamber as well, and separated the two bedrooms. The apartment was provided with all necessary utensils.

People re-acquire confidence as foolishly as they lose it; human nature is so constituted. Hardly had Jean Valjean reached the Rue de l'Homme Armé when his anxiety was lightened and by degrees dissipated. There are soothing spots which act in some sort mechanically on the mind. An obscure street, peaceable inhabitants. Jean Valjean experienced an indescribable contagion of tranquillity in that alley of ancient Paris, which is so narrow that it is barred against carriages by a transverse beam placed on two posts, which is deaf and dumb in the midst of the clamorous city, dimly lighted at mid-day, and is, so to speak, incapable of emotions between two rows of lofty houses centuries old, which hold their peace like ancients as they are. There was a touch of stagnant oblivion in that street. Jean Valjean drew his breath once more there. How could he be found there?

His first care was to place *the inseparable* beside him.

He slept well. Night brings wisdom; we may add, night soothes. On the following morning he awoke in a mood that was almost gay. He thought the dining-room charming, though it was hideous, furnished with an old round table, a long sideboard surmounted by a slanting mirror, a dilapidated arm-chair, and several plain chairs which were encumbered with Toussaint's packages. In one of these packages Jean Valjean's uniform of a National Guard was visible through a rent.

As for Cosette, she had had Toussaint take some broth to her room, and did not make her appearance until evening.

About five o'clock, Toussaint, who was going and coming and busying herself with the tiny establishment, set on the table a cold chicken, which Cosette, out of deference to her father, consented to glance at.

That done, Cosette, under the pretext of an obstinate sick headache, had bade Jean Valjean good night and had shut herself up in her chamber. Jean Valjean had eaten a wing of the chicken with a good appetite, and with his elbows on

the table, having gradually recovered his serenity, had regained possession of his sense of security.

While he was discussing this modest dinner, he had, twice or thrice, noticed in a confused way, Toussaint's stammering words as she said to him: "Monsieur, there is something going on. they are fighting in Paris." But absorbed in a throng of inward calculations, he had paid no heed to it. To tell the truth, he had not heard her. He rose and began to pace from the door to the window and from the window to the door, growing ever more serene.

With this calm, Cosette, his sole anxiety, recurred to his thoughts. Not that he was troubled by this headache, a little nervous crisis, a young girl's fit of sulks, the cloud of a moment, there would be nothing left of it in a day or two; but he meditated on the future, and, as was his habit, he thought of it with pleasure. After all, he saw no obstacle to their happy life resuming its course. At certain hours, everything seems impossible, at others everything appears easy; Jean Valjean was in the midst of one of these good hours. They generally succeed the bad ones, as day follows night, by virtue of that law of succession and of contrast which lies at the very foundation of nature, and which superficial minds call antithesis. In this peaceful street where he had taken refuge, Jean Valjean got rid of all that had been troubling him for some time past. This very fact, that he had seen many shadows, made him begin to perceive a little azure. To have quitted the Rue Plumet without complications or incidents was one good step already accomplished. Perhaps it would be wise to go abroad, if only for a few months, and to set out for London. Well, they would go. What difference did it make to him whether he was in France or in England, provided he had Cosette beside him? Cosette was his nation. Cosette sufficed for his happiness; the idea that he, perhaps, did not suffice for Cosette's happiness, that idea which had formerly been the cause of his fever and sleeplessness, did not even present itself to his mind. He was in a state of collapse from all his past sufferings, and he was fully

entered on optimism. Cosette was by his side, she seemed to be his; an optical illusion which every one has experienced. He arranged in his own mind, with all sorts of felicitous devices, his departure for England with Cosette, and he beheld his felicity reconstituted wherever he pleased, in the perspective of his reverie.

As he paced to and fro with long strides, his glance suddenly encountered something strange.

In the inclined mirror facing him which surmounted the sideboard, he saw the four lines which follow:—

“My dearest, alas! my father insists on our setting out immediately. We shall be this evening in the Rue de l’Homme Armé, No. 7. In a week we shall be in England. COSETTE. June 4th.”

Jean Valjean halted, perfectly haggard.

Cosette on her arrival had placed her blotting-book on the sideboard in front of the mirror, and, utterly absorbed in her agony of grief, had forgotten it and left it there, without even observing that she had left it wide open, and open at precisely the page on which she had laid to dry the four lines which she had penned, and which she had given in charge of the young workman in the Rue Plumet. The writing had been printed off on the blotter.

The mirror reflected the writing.

The result was, what is called in geometry, *the symmetrical image*; so that the writing, reversed on the blotter, was righted in the mirror and presented its natural appearance; and Jean Valjean had beneath his eyes the letter written by Cosette to Marius on the preceding evening.

It was simple and withering.

Jean Valjean stepped up to the mirror. He read the four lines again, but he did not believe them. They produced on him the effect of appearing in a flash of lightning. It was a hallucination, it was impossible. It was not so.

Little by little, his perceptions became more precise; he looked at Cosette’s blotting-book, and the consciousness of the reality returned to him. He caught up the blotter and

said: "It comes from there." He feverishly examined the four lines imprinted on the blotter, the reversal of the letters converted into an odd scrawl, and he saw no sense in it. Then he said to himself: "But this signifies nothing; there is nothing written here." And he drew a long breath with inexpressible relief. Who has not experienced those foolish joys in horrible instants? The soul does not surrender to despair until it has exhausted all illusions.

He held the blotter in his hand and contemplated it in stupid delight, almost ready to laugh at the hallucination of which he had been the dupe. All at once his eyes fell upon the mirror again, and again he beheld the vision. There were the four lines outlined with inexorable clearness. This time it was no mirage. The recurrence of a vision is a reality; it was palpable, it was the writing restored in the mirror. He understood.

Jean Valjean tottered, dropped the blotter, and fell into the old arm-chair beside the buffet, with drooping head, and glassy eyes, in utter bewilderment. He told himself that it was plain, that the light of the world had been eclipsed forever, and that Cosette had written that to some one. Then he heard his soul, which had become terrible once more, give vent to a dull roar in the gloom. Try then the effect of taking from the lion the dog which he has in his cage!

Strange and sad to say, at that very moment, Marius had not yet received Cosette's letter; chance had treacherously carried it to Jean Valjean before delivering it to Marius. Up to that day, Jean Valjean had not been vanquished by trial. He had been subjected to fearful proofs; no violence of bad fortune had been spared him; the ferocity of fate, armed with all vindictiveness and all social scorn, had taken him for her prey and had raged against him. He had accepted every extremity when it had been necessary; he had sacrificed his inviolability as a reformed man, had yielded up his liberty, risked his head, lost everything, suffered everything, and he had remained disinterested and stoical to such a point that he might have been thought to be absent from

himself like a martyr. His conscience inured to every assault of destiny, might have appeared to be forever impregnable. Well, any one who had beheld his spiritual self would have been obliged to concede that it weakened at that moment. It was because, of all the tortures which he had undergone in the course of this long inquisition to which destiny had doomed him, this was the most terrible. Never had such pincers seized him hitherto. He felt the mysterious stirring of all his latent sensibilities. He felt the plucking at the strange chord. Alas! the supreme trial, let us say rather, the only trial, is the loss of the beloved being.

Poor old Jean Valjean certainly did not love Cosette otherwise than as a father; but we have already remarked, above, that into this paternity the widowhood of his life had introduced all the shades of love; he loved Cosette as his daughter, and he loved her as his mother, and he loved her as his sister; and, as he had never had either a woman to love or a wife, as nature is a creditor who accepts no protest, that sentiment also, the most impossible to lose, was mingled with the rest, vague, ignorant, pure with the purity of blindness, unconscious, celestial, angelic, divine; less like a sentiment than like an instinct, less like an instinct than like an imperceptible and invisible but real attraction; and love, properly speaking, was, in his immense tenderness for Cosette, like the thread of gold in the mountain, concealed and virgin.

Let the reader recall the situation of heart which we have already indicated. No marriage was possible between them; not even that of souls; and yet, it is certain that their destinies were wedded. With the exception of Cosette, that is to say, with the exception of a childhood, Jean Valjean had never, in the whole of his long life, known anything of that which may be loved. The passions and loves which succeed each other had not produced in him those successive green growths, tender green or dark green, which can be seen in foliage which passes through the winter and in men who pass fifty. In short, and we have insisted on it more than once, all this interior fusion, all this whole, of which the sum total

was a lofty virtue, ended in rendering Jean Valjean a father to Cosette. A strange father, forged from the grandfather, the son, the brother, and the husband, that existed in Jean Valjean; a father in whom there was included even a mother; a father who loved Cosette and adored her, and who held that child as his light, his home, his family, his country, his paradise.

Thus when he saw that the end had absolutely come, that she was escaping from him, that she was slipping from his hands, that she was gliding from him, like a cloud, like water, when he had before his eyes this crushing proof: "another is the goal of her heart, another is the wish of her life; there is a dearest one, I am no longer anything but her father, I no longer exist"; when he could no longer doubt, when he said to himself: "She is going away from me!" the grief which he felt surpassed the bounds of possibility. To have done all that he had done for the purpose of ending like this! And the very idea of being nothing! Then, as we have just said, a quiver of revolt ran through him from head to foot. He felt, even in the very roots of his hair, the immense re-awakening of egotism, and the *I* in this man's abyss howled.

There is such a thing as the sudden giving way of the inward subsoil. A despairing certainty does not make its way into a man without thrusting aside and breaking certain profound elements which, in some cases, are the very man himself. Grief, when it attains this shape, is a headlong flight of all the forces of the conscience. These are fatal crises. Few among us emerge from them still like ourselves and firm in duty. When the limit of endurance is overstepped, the most imperturbable virtue is disconcerted. Jean Valjean took the blotter again, and convinced himself afresh; he remained bowed and as though petrified and with staring eyes, over those four unobjectionable lines; and there arose within him such a cloud that one might have thought that everything in this soul was crumbling away.

He examined this revelation, athwart the exaggerations of revery, with an apparent and terrifying calmness, for it is a

fearful thing when a man's calmness reaches the coldness of the statue.

He measured the terrible step which his destiny had taken without his having a suspicion of the fact; he recalled his fears of the preceding summer, so foolishly dissipated; he recognized the precipice, it was still the same; only, Jean Valjean was no longer on the brink, he was at the bottom of it.

The unprecedented and heart-rending thing about it was that he had fallen without perceiving it. All the light of his life had departed, while he still fancied that he beheld the sun.

His instinct did not hesitate. He put together certain circumstances, certain dates, certain blushes and certain pallors on Cosette's part, and he said to himself: "It is he."

The divination of despair is a sort of mysterious bow which never misses its aim. He struck Marius with his first conjecture. He did not know the name, but he found the man instantly. He distinctly perceived, in the background of the implacable conjuration of his memories, the unknown prowler of the Luxembourg, that wretched seeker of love adventures, that idler of romance, that idiot, that coward, for it is cowardly to come and make eyes at young girls who have beside them a father who loves them.

After he had thoroughly verified the fact that this young man was at the bottom of this situation, and that everything proceeded from that quarter, he, Jean Valjean, the regenerated man, the man who had so labored over his soul, the man who had made so many efforts to resolve all life, all misery, and all unhappiness into love, looked into his own breast and there beheld a spectre, Hate.

Great griefs contain something of dejection. They discourage one with existence. The man into whom they enter feels something within him withdraw from him. In his youth, their visits are lugubrious; later on they are sinister. Alas, if despair is a fearful thing when the blood is hot, when the hair is black, when the head is erect on the body like the

flame on the torch, when the roll of destiny still retains its full thickness, when the heart, full of desirable love, still possesses beats which can be returned to it, when one has time for redress, when all women and all smiles and all the future and all the horizon are before one, when the force of life is complete, what is it in old age, when the years hasten on, growing ever paler, to that twilight hour when one begins to behold the stars of the tomb?

While he was meditating, Toussaint entered. Jean Valjean rose and asked her:—

“In what quarter is it? Do you know?”

Toussaint was struck dumb, and could only answer him:—

“What is it, sir?”

Jean Valjean began again: “Did you not tell me that just now that there is fighting going on?”

“Ah! yes, sir,” replied Toussaint. “It is in the direction of Saint-Merry.”

There is a mechanical movement which comes to us, unconsciously, from the most profound depths of our thought. It was, no doubt, under the impulse of a movement of this sort, and of which he was hardly conscious, that Jean Valjean, five minutes later, found himself in the street.

Bareheaded, he sat upon the stone post at the door of his house. He seemed to be listening.

Night had come.

CHAPTER II

THE STREET URCHIN AN ENEMY OF LIGHT

How long did he remain thus? What was the ebb and flow of this tragic meditation? Did he straighten up? Did he remain bowed? Had he been bent to breaking? Could he still rise and regain his footing in his conscience upon something solid? He probably would not have been able to tell himself.

The street was deserted. A few uneasy bourgeois, who were rapidly returning home, hardly saw him. Each one for himself in times of peril. The lamp-lighter came as usual to light the lantern which was situated precisely opposite the door of No. 7, and then went away. Jean Valjean would not have appeared like a living man to any one who had examined him in that shadow. He sat there on the post of his door, motionless as a form of ice. There is congealment in despair. The alarm bells and a vague and stormy uproar were audible. In the midst of all these convulsions of the bell mingled with the revolt, the clock of Saint-Paul struck eleven, gravely and without haste; for the tocsin is man; the hour is God. The passage of the hour produced no effect on Jean Valjean; Jean Valjean did not stir. Still, at about that moment, a brusque report burst forth in the direction of the Halles, a second yet more violent followed; it was probably that attack on the barricade in the Rue de la Chanvrevie which we have just seen repulsed by Marius. At this double discharge, whose fury seemed augmented by the stupor of the night, Jean Valjean started; he rose, turning towards the quarter whence the noise proceeded; then he fell back upon the post again, folded his arms, and his head slowly sank on his bosom again.

He resumed his gloomy dialogue with himself.

All at once, he raised his eyes; some one was walking in the street, he heard steps near him. He looked, and by the light of the lanterns, in the direction of the street which ran into the Rue-aux-Archives, he perceived a young, livid, and beaming face.

Gavroche had just arrived in the Rue l'Homme Armé.

Gavroche was staring into the air, apparently in search of something. He saw Jean Valjean perfectly well but he took no notice of him.

Gavroche after staring into the air, stared below; he raised himself on tiptoe, and felt of the doors and windows of the ground floor; they were all shut, bolted, and padlocked. After having authenticated the fronts of five or six barricaded houses

in this manner, the urchin shrugged his shoulders, and took himself to task in these terms:—

“Pardi!”

Then he began to stare into the air again.

Jean Valjean, who, an instant previously, in his then state of mind, would not have spoken to or even answered any one, felt irresistibly impelled to accost that child.

“What is the matter with you, my little fellow?” he said.

“The matter with me is that I am hungry,” replied Gavroche frankly. And he added: “Little fellow yourself.”

Jean Valjean fumbled in his fob and pulled out a five-franc piece.

But Gavroche, who was of the wagtail species, and who skipped vivaciously from one gesture to another, had just picked up a stone. He had caught sight of the lantern.

“See here,” said he, “you still have your lanterns here. You are disobeying the regulations, my friend. This is disorderly. Smash that for me.”

And he flung the stone at the lantern, whose broken glass fell with such a clatter that the bourgeois in hiding behind their curtains in the opposite house cried: “There is ‘Ninety-three’ come again.”

The lantern oscillated violently, and went out. The street had suddenly become black.

“That’s right, old street,” ejaculated Gavroche, “put on your night-cap.”

And turning to Jean Valjean:—

“What do you call that gigantic monument that you have there at the end of the street? It’s the Archives, isn’t it? I must crumble up those big stupids of pillars a bit and make a nice barriade out of them.”

Jean Valjean stepped up to Gavroche.

“Poor creature,” he said in a low tone, and speaking to himself, “he is hungry.”

And he laid the hundred-sou piece in his hand.

Gavroche raised his face, astonished at the size of this sou; he stared at it in the darkness, and the whiteness of the big

sou dazzled him. He knew five-franc pieces by hearsay; their reputation was agreeable to him; he was delighted to see one close to. He said:—

“Let us contemplate the tiger.”

He gazed at it for several minutes in ecstasy; then, turning to Jean Valjean, he held out the coin to him, and said majestically to him:—

“Bourgeois, I prefer to smash lanterns. Take back your ferocious beast. You can’t bribe me. That has got five claws; but it doesn’t scratch me.”

“Have you a mother?” asked Jean Valjean.

Gavroche replied:—

“More than you have, perhaps.”

“Well,” returned Jean Valjean, “keep the money for your mother!”

Gavroche was touched. Moreover, he had just noticed that the man who was addressing him had no hat, and this inspired him with confidence.

“Truly,” said he, “so it wasn’t to keep me from breaking the lanterns?”

“Break whatever you please.”

“You’re a fine man,” said Gavroche.

And he put the five-franc piece into one of his pockets.

His confidence having increased, he added:—

“Do you belong in this street?”

“Yes, why?”

“Can you tell me where No. 7 is?”

“What do you want with No. 7?”

Here the child paused, he feared that he had said too much; he thrust his nails energetically into his hair and contented himself with replying:—

“Ah! Here it is.”

An idea flashed through Jean Valjean’s mind. Anguish does have these gleams. He said to the lad:—

“Are you the person who is bringing a letter that I am expecting?”

“You?” said Gavroche. “You are not a woman.”

"The letter is for Mademoiselle Cosette, is it not?"

"Cosette," muttered Gavroche. "Yes, I believe that is the queer name."

"Well," resumed Jean Valjean, "I am the person to whom you are to deliver the letter. Give it here."

"In that case, you must know that I was sent from the barricade."

"Of course," said Jean Valjean.

Gavroche engulfed his hand in another of his pockets and drew out a paper folded in four.

Then he made the military salute.

"Respect for despatches," said he. "It comes from the Provisional Government."

"Give it to me," said Jean Valjean.

Gavroche held the paper elevated above his head.

"Don't go and fancy it's a love letter. It is for a woman, but it's for the people. We men fight and we respect the fair sex. We are not as they are in fine society, where there are lions who send chickens¹ to camels."

"Give it to me."

"After all," continued Gavroche, "you have the air of an honest man."

"Give it to me quick."

"Catch hold of it."

And he handed the paper to Jean Valjean.

"And make haste, Monsier What's-your-name, for Mamselle Cosette is waiting."

Gavroche was satisfied with himself for having produced this remark.

Jean Valjean began again:—

"Is it to Saint-Merry that the answer is to be sent?"

"There you are making some of those bits of pastry vulgarly called *brioche*s [blunders]. This letter comes from the barricade of the Rue de la Chanvrerie, and I'm going back there. Good evening, citizen."

That said, Gavroche took himself off, or, to describe it

¹Love letters.

more exactly, fluttered away in the direction whence he had come with a flight like that of an escaped bird. He plunged back into the gloom as though he made a hole in it, with the rigid rapidity of a projectile; the alley of l'Homme Armé became silent and solitary once more; in a twinkling, that strange child, who had about him something of the shadow and of the dream, had buried himself in the mists of the rows of black houses, and was lost there, like smoke in the dark; and one might have thought that he had dissipated and vanished, had there not taken place, a few minutes after his disappearance, a startling shiver of glass, and had not the magnificent crash of a lantern rattling down on the pavement once more abruptly awakened the indignant bourgeois. It was Gavroche upon his way through the Rue du Chaume.

CHAPTER III

WHILE COSETTE AND TOUSSAINT ARE ASLEEP

JEAN VALJEAN went into the house with Marius' letter.

He groped his way up the stairs, as pleased with the darkness as an owl who grips his prey, opened and shut his door softly, listened to see whether he could hear any noise,—made sure that, to all appearances, Cosette and Toussaint were asleep; and plunged three or four matches into the bottle of the Fumade lighter before he could evoke a spark, so greatly did his hand tremble. What he had just done smacked of theft. At last the candle was lighted; he leaned his elbows on the table, unfolded the paper, and read.

In violent emotions, one does not read, one flings to the earth, so to speak, the paper which one holds, one clutches it like a victim, one crushes it, one digs into it the nails of one's wrath, or of one's joy; one hastens to the end, one leaps to the beginning; attention is at fever heat; it takes up in the gross, as it were, the essential points; it seizes on one

point, and the rest disappears. In Marius' note to Cosette, Jean Valjean saw only these words:—

“I die. When thou readest this, my soul will be near thee.”

In the presence of these two lines, he was horribly dazzled; he remained for a moment, crushed, as it were, by the change of emotion which was taking place within him, he stared at Marius' note with a sort of intoxicated amazement, he had before his eyes that splendor, the death of a hated individual.

He uttered a frightful cry of inward joy. So it was all over. The catastrophe had arrived sooner than he had dared to hope. The being who obstructed his destiny was disappearing. That man had taken himself off of his own accord, freely, willingly. This man was going to his death, and he, Jean Valjean, had had no hand in the matter, and it was through no fault of his. Perhaps, even, he is already dead. Here his fever entered into calculations. No, he is not dead yet. The letter had evidently been intended for Cosette to read on the following morning; after the two discharges that were heard between eleven o'clock and midnight, nothing more has taken place; the barricade will not be attacked seriously until daybreak; but that makes no difference, from the moment when “that man” is concerned in this war, he is lost; he is caught in the gearing. Jean Valjean felt himself delivered. So he was about to find himself alone with Cosette once more. The rivalry would cease; the future was beginning again. He had but to keep this note in his pocket. Cosette would never know what had become of that man. All that there requires to be done is to let things take their own course. This man cannot escape. If he is not already dead, it is certain that he is about to die. What good fortune!

Having said all this to himself, he became gloomy.

Then he went down stairs and woke up the porter.

About an hour later, Jean Valjean went out in the complete costume of a National Guard, and with his arms. The

porter had easily found in the neighborhood the wherewithal to complete his equipment. He had a loaded gun and a cartridge-box filled with cartridges.

He strode off in the direction of the markets.

CHAPTER IV

GAVROCHE'S EXCESS OF ZEAL

IN the meantime, Gavroche had had an adventure.

Gavroche, after having conscientiously stoned the lantern in the Rue du Chaume, entered the Rue des Vieilles-Haudriettes, and not seeing "even a eat" there, he thought the opportunity a good one to strike up all the song of which he was capable. His march, far from being retarded by his singing, was accelerated by it. He began to sow along the sleeping or terrified houses these incendiary couplets:—

"L'oiseau médit dans les charmilles,
Et prétend qu'hier Atala
Avec un Russe s'en alla.
Où vont les belles filles,
Lon la.

"Mon ami Pierrot, tu babilles,
Parce que l'autre jour Mila
Cogna sa vitre et m'appela,
Où vont les belles filles,
Lon la.

"Les drôlesses sont fort gentilles,
Leur poison qui m'ensorcela
Griserait Monsieur Orfila.
Où vont les belles filles,
Lon la.

"J'aime l'amour et les bisbilles,
J'aime Agnès, j'aime Paméla,
Lise en m'allumant se brûla.
Où vont les belles filles,
Lon la.

“Jadis, quand je vis les mantilles
De Suzette et de Zéila,
Mon ame à leurs plis se mêla,
Où vont les belles filles,
Lon la.

“Amour, quand dans l'ombre où tu brilles,
Tu coiffes de roses Lola,
Je me damnerais pour cela.
Où vont les belles filles,
Lon la.

“Jeanne à ton miroir tu t'habilles!
Mon cœur un beau jour s'envola.
Je erois que e'est Jeanne qui l'a.
Où vont les belles filles,
Lon la.

“Le soir, en sortant des quadrilles,
Je montre aux étoiles Stella,
Et je leur dis: ‘Régardez-la.’
Où vont les belles filles,
Lon la.”¹

Gavroche, as he sang, was lavish of his pantomime. Gesture is the strong point of the refrain. His face, an inexhaustible repertory of masks, produced grimaces more convulsing and more fantastic than the rents of a cloth torn in a high gale. Unfortunately, as he was alone, and as it was

‘The bird slanders in the elms,
And pretends that yesterday, Atala
Went off with a Russian,
Where fair maids go.
Lon la.

My friend Pierrot, thou pratest, because Mila knocked at her pane the other day and called me. The jades are very charminig, their poison which bewitched me would intoxicate Monsieur Orfila. I'm fond of love and its bickerings, I love Agnes, I love Pamela, Lise burned herself in setting me aflame. In former days when I saw the mantillas of Suzette and of Zéila, my soul mingled with their folds. Love, when thou gleamest in the dark thou crownest Lola with roses, I would lose my soul for that. Jeanne, at thy mirror thou deekest thyself! One fine day, my heart flew forth. I think that it is Jeanne who has it. At night, when I come from the quadrilles, I show Stella to the stars, and I say to them: “Behold her.” Where fair maids go, lon la.

night, this was neither seen nor even visible. Such wastes of riches do occur.

All at once, he stopped short.

"Let us interrupt the romance," said he.

His feline eye had just descried, in the recess of a carriage door, what is called in painting, an *ensemble*, that is to say, a person and a thing; the thing was a hand-cart, the person was a man from Auvergene who was sleeping therein.

The shafts of the cart rested on the pavement, and the Auvergnat's head was supported against the front of the cart. His body was coiled up on this inclined plane and his feet touched the ground.

Gavroche, with his experience of the things of this world, recognized a drunken man. He was some corner errand-man who had drunk too much and was sleeping too much.

"There now," thought Gavroche, "that's what the summer nights are good for. We'll take the cart for the Republic, and leave the Auvergnat for the Monarchy."

His mind had just been illuminated by this flash of light:—

"How bully that cart would look on our barricade!"

The Auvergnat was snoring.

Gavroche gently tugged at the cart from behind, and at the Auvergnat from the front, that is to say, by the feet, and at the expiration of another minute the imperturbable Auvergnat was reposing flat on the pavement.

The cart was free.

Gavroche, habituated to facing the unexpected in all quarters, had everything about him. He fumbled in one of his pockets, and pulled from it a scrap of paper and a bit of red pencil filched from some carpenter.

He wrote:—

"French Republic."

"Received thy cart."

And he signed it: "GAVROCHE."

That done, he put the paper in the pocket of the still

snoring Auvergnat's velvet vest, seized the cart shafts in both hands, and set off in the direction of the Halles, pushing the cart before him at a hard gallop with a glorious and triumphant uproar.

This was perilous. There was a post at the Royal Printing Establishment. Gavroche did not think of this. This post was occupied by the National Guards of the suburbs. The squad began to wake up, and heads were raised from camp beds. Two street lanterns broken in succession, that ditty sung at the top of the lungs. This was a great deal for those cowardly streets, which desire to go to sleep at sunset, and which put the extinguisher on their candles at such an early hour. For the last hour, that boy had been creating an uproar in that peaceable arrondissement, the uproar of a fly in a bottle. The sergeant of the banlieue lent an ear. He waited. He was a prudent man.

The mad rattle of the cart, filled to overflowing the possible measure of waiting, and decided the sergeant to make a reconnaissance.

"There's a whole band of them there!" said he, "let us proceed gently."

It was clear that the hydra of anarchy had emerged from its box and that it was stalking abroad through the quarter.

And the sergeant ventured out of the post with cautious tread.

All at once, Gavroche, pushing his cart in front of him, and at the very moment when he was about to turn into the Rue des Vieilles-Haudriettes, found himself face to face with a uniform, a shako, a plume, and a gun.

For the second time, he stopped short.

"Hullo," said he, "it's him. Good day, public order."

Gavroche's amazement was always brief and speedily thawed.

"Where are you going, you rascal?" shouted the sergeant.

"Citizen," retorted Gavroche, "I haven't called you 'bourgeois' yet. Why do you insult me?"

"Where are you going, you rogue?"

"Monsieur," retorted Gavroche, "perhaps you were a man of wit yesterday, but you have degenerated this morning."

"I ask you where are you going, you villain?"

Gavroche replied:—

"You speak prettily. Really, no one would suppose you as old as you are. You ought to sell all your hair at a hundred francs apiece. That would yield you five hundred francs."

"Where are you going? Where are you going? Where are you going, bandit?"

Gavroche retorted again:—

"What villainous words! You must wipe your mouth better the first time that they give you suck."

The sergeant lowered his bayonet.

"Will you tell me where you are going, you wretch?"

"General," said Gavroche, "I'm on my way to look for a doctor for my wife who is in labor."

"To arms!" shouted the sergeant.

The master-stroke of strong men consists in saving themselves by the very means that have ruined them; Gavroche took in the whole situation at a glance. It was the cart which had told against him, it was the cart's place to protect him.

At the moment when the sergeant was on the point of making his descent on Gavroche, the cart, converted into a projectile and launched with all the latter's might, rolled down upon him furiously, and the sergeant, struck full in the stomach, tumbled over backwards into the gutter while his gun went off in the air.

The men of the post had rushed out pell-mell at the sergeant's shout; the shot brought on a general random discharge, after which they reloaded their weapons and began again.

This blind-man's-buff musketry lasted for a quarter of an hour and killed several panes of glass.

In the meanwhile, Gavroche, who had retraced his steps at full speed, halted five or six streets distant and seated himself, panting, on the stone post which forms the corner of the Enfants-Rouges.

He listened.

After panting for a few minutes, he turned in the direction where the fusillade was raging, lifted his left hand to a level with his nose and thrust it forward three times, as he slapped the back of his head with his right hand; an imperious gesture in which Parisian street-urchindom has condensed French irony, and which is evidently efficacious, since it has already lasted half a century.

This gayety was troubled by one bitter reflection.

"Yes," said he, "I'm splitting with laughter, I'm twisting with delight, I abound in joy, but I'm losing my way, I shall have to take a roundabout way. If I only reach the barricade in season!"

Thereupon he set out again on a run.

And as he ran:—

"Ah, by the way, where was I?" said he.

And he resumed his ditty, as he plunged rapidly through the streets, and this is what died away in the gloom:—

"Mais il reste encore des bastilles,
Et je vais mettre le holà
Dans l'orde public que voilà.
Où vont les belles filles,
Lon la.

"Quelqu'un veut-il jouer aux quilles?
Tout l'ancien monde s'écroura
Quand la grosse boule roula.
Où vont les belles filles,
Lon la.

"Vieux bon peuple, à coups de bequilles,
Cassons ce Louvre ou s'étala
La monarchie en falbala.
Où vont les belles filles,
Lon la.

“Nous en avons forcé les grilles,
 Le roi Charles-Dix ce jour là,
 Tenait mal et se décolla.
 Où vont les belles filles,
 Lon la.”¹

The post's recourse to arms was not without result. The cart was conquered, the drunken man was taken prisoner. The first was put in the pound, the second was later on somewhat harassed before the councils of war as an accomplice. The public ministry of the day proved its indefatigable zeal in the defence of society, in this instance.

Gavroche's adventure, which has lingered as a tradition in the quarters of the Temple, is one of the most terrible souvenirs of the elderly bourgeois of the Marais, and is entitled in their memories: “The nocturnal attack by the post of the Royal Printing Establishment.”

¹But some prisons still remain, and I am going to put a stop to this sort of public order. Does any one wish to play at skittles? The whole ancient world fell in ruin, when the big ball rolled. Good old folks, let us smash with our crutches that Louvre where the monarchy displayed itself in furbelows. We have forced its gates. On that day, King Charles X. did not stick well and came unglued.

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