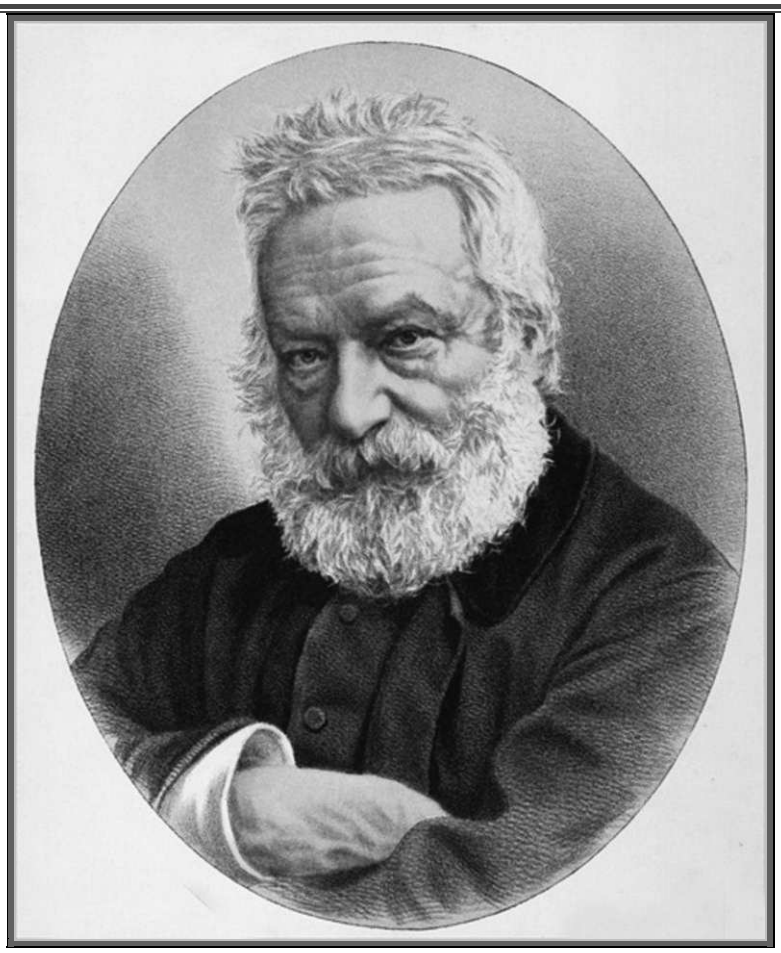
LES MISÉRABLES

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Victor Hugo

(Translator: Isabel F. Hapgood)

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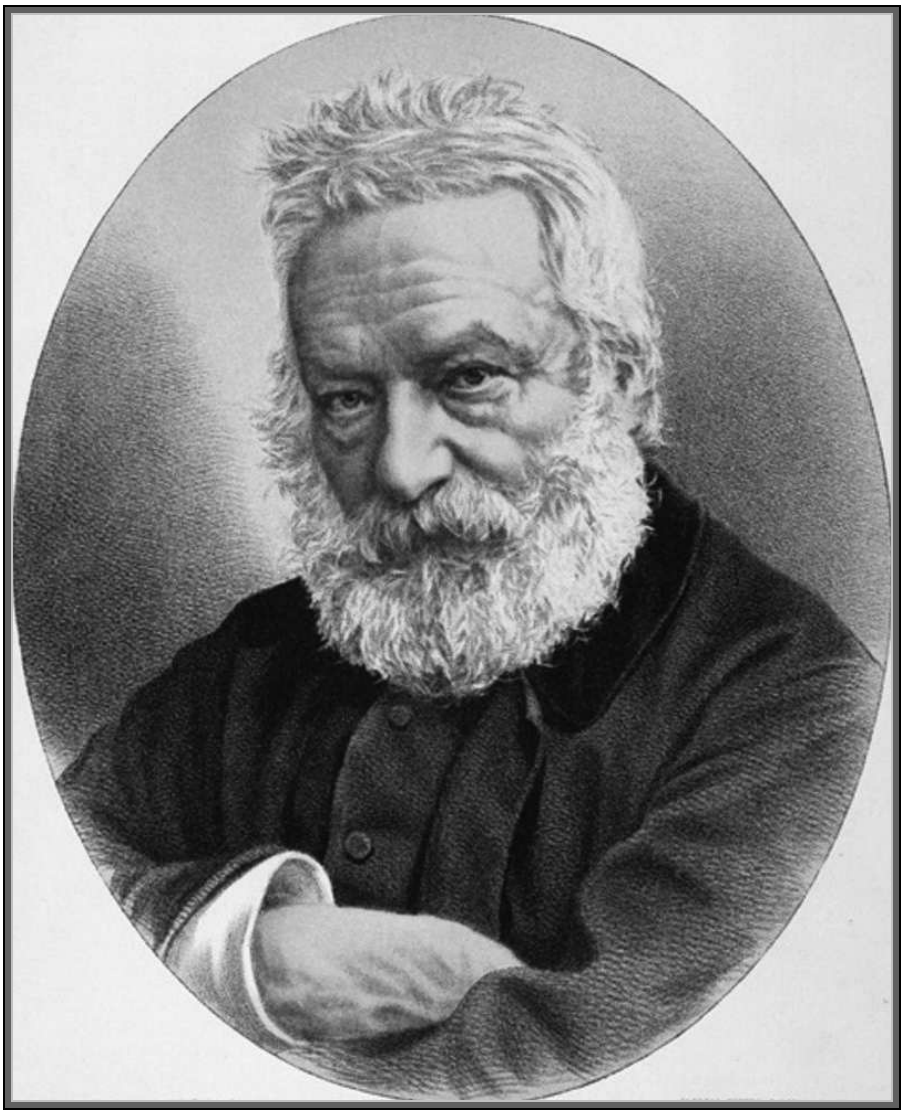
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ABOUT AUTHOR



Victor-Marie Hugo (1802 — 1885) was a French poet, novelist, playwright, essayist, visual artist, statesman, human rights campaigner, and perhaps the most influential exponent of the Romantic movement in France. In France, Hugo's literary reputation rests on his poetic and dramatic output. Among many volumes of poetry, Les Contemplations and La Légende des siècles stand particularly high in critical esteem, and Hugo is sometimes identified as the greatest French poet. In the English-speaking world his best-known works are often the novels Les Misérables and Notre-Dame de Paris (sometimes translated into English as The Hunchback of Notre-Dame). Though extremely conservative in his youth, Hugo moved to the political left as the decades passed; he became a passionate supporter of republicanism, and his work touches upon most of the political and social issues and artistic trends of his time.

Other books of Author

- *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1831)

PART 1. A JUST MAN

CHAPTER 1 M. MYRIEL

In 1815, M. Charles-Francois-Bienvenu Myriel was Bishop of D—— He was an old man of about seventy-five years of age; he had occupied the see of D—— since 1806.

Although this detail has no connection whatever with the real substance of what we are about to relate, it will not be superfluous, if merely for the sake of exactness in all points, to mention here the various rumors and remarks which had been in circulation about him from the very moment when he arrived in the diocese. True or false, that which is said of men often occupies as important a place in their lives, and above all in their destinies, as that which they do. M. Myriel was the son of a councillor of the Parliament of Aix; hence he belonged to the nobility of the bar. It was said that his father, destining him to be the heir of his own post, had married him at a very early age, eighteen or twenty, in accordance with a custom which is rather widely prevalent in parliamentary families. In spite of this marriage, however, it was said that Charles Myriel created a great deal of talk. He was well formed, though rather short in stature, elegant, graceful, intelligent; the whole of the first portion of his life had been devoted to the world and to gallantry.

The Revolution came; events succeeded each other with precipitation; the parliamentary families, decimated, pursued, hunted down, were dispersed. M. Charles Myriel emigrated to Italy at the very beginning of the Revolution. There his wife died of a malady of the chest, from which she had long suffered. He had no children. What took place next in the fate of M. Myriel? The ruin of the French society of the olden days, the fall of his own family, the tragic spectacles of '93, which were, perhaps, even more alarming to the emigrants who viewed them from a distance, with the magnifying powers of terror,—did these cause the ideas of renunciation and solitude to germinate in him? Was he, in the midst of these distractions, these affections which absorbed his life, suddenly smitten with one of those mysterious and terrible blows which sometimes overwhelm, by striking to his heart, a man whom public catastrophes would not shake, by striking at his existence and his fortune? No one could have told: all that was known was, that when he returned from Italy he was a priest.

In 1804, M. Myriel was the Cure of B—— [Brignolles]. He was already advanced in years, and lived in a very retired manner.

About the epoch of the coronation, some petty affair connected with his curacy—just what, is not precisely known—took him to Paris. Among other powerful persons to whom he went to solicit aid for his parishioners was M. le Cardinal Fesch. One day, when the Emperor had come to visit his uncle, the worthy Cure, who was waiting in the anteroom, found himself present when His Majesty passed. Napoleon, on finding himself observed with a certain curiosity by this old man, turned round and said abruptly:—

"Who is this good man who is staring at me?"

"Sire," said M. Myriel, "you are looking at a good man, and I at a great man. Each of us can profit by it."

That very evening, the Emperor asked the Cardinal the name of the Cure, and some time afterwards M. Myriel was utterly astonished to learn that he had been appointed Bishop of D——

What truth was there, after all, in the stories which were invented as to the early portion of M. Myriel's life? No one knew. Very few families had been acquainted with the Myriel family before the Revolution.

M. Myriel had to undergo the fate of every newcomer in a little town, where there are many mouths which talk, and very few heads which think. He was obliged to undergo it although he was a bishop, and because he was a bishop. But after all, the rumors with which his name was connected were rumors only,—noise, sayings, words; less than words— palabres, as the energetic language of the South expresses it.

However that may be, after nine years of episcopal power and of residence in D——, all the stories and subjects of conversation which engross petty towns and petty people at the outset had fallen into profound oblivion. No one would have dared to mention them; no one would have dared to recall them.

M. Myriel had arrived at D—— accompanied by an elderly spinster, Mademoiselle Baptistine, who was his sister, and ten years his junior.

Their only domestic was a female servant of the same age as Mademoiselle Baptistine, and named Madame Magloire, who, after having been the servant of M. le Cure, now assumed the double title of maid to Mademoiselle and housekeeper to Monseigneur.

Mademoiselle Baptistine was a long, pale, thin, gentle creature; she realized the ideal expressed by the word "respectable"; for it seems that a woman must needs be a mother in order to be venerable. She had never been pretty; her whole life, which had been nothing but a succession of holy deeds, had finally conferred upon her a sort of pallor and transparency; and as she advanced in years she had acquired what may be called the beauty of goodness. What had been leanness in her youth had become transparency in her maturity; and this diaphaneity allowed the angel to be seen. She was a soul rather than a virgin. Her person seemed made of a shadow; there was hardly sufficient body to provide for sex; a little matter enclosing a light; large eyes forever drooping;— a mere pretext for a soul's remaining on the earth.

Madame Magloire was a little, fat, white old woman, corpulent and bustling; always out of breath,—in the first place, because of her activity, and in the next, because of her asthma.

On his arrival, M. Myriel was installed in the episcopal palace with the honors required by the Imperial decrees, which class a bishop immediately after a major-general. The mayor and the president paid the first call on him, and he, in turn, paid the first call on the general and the prefect.

The installation over, the town waited to see its bishop at work.

CHAPTER 2 M. MYRIEL BECOMES M. WELCOME

The episcopal palace of D—— adjoins the hospital.

The episcopal palace was a huge and beautiful house, built of stone at the beginning of the last century by M. Henri Puget, Doctor of Theology of the Faculty of Paris, Abbe of Simore, who had been Bishop of D—— in 1712. This palace was a genuine seignorial residence. Everything about it had a grand air,—the

apartments of the Bishop, the drawing-rooms, the chambers, the principal courtyard, which was very large, with walks encircling it under arcades in the old Florentine fashion, and gardens planted with magnificent trees. In the dining-room, a long and superb gallery which was situated on the ground-floor and opened on the gardens, M. Henri Puget had entertained in state, on July 29, 1714, My Lords Charles Brulart de Genlis, archbishop; Prince d'Embrun; Antoine de Mesgrigny, the capuchin, Bishop of Grasse; Philippe de Vendome, Grand Prior of France, Abbe of Saint Honore de Lerins; Francois de Berton de Crillon, bishop, Baron de Vence; Cesar de Sabran de Forcalquier, bishop, Seignor of Glandeve; and Jean Soanen, Priest of the Oratory, preacher in ordinary to the king, bishop, Seignor of Senez. The portraits of these seven reverend personages decorated this apartment; and this memorable date, the 29th of July, 1714, was there engraved in letters of gold on a table of white marble.

The hospital was a low and narrow building of a single story, with a small garden.

Three days after his arrival, the Bishop visited the hospital. The visit ended, he had the director requested to be so good as to come to his house.

"Monsieur the director of the hospital," said he to him, "how many sick people have you at the present moment?"

"Twenty-six, Monseigneur."

"That was the number which I counted," said the Bishop.

"The beds," pursued the director, "are very much crowded against each other."

"That is what I observed."

"The halls are nothing but rooms, and it is with difficulty that the air can be changed in them."

"So it seems to me."

"And then, when there is a ray of sun, the garden is very small for the convalescents."

"That was what I said to myself."

"In case of epidemics,—we have had the typhus fever this year; we had the sweating sickness two years ago, and a hundred patients at times,—we know not what to do."

"That is the thought which occurred to me."

"What would you have, Monseigneur?" said the director. "One must resign one's self."

This conversation took place in the gallery dining-room on the ground-floor.

The Bishop remained silent for a moment; then he turned abruptly to the director of the hospital.

"Monsieur," said he, "how many beds do you think this hall alone would hold?"

"Monseigneur's dining-room?" exclaimed the stupefied director.

The Bishop cast a glance round the apartment, and seemed to be taking measures and calculations with his eyes.

"It would hold full twenty beds," said he, as though speaking to himself. Then, raising his voice:—

"Hold, Monsieur the director of the hospital, I will tell you something. There is evidently a mistake here. There are thirty-six of you, in five or six small rooms. There are three of us here, and we have room for sixty.

There is some mistake, I tell you; you have my house, and I have yours. Give me back my house; you are at home here."

On the following day the thirty-six patients were installed in the Bishop's palace, and the Bishop was settled in the hospital.

M. Myriel had no property, his family having been ruined by the Revolution. His sister was in receipt of a yearly income of five hundred francs, which sufficed for her personal wants at the vicarage. M. Myriel received from the State, in his quality of bishop, a salary of fifteen thousand francs. On the very day when he took up his abode in the hospital, M. Myriel settled on the disposition of this sum once for all, in the following manner. We transcribe here a note made by his own hand:—

NOTE ON THE REGULATION OF MY HOUSEHOLD EXPENSES.

For the little seminary … … … … . . 1,500

livres Society of the mission … … … … . . 100 "

For the Lazarists of Montdidier … … … . 100 "

Seminary for foreign missions in Paris … … 200 "

Congregation of the Holy Spirit … … … . 150 "

Religious establishments of the Holy Land … . . 100 "

Charitable maternity societies … … … . 300 "

Extra, for that of Arles … … … … . 50 "

Work for the amelioration of prisons … … . 400 "

Work for the relief and delivery of prisoners … 500 "

To liberate fathers of families incarcerated for debt 1,000 "

Addition to the salary of the poor teachers of the diocese … … . 2,000 "

Public granary of the Hautes-Alpes … … . . 100 "

Congregation of the ladies of D——, of Manosque, and of Sisteron, for the gratuitous instruction of poor girls … … … … … … . . 1,500 "

For the poor … … … … … … . 6,000 "

My personal expenses … … … … … 1,000 "

——— Total … … … … … … . . 15,000 "

M. Myriel made no change in this arrangement during the entire period that he occupied the see of D—— As has been seen, he called it regulating his household expenses.

This arrangement was accepted with absolute submission by Mademoiselle Baptistine. This holy woman regarded Monseigneur of D—— as at one and the same time her brother and her bishop, her friend according to the flesh and her superior according to the Church. She simply loved and venerated him. When he spoke, she bowed; when he acted, she yielded her adherence. Their only servant, Madame Magloire,

grumbled a little. It will be observed that Monsieur the Bishop had reserved for himself only one thousand livres, which, added to the pension of Mademoiselle Baptistine, made fifteen hundred francs a year. On these fifteen hundred francs these two old women and the old man subsisted.

And when a village curate came to D——, the Bishop still found means to entertain him, thanks to the severe economy of Madame Magloire, and to the intelligent administration of Mademoiselle Baptistine.

One day, after he had been in D—— about three months, the Bishop said:—

"And still I am quite cramped with it all!"

"I should think so!" exclaimed Madame Magloire. "Monseigneur has not even claimed the allowance which the department owes him for the expense of his carriage in town, and for his journeys about the diocese. It was customary for bishops in former days."

"Hold!" cried the Bishop, "you are quite right, Madame Magloire."

And he made his demand.

Some time afterwards the General Council took this demand under consideration, and voted him an annual sum of three thousand francs, under this heading: Allowance to M. the Bishop for expenses of carriage, expenses of posting, and expenses of pastoral visits.

This provoked a great outcry among the local burgesses; and a senator of the Empire, a former member of the Council of the Five Hundred which favored the 18 Brumaire, and who was provided with a magnificent senatorial office in the vicinity of the town of D——, wrote to M. Bigot de Preameneu, the minister of public worship, a very angry and confidential note on the subject, from which we extract these authentic lines:—

"Expenses of carriage? What can be done with it in a town of less than four thousand inhabitants? Expenses of journeys? What is the use of these trips, in the first place? Next, how can the posting be accomplished in these mountainous parts? There are no roads. No one travels otherwise than on horseback. Even the bridge between Durance and Chateau-Arnoux can barely support ox-teams. These priests are all thus, greedy and avaricious. This man played the good priest when he first came. Now he does like the rest; he must have a carriage and a posting-chaise, he must have luxuries, like the bishops of the olden days. Oh, all this priesthood! Things will not go well, M. le Comte, until the Emperor has freed us from these black-capped rascals. Down with the Pope! [Matters were getting embroiled with Rome.] For my part, I am for Caesar alone." Etc., etc.

On the other hand, this affair afforded great delight to Madame Magloire. "Good," said she to Mademoiselle Baptistine; "Monseigneur began with other people, but he has had to wind up with himself, after all. He has regulated all his charities. Now here are three thousand francs for us! At last!"

That same evening the Bishop wrote out and handed to his sister a memorandum conceived in the following terms:—

EXPENSES OF CARRIAGE AND CIRCUIT.

For furnishing meat soup to the patients in the hospital. 1,500 livres

For the maternity charitable society of Aix … … . 250 "

For the maternity charitable society of Draguignan … 250 "

For foundlings … … … … … … … 500 "

For orphans … … … … … … … . 500 "

—— Total … … … … … … … . . 3,000 "

Such was M. Myriel's budget.

As for the chance episcopal perquisites, the fees for marriage bans, dispensations, private baptisms, sermons, benedictions, of churches or chapels, marriages, etc., the Bishop levied them on the wealthy with all the more asperity, since he bestowed them on the needy.

After a time, offerings of money flowed in. Those who had and those who lacked knocked at M. Myriel's door,—the latter in search of the alms which the former came to deposit. In less than a year the Bishop had become the treasurer of all benevolence and the cashier of all those in distress. Considerable sums of money passed through his hands, but nothing could induce him to make any change whatever in his mode of life, or add anything superfluous to his bare necessities.

Far from it. As there is always more wretchedness below than there is brotherhood above, all was given away, so to speak, before it was received. It was like water on dry soil; no matter how much money he received, he never had any. Then he stripped himself.

The usage being that bishops shall announce their baptismal names at the head of their charges and their pastoral letters, the poor people of the country-side had selected, with a sort of affectionate instinct, among the names and prenomens of their bishop, that which had a meaning for them; and they never called him anything except Monseigneur Bienvenu [Welcome]. We will follow their example, and will also call him thus when we have occasion to name him. Moreover, this appellation pleased him.

"I like that name," said he. "Bienvenu makes up for the Monseigneur."

We do not claim that the portrait herewith presented is probable; we confine ourselves to stating that it resembles the original.

CHAPTER 3 A HARD BISHOPRIC FOR A GOOD BISHOP

The Bishop did not omit his pastoral visits because he had converted his carriage into alms. The diocese of D—— is a fatiguing one. There are very few plains and a great many mountains; hardly any roads, as we have just seen; thirty-two curacies, forty-one vicarships, and two hundred and eighty-five auxiliary chapels. To visit all these is quite a task.

The Bishop managed to do it. He went on foot when it was in the neighborhood, in a tilted spring-cart when it was on the plain, and on a donkey in the mountains. The two old women accompanied him. When the trip was too hard for them, he went alone.

One day he arrived at Senez, which is an ancient episcopal city. He was mounted on an ass. His purse, which was very dry at that moment, did not permit him any other equipage. The mayor of the town came to receive him at the gate of the town, and watched him dismount from his ass, with scandalized eyes. Some of the citizens were laughing around him. "Monsieur the Mayor," said the Bishop, "and Messieurs Citizens, I perceive that I shock you. You think it very arrogant in a poor priest to ride an animal which was used by Jesus Christ. I have done so from necessity, I assure you, and not from vanity."

In the course of these trips he was kind and indulgent, and talked rather than preached. He never went far in search of his arguments and his examples. He quoted to the inhabitants of one district the example of a neighboring district. In the cantons where they were harsh to the poor, he said: "Look at the people of Briancon! They have conferred on the poor, on widows and orphans, the right to have their meadows mown three days in advance of every one else. They rebuild their houses for them gratuitously when they are ruined. Therefore it is a country which is blessed by God. For a whole century, there has not been a single murderer among them."

In villages which were greedy for profit and harvest, he said: "Look at the people of Embrun! If, at the harvest season, the father of a family has his son away on service in the army, and his daughters at service in the town, and if he is ill and incapacitated, the cure recommends him to the prayers of the congregation; and on Sunday, after the mass, all the inhabitants of the village—men, women, and children—go to the poor man's field and do his harvesting for him, and carry his straw and his grain to his granary." To families divided by questions of money and inheritance he said: "Look at the mountaineers of Devolny, a country so wild that the nightingale is not heard there once in fifty years. Well, when the father of a family dies, the boys go off to seek their fortunes, leaving the property to the girls, so that they may find husbands." To the cantons which had a taste for lawsuits, and where the farmers ruined themselves in stamped paper, he said: "Look at those good peasants in the valley of Queyras! There are three thousand souls of them. Mon Dieu! it is like a little republic. Neither judge nor bailiff is known there. The mayor does everything. He allots the imposts, taxes each person conscientiously, judges quarrels for nothing, divides inheritances without charge, pronounces sentences gratuitously; and he is obeyed, because he is a just man among simple men." To villages where he found no schoolmaster, he quoted once more the people of Queyras: "Do you know how they manage?" he said. "Since a little country of a dozen or fifteen hearths cannot always support a teacher, they have school-masters who are paid by the whole valley, who make the round of the villages, spending a week in this one, ten days in that, and instruct them. These teachers go to the fairs. I have seen them there. They are to be recognized by the quill pens which they wear in the cord of their hat. Those who teach reading only have one pen; those who teach reading and reckoning have two pens; those who teach reading, reckoning, and Latin have three pens. But what a disgrace to be ignorant! Do like the people of Queyras!"

Thus he discoursed gravely and paternally; in default of examples, he invented parables, going directly to the point, with few phrases and many images, which characteristic formed the real eloquence of Jesus Christ. And being convinced himself, he was persuasive.

CHAPTER 4 WORKS CORRESPONDING TO WORDS

His conversation was gay and affable. He put himself on a level with the two old women who had passed their lives beside him. When he laughed, it was the laugh of a schoolboy. Madame Magloire liked to call him Your Grace [Votre Grandeur]. One day he rose from his arm-chair, and went to his library in search of a book. This book was on one of the upper shelves. As the bishop was rather short of stature, he could not reach it. "Madame Magloire," said he, "fetch me a chair. My greatness [grandeur] does not reach as far as that shelf."

One of his distant relatives, Madame la Comtesse de Lo, rarely allowed an opportunity to escape of enumerating, in his presence, what she designated as "the expectations" of her three sons. She had numerous relatives, who were very old and near to death, and of whom her sons were the natural heirs. The youngest of the three was to receive from a grand-aunt a good hundred thousand livres of income; the second was the heir by entail to the title of the Duke, his uncle; the eldest was to succeed to the peerage of his grandfather. The Bishop was accustomed to listen in silence to these innocent and pardonable maternal boasts. On one occasion, however, he appeared to be more thoughtful than usual, while Madame de Lo was relating once again the details of all these inheritances and all these "expectations." She interrupted herself impatiently: "Mon Dieu, cousin! What are you thinking about?" "I am thinking," replied the Bishop, "of a singular remark, which is to be found, I believe, in St. Augustine,—`Place your hopes in the man from whom you do not inherit.'"

At another time, on receiving a notification of the decease of a gentleman of the country-side, wherein not only the dignities of the dead man, but also the feudal and noble qualifications of all his relatives, spread over an entire page: "What a stout back Death has!" he exclaimed. "What a strange burden of titles is cheerfully imposed on him, and how much wit must men have, in order thus to press the tomb into the service of vanity!"

He was gifted, on occasion, with a gentle raillery, which almost always concealed a serious meaning. In the course of one Lent, a youthful vicar came to D——, and preached in the cathedral. He was tolerably eloquent. The subject of his sermon was charity. He urged the rich to give to the poor, in order to avoid hell, which he depicted in the most frightful manner of which he was capable, and to win paradise, which he represented as charming and desirable. Among the audience there was a wealthy retired merchant, who was somewhat of a usurer, named M. Geborand, who had amassed two millions in the manufacture of coarse cloth, serges, and woollen galloons. Never in his whole life had M. Geborand bestowed alms on any poor wretch. After the delivery of that sermon, it was observed that he gave a sou every Sunday to the poor old beggar-women at the door of the cathedral. There were six of them to share it. One day the Bishop caught sight of him in the act of bestowing this charity, and said to his sister, with a smile, "There is M. Geborand purchasing paradise for a sou."

When it was a question of charity, he was not to be rebuffed even by a refusal, and on such occasions he gave utterance to remarks which induced reflection. Once he was begging for the poor in a drawing-room of the town; there was present the Marquis de Champtercier, a wealthy and avaricious old man, who contrived to be, at one and the same time, an ultra-royalist and an ultra-Voltairian. This variety of man has actually existed. When the Bishop came to him, he touched his arm, "You must give me something, M. le Marquis." The Marquis turned round and answered dryly, "I have poor people of my own, Monseigneur." "Give them to me," replied the Bishop.

One day he preached the following sermon in the cathedral:—

"My very dear brethren, my good friends, there are thirteen hundred and twenty thousand peasants' dwellings in France which have but three openings; eighteen hundred and seventeen thousand hovels which have but two openings, the door and one window; and three hundred and forty-six thousand cabins besides which have but one opening, the door. And this arises from a thing which is called the tax on doors and windows. Just put poor families, old women and little children, in those buildings, and behold the fevers and maladies which result! Alas! God gives air to men; the law sells it to them. I do not blame the law, but I bless God. In the department of the Isere, in the Var, in the two departments of the Alpes, the Hautes, and the Basses, the peasants have not even wheelbarrows; they transport their manure on the backs of men; they have no candles, and they burn resinous sticks, and bits of rope dipped in pitch. That is the state of affairs throughout the whole of the hilly country of Dauphine. They make bread for six months at one time; they bake it with dried cow-dung. In the winter they break this bread up with an axe, and they soak it for twenty-four hours, in order to render it eatable. My brethren, have pity! behold the suffering on all sides of you!"

Born a Provencal, he easily familiarized himself with the dialect of the south. He said, "En be! moussu, ses sage?" as in lower Languedoc; "Onte anaras passa?" as in the Basses-Alpes; "Puerte un bouen moutu embe un bouen fromage grase," as in upper Dauphine. This pleased the people extremely, and contributed not a little to win him access to all spirits. He was perfectly at home in the thatched cottage and in the mountains. He understood how to say the grandest things in the most vulgar of idioms. As he spoke all tongues, he entered into all hearts.

Moreover, he was the same towards people of the world and towards the lower classes. He condemned nothing in haste and without taking circumstances into account. He said, "Examine the road over which the fault has passed."

Being, as he described himself with a smile, an ex-sinner, he had none of the asperities of austerity, and he professed, with a good deal of distinctness, and without the frown of the ferociously virtuous, a doctrine which may be summed up as follows:—

"Man has upon him his flesh, which is at once his burden and his temptation. He drags it with him and yields to it. He must watch it, cheek it, repress it, and obey it only at the last extremity. There may be some fault even in this obedience; but the fault thus committed is venial; it is a fall, but a fall on the knees which may terminate in prayer.

"To be a saint is the exception; to be an upright man is the rule. Err, fall, sin if you will, but be upright.

"The least possible sin is the law of man. No sin at all is the dream of the angel. All which is terrestrial is subject to sin. Sin is a gravitation."

When he saw everyone exclaiming very loudly, and growing angry very quickly, "Oh! oh!" he said, with a smile; "to all appearance, this is a great crime which all the world commits. These are hypocrisies which have taken fright, and are in haste to make protest and to put themselves under shelter."

He was indulgent towards women and poor people, on whom the burden of human society rest. He said, "The faults of women, of children, of the feeble, the indigent, and the ignorant, are the fault of the husbands, the fathers, the masters, the strong, the rich, and the wise."

He said, moreover, "Teach those who are ignorant as many things as possible; society is culpable, in that it does not afford instruction gratis; it is responsible for the night which it produces. This soul is full of

shadow; sin is therein committed. The guilty one is not the person who has committed the sin, but the person who has created the shadow."

It will be perceived that he had a peculiar manner of his own of judging things: I suspect that he obtained it from the Gospel.

One day he heard a criminal case, which was in preparation and on the point of trial, discussed in a drawing-room. A wretched man, being at the end of his resources, had coined counterfeit money, out of love for a woman, and for the child which he had had by her. Counterfeiting was still punishable with death at that epoch. The woman had been arrested in the act of passing the first false piece made by the man. She was held, but there were no proofs except against her. She alone could accuse her lover, and destroy him by her confession. She denied; they insisted. She persisted in her denial. Thereupon an idea occurred to the attorney for the crown. He invented an infidelity on the part of the lover, and succeeded, by means of fragments of letters cunningly presented, in persuading the unfortunate woman that she had a rival, and that the man was deceiving her. Thereupon, exasperated by jealousy, she denounced her lover, confessed all, proved all.

The man was ruined. He was shortly to be tried at Aix with his accomplice. They were relating the matter, and each one was expressing enthusiasm over the cleverness of the magistrate. By bringing jealousy into play, he had caused the truth to burst forth in wrath, he had educed the justice of revenge. The Bishop listened to all this in silence. When they had finished, he inquired,—

"Where are this man and woman to be tried?"

"At the Court of Assizes."

He went on, "And where will the advocate of the crown be tried?"

A tragic event occurred at D—— A man was condemned to death for murder. He was a wretched fellow, not exactly educated, not exactly ignorant, who had been a mountebank at fairs, and a writer for the public. The town took a great interest in the trial. On the eve of the day fixed for the execution of the condemned man, the chaplain of the prison fell ill. A priest was needed to attend the criminal in his last moments. They sent for the cure. It seems that he refused to come, saying, "That is no affair of mine. I have nothing to do with that unpleasant task, and with that mountebank: I, too, am ill; and besides, it is not my place." This reply was reported to the Bishop, who said, "Monsieur le Cure is right: it is not his place; it is mine."

He went instantly to the prison, descended to the cell of the "mountebank," called him by name, took him by the hand, and spoke to him. He passed the entire day with him, forgetful of food and sleep, praying to God for the soul of the condemned man, and praying the condemned man for his own. He told him the best truths, which are also the most simple. He was father, brother, friend; he was bishop only to bless. He taught him everything, encouraged and consoled him. The man was on the point of dying in despair. Death was an abyss to him. As he stood trembling on its mournful brink, he recoiled with horror. He was not sufficiently ignorant to be absolutely indifferent. His condemnation, which had been a profound shock, had, in a manner, broken through, here and there, that wall which separates us from the mystery of things, and which we call life. He gazed incessantly beyond this world through these fatal breaches, and beheld only darkness. The Bishop made him see light.

On the following day, when they came to fetch the unhappy wretch, the Bishop was still there. He followed him, and exhibited himself to the eyes of the crowd in his purple camail and with his episcopal cross upon his neck, side by side with the criminal bound with cords.

He mounted the tumbril with him, he mounted the scaffold with him. The sufferer, who had been so gloomy and cast down on the preceding day, was radiant. He felt that his soul was reconciled, and he hoped in God. The Bishop embraced him, and at the moment when the knife was about to fall, he said to him: "God raises from the dead him whom man slays; he whom his brothers have rejected finds his Father once more. Pray, believe, enter into life: the Father is there." When he descended from the scaffold, there was something in his look which made the people draw aside to let him pass. They did not know which was most worthy of admiration, his pallor or his serenity. On his return to the humble dwelling, which he designated, with a smile, as his palace, he said to his sister, "I have just officiated pontifically."

Since the most sublime things are often those which are the least understood, there were people in the town who said, when commenting on this conduct of the Bishop, "It is affectation."

This, however, was a remark which was confined to the drawing-rooms. The populace, which perceives no jest in holy deeds, was touched, and admired him.

As for the Bishop, it was a shock to him to have beheld the guillotine, and it was a long time before he recovered from it.

In fact, when the scaffold is there, all erected and prepared, it has something about it which produces hallucination. One may feel a certain indifference to the death penalty, one may refrain from pronouncing upon it, from saying yes or no, so long as one has not seen a guillotine with one's own eyes: but if one encounters one of them, the shock is violent; one is forced to decide, and to take part for or against. Some admire it, like de Maistre; others execrate it, like Beccaria. The guillotine is the concretion of the law; it is called vindicte; it is not neutral, and it does not permit you to remain neutral. He who sees it shivers with the most mysterious of shivers. All social problems erect their interrogation point around this chopping-knife. The scaffold is a vision. The scaffold is not a piece of carpentry; the scaffold is not a machine; the scaffold is not an inert bit of mechanism constructed of wood, iron and cords.

It seems as though it were a being, possessed of I know not what sombre initiative; one would say that this piece of carpenter's work saw, that this machine heard, that this mechanism understood, that this wood, this iron, and these cords were possessed of will. In the frightful meditation into which its presence casts the soul the scaffold appears in terrible guise, and as though taking part in what is going on. The scaffold is the accomplice of the executioner; it devours, it eats flesh, it drinks blood; the scaffold is a sort of monster fabricated by the judge and the carpenter, a spectre which seems to live with a horrible vitality composed of all the death which it has inflicted.

Therefore, the impression was terrible and profound; on the day following the execution, and on many succeeding days, the Bishop appeared to be crushed. The almost violent serenity of the funereal moment had disappeared; the phantom of social justice tormented him. He, who generally returned from all his deeds with a radiant satisfaction, seemed to be reproaching himself. At times he talked to himself, and stammered lugubrious monologues in a low voice. This is one which his sister overheard one evening and preserved: "I did not think that it was so monstrous. It is wrong to become absorbed in the divine law to such a degree as not to perceive human law. Death belongs to God alone. By what right do men touch that unknown thing?"

In course of time these impressions weakened and probably vanished. Nevertheless, it was observed that the Bishop thenceforth avoided passing the place of execution.

M. Myriel could be summoned at any hour to the bedside of the sick and dying. He did not ignore the fact that therein lay his greatest duty and his greatest labor. Widowed and orphaned families had no need to summon him; he came of his own accord. He understood how to sit down and hold his peace for long hours beside the man who had lost the wife of his love, of the mother who had lost her child. As he knew the moment for silence he knew also the moment for speech. Oh, admirable consoler! He sought not to efface sorrow by forgetfulness, but to magnify and dignify it by hope. He said:—

"Have a care of the manner in which you turn towards the dead. Think not of that which perishes. Gaze steadily. You will perceive the living light of your well-beloved dead in the depths of heaven." He knew that faith is wholesome. He sought to counsel and calm the despairing man, by pointing out to him the resigned man, and to transform the grief which gazes upon a grave by showing him the grief which fixes its gaze upon a star.

CHAPTER 5 MONSEIGNEUR BIENVENU MADE HIS CASSOCKS LAST TOO LONG

The private life of M. Myriel was filled with the same thoughts as his public life. The voluntary poverty in which the Bishop of D—— lived, would have been a solemn and charming sight for any one who could have viewed it close at hand.

Like all old men, and like the majority of thinkers, he slept little. This brief slumber was profound. In the morning he meditated for an hour, then he said his mass, either at the cathedral or in his own house. His mass said, he broke his fast on rye bread dipped in the milk of his own cows. Then he set to work.

A Bishop is a very busy man: he must every day receive the secretary of the bishopric, who is generally a canon, and nearly every day his vicars-general. He has congregations to reprove, privileges to grant, a whole ecclesiastical library to examine,— prayer-books, diocesan catechisms, books of hours, etc.,— charges to write, sermons to authorize, cures and mayors to reconcile, a clerical correspondence, an administrative correspondence; on one side the State, on the other the Holy See; and a thousand matters of business.

What time was left to him, after these thousand details of business, and his offices and his breviary, he bestowed first on the necessitous, the sick, and the afflicted; the time which was left to him from the afflicted, the sick, and the necessitous, he devoted to work. Sometimes he dug in his garden; again, he read or wrote. He had but one word for both these kinds of toil; he called them gardening. "The mind is a garden," said he.

Towards mid-day, when the weather was fine, he went forth and took a stroll in the country or in town, often entering lowly dwellings. He was seen walking alone, buried in his own thoughts, his eyes cast down, supporting himself on his long cane, clad in his wadded purple garment of silk, which was very warm, wearing purple stockings inside his coarse shoes, and surmounted by a flat hat which allowed three golden tassels of large bullion to droop from its three points.

It was a perfect festival wherever he appeared. One would have said that his presence had something warming and luminous about it. The children and the old people came out to the doorsteps for the Bishop as for the sun. He bestowed his blessing, and they blessed him. They pointed out his house to any one who was in need of anything.

Here and there he halted, accosted the little boys and girls, and smiled upon the mothers. He visited the poor so long as he had any money; when he no longer had any, he visited the rich.

As he made his cassocks last a long while, and did not wish to have it noticed, he never went out in the town without his wadded purple cloak. This inconvenienced him somewhat in summer.

On his return, he dined. The dinner resembled his breakfast.

At half-past eight in the evening he supped with his sister, Madame Magloire standing behind them and serving them at table. Nothing could be more frugal than this repast. If, however, the Bishop had one of his cures to supper, Madame Magloire took advantage of the opportunity to serve Monseigneur with some excellent fish from the lake, or with some fine game from the mountains. Every cure furnished the pretext for a good meal: the Bishop did not interfere. With that exception, his ordinary diet consisted only of vegetables boiled in water, and oil soup. Thus it was said in the town, when the Bishop does not indulge in the cheer of a cure, he indulges in the cheer of a trappist.

After supper he conversed for half an hour with Mademoiselle Baptistine and Madame Magloire; then he retired to his own room and set to writing, sometimes on loose sheets, and again on the margin of some folio. He was a man of letters and rather learned. He left behind him five or six very curious manuscripts; among others, a dissertation on this verse in Genesis, In the beginning, the spirit of God floated upon the waters. With this verse he compares three texts: the Arabic verse which says, The winds of God blew; Flavius Josephus who says, A wind from above was precipitated upon the earth; and finally, the Chaldaic paraphrase of Onkelos, which renders it, A wind coming from God blew upon the face of the waters. In another dissertation, he examines the theological works of Hugo, Bishop of Ptolemais, great-grand-uncle to the writer of this book, and establishes the fact, that to this bishop must be attributed the divers little works published during the last century, under the pseudonym of Barleycourt.

Sometimes, in the midst of his reading, no matter what the book might be which he had in his hand, he would suddenly fall into a profound meditation, whence he only emerged to write a few lines on the pages of the volume itself. These lines have often no connection whatever with the book which contains them. We now have under our eyes a note written by him on the margin of a quarto entitled Correspondence of Lord Germain with Generals Clinton, Cornwallis, and the Admirals on the American station. Versailles, Poincot, book-seller; and Paris, Pissot, bookseller, Quai des Augustins.

Here is the note:—

"Oh, you who are!

"Ecclesiastes calls you the All-powerful; the Maccabees call you the Creator; the Epistle to the Ephesians calls you liberty; Baruch calls you Immensity; the Psalms call you Wisdom and Truth; John calls you Light; the Books of Kings call you Lord; Exodus calls you Providence; Leviticus, Sanctity; Esdras, Justice; the creation calls you God; man calls you Father; but Solomon calls you Compassion, and that is the most beautiful of all your names."

Toward nine o'clock in the evening the two women retired and betook themselves to their chambers on the first floor, leaving him alone until morning on the ground floor.

It is necessary that we should, in this place, give an exact idea of the dwelling of the Bishop of D——

CHAPTER 6 WHO GUARDED HIS HOUSE FOR HIM

The house in which he lived consisted, as we have said, of a ground floor, and one story above; three rooms on the ground floor, three chambers on the first, and an attic above. Behind the house was a garden, a quarter of an acre in extent. The two women occupied the first floor; the Bishop was lodged below. The first room, opening on the street, served him as dining-room, the second was his bedroom, and the third his oratory. There was no exit possible from this oratory, except by passing through the bedroom, nor from the bedroom, without passing through the dining-room. At the end of the suite, in the oratory, there was a detached alcove with a bed, for use in cases of hospitality. The Bishop offered this bed to country curates whom business or the requirements of their parishes brought to D——

The pharmacy of the hospital, a small building which had been added to the house, and abutted on the garden, had been transformed into a kitchen and cellar. In addition to this, there was in the garden a stable, which had formerly been the kitchen of the hospital, and in which the Bishop kept two cows. No matter what the quantity of milk they gave, he invariably sent half of it every morning to the sick people in the hospital. "I am paying my tithes," he said.

His bedroom was tolerably large, and rather difficult to warm in bad weather. As wood is extremely dear at D——, he hit upon the idea of having a compartment of boards constructed in the cow-shed. Here he passed his evenings during seasons of severe cold: he called it his winter salon.

In this winter salon, as in the dining-room, there was no other furniture than a square table in white wood, and four straw-seated chairs. In addition to this the dining-room was ornamented with an antique sideboard, painted pink, in water colors. Out of a similar sideboard, properly draped with white napery and imitation lace, the Bishop had constructed the altar which decorated his oratory.

His wealthy penitents and the sainted women of D—— had more than once assessed themselves to raise the money for a new altar for Monseigneur's oratory; on each occasion he had taken the money and had given it to the poor. "The most beautiful of altars," he said, "is the soul of an unhappy creature consoled and thanking God."

In his oratory there were two straw prie-Dieu, and there was an arm-chair, also in straw, in his bedroom. When, by chance, he received seven or eight persons at one time, the prefect, or the general, or the staff of the regiment in garrison, or several pupils from the little seminary, the chairs had to be fetched from the winter salon in the stable, the prie-Dieu from the oratory, and the arm-chair from the bedroom: in this way as many as eleven chairs could be collected for the visitors. A room was dismantled for each new guest.

It sometimes happened that there were twelve in the party; the Bishop then relieved the embarrassment of the situation by standing in front of the chimney if it was winter, or by strolling in the garden if it was summer.

There was still another chair in the detached alcove, but the straw was half gone from it, and it had but three legs, so that it was of service only when propped against the wall. Mademoiselle Baptistine had also in her own room a very large easy-chair of wood, which had formerly been gilded, and which was covered with flowered pekin; but they had been obliged to hoist this bergere up to the first story through the window, as the staircase was too narrow; it could not, therefore, be reckoned among the possibilities in the way of furniture.

Mademoiselle Baptistine's ambition had been to be able to purchase a set of drawing-room furniture in yellow Utrecht velvet, stamped with a rose pattern, and with mahogany in swan's neck style, with a sofa. But this would have cost five hundred francs at least, and in view of the fact that she had only been able to lay by forty-two francs and ten sous for this purpose in the course of five years, she had ended by renouncing the idea. However, who is there who has attained his ideal?

Nothing is more easy to present to the imagination than the Bishop's bedchamber. A glazed door opened on the garden; opposite this was the bed,—a hospital bed of iron, with a canopy of green serge; in the shadow of the bed, behind a curtain, were the utensils of the toilet, which still betrayed the elegant habits of the man of the world: there were two doors, one near the chimney, opening into the oratory; the other near the bookcase, opening into the dining-room. The bookcase was a large cupboard with glass doors filled with books; the chimney was of wood painted to represent marble, and habitually without fire. In the chimney stood a pair of firedogs of iron, ornamented above with two garlanded vases, and flutings which had formerly been silvered with silver leaf, which was a sort of episcopal luxury; above the chimney-piece hung a crucifix of copper, with the silver worn off, fixed on a background of threadbare velvet in a wooden frame from which the gilding had fallen; near the glass door a large table with an inkstand, loaded with a confusion of papers and with huge volumes; before the table an arm-chair of straw; in front of the bed a prie-Dieu, borrowed from the oratory.

Two portraits in oval frames were fastened to the wall on each side of the bed. Small gilt inscriptions on the plain surface of the cloth at the side of these figures indicated that the portraits represented, one the Abbe of Chaliot, bishop of Saint Claude; the other, the Abbe Tourteau, vicar-general of Agde, abbe of Grand-Champ, order of Citeaux, diocese of Chartres. When the Bishop succeeded to this apartment, after the hospital patients, he had found these portraits there, and had left them. They were priests, and probably donors—two reasons for respecting them. All that he knew about these two persons was, that they had been appointed by the king, the one to his bishopric, the other to his benefice, on the same day, the 27th of April, 1785. Madame Magloire having taken the pictures down to dust, the Bishop had discovered these particulars written in whitish ink on a little square of paper, yellowed by time, and attached to the back of the portrait of the Abbe of Grand-Champ with four wafers.

At his window he had an antique curtain of a coarse woollen stuff, which finally became so old, that, in order to avoid the expense of a new one, Madame Magloire was forced to take a large seam in the very middle of it. This seam took the form of a cross. The Bishop often called attention to it: "How delightful that is!" he said.

All the rooms in the house, without exception, those on the ground floor as well as those on the first floor, were white-washed, which is a fashion in barracks and hospitals.

However, in their latter years, Madame Magloire discovered beneath the paper which had been washed over, paintings, ornamenting the apartment of Mademoiselle Baptistine, as we shall see further on. Before becoming a hospital, this house had been the ancient parliament house of the Bourgeois. Hence this

decoration. The chambers were paved in red bricks, which were washed every week, with straw mats in front of all the beds. Altogether, this dwelling, which was attended to by the two women, was exquisitely clean from top to bottom. This was the sole luxury which the Bishop permitted. He said, "That takes nothing from the poor."

It must be confessed, however, that he still retained from his former possessions six silver knives and forks and a soup-ladle, which Madame Magloire contemplated every day with delight, as they glistened splendidly upon the coarse linen cloth. And since we are now painting the Bishop of D—— as he was in reality, we must add that he had said more than once, "I find it difficult to renounce eating from silver dishes."

To this silverware must be added two large candlesticks of massive silver, which he had inherited from a great-aunt. These candlesticks held two wax candles, and usually figured on the Bishop's chimney-piece. When he had any one to dinner, Madame Magloire lighted the two candles and set the candlesticks on the table.

In the Bishop's own chamber, at the head of his bed, there was a small cupboard, in which Madame Magloire locked up the six silver knives and forks and the big spoon every night. But it is necessary to add, that the key was never removed.

The garden, which had been rather spoiled by the ugly buildings which we have mentioned, was composed of four alleys in cross-form, radiating from a tank. Another walk made the circuit of the garden, and skirted the white wall which enclosed it. These alleys left behind them four square plots rimmed with box. In three of these, Madame Magloire cultivated vegetables; in the fourth, the Bishop had planted some flowers; here and there stood a few fruit-trees. Madame Magloire had once remarked, with a sort of gentle malice: "Monseigneur, you who turn everything to account, have, nevertheless, one useless plot. It would be better to grow salads there than bouquets." "Madame Magloire," retorted the Bishop, "you are mistaken. The beautiful is as useful as the useful." He added after a pause, "More so, perhaps."

This plot, consisting of three or four beds, occupied the Bishop almost as much as did his books. He liked to pass an hour or two there, trimming, hoeing, and making holes here and there in the earth, into which he dropped seeds. He was not as hostile to insects as a gardener could have wished to see him. Moreover, he made no pretensions to botany; he ignored groups and consistency; he made not the slightest effort to decide between Tournefort and the natural method; he took part neither with the buds against the cotyledons, nor with Jussieu against Linnaeus. He did not study plants; he loved flowers. He respected learned men greatly; he respected the ignorant still more; and, without ever failing in these two respects, he watered his flower-beds every summer evening with a tin watering-pot painted green.

The house had not a single door which could be locked. The door of the dining-room, which, as we have said, opened directly on the cathedral square, had formerly been ornamented with locks and bolts like the door of a prison. The Bishop had had all this ironwork removed, and this door was never fastened, either by night or by day, with anything except the latch. All that the first passerby had to do at any hour, was to give it a push. At first, the two women had been very much tried by this door, which was never fastened, but Monsieur de D—— had said to them, "Have bolts put on your rooms, if that will please you." They had ended by sharing his confidence, or by at least acting as though they shared it. Madame Magloire alone had frights from time to time. As for the Bishop, his thought can be found explained, or at least indicated, in the three lines which he wrote on the margin of a Bible, "This is the shade of difference: the door of the physician should never be shut, the door of the priest should always be open."

On another book, entitled Philosophy of the Medical Science, he had written this other note: "Am not I a physician like them? I also have my patients, and then, too, I have some whom I call my unfortunates."

Again he wrote: "Do not inquire the name of him who asks a shelter of you. The very man who is embarrassed by his name is the one who needs shelter."

It chanced that a worthy cure, I know not whether it was the cure of Couloubroux or the cure of Pompierry, took it into his head to ask him one day, probably at the instigation of Madame Magloire, whether Monsieur was sure that he was not committing an indiscretion, to a certain extent, in leaving his door unfastened day and night, at the mercy of any one who should choose to enter, and whether, in short, he did not fear lest some misfortune might occur in a house so little guarded. The Bishop touched his shoulder, with gentle gravity, and said to him, "Nisi Dominus custodierit domum, in vanum vigilant qui custodiunt eam," Unless the Lord guard the house, in vain do they watch who guard it.

Then he spoke of something else.

He was fond of saying, "There is a bravery of the priest as well as the bravery of a colonel of dragoons,—only," he added, "ours must be tranquil."

CHAPTER 7 CRAVATTE

It is here that a fact falls naturally into place, which we must not omit, because it is one of the sort which show us best what sort of a man the Bishop of D—— was.

After the destruction of the band of Gaspard Bes, who had infested the gorges of Ollioules, one of his lieutenants, Cravatte, took refuge in the mountains. He concealed himself for some time with his bandits, the remnant of Gaspard Bes's troop, in the county of Nice; then he made his way to Piedmont, and suddenly reappeared in France, in the vicinity of Barcelonette. He was first seen at Jauziers, then at Tuiles. He hid himself in the caverns of the Joug-de-l'Aigle, and thence he descended towards the hamlets and villages through the ravines of Ubaye and Ubayette.

He even pushed as far as Embrun, entered the cathedral one night, and despoiled the sacristy. His highway robberies laid waste the country-side. The gendarmes were set on his track, but in vain. He always escaped; sometimes he resisted by main force. He was a bold wretch. In the midst of all this terror the Bishop arrived. He was making his circuit to Chastelar. The mayor came to meet him, and urged him to retrace his steps. Cravatte was in possession of the mountains as far as Arche, and beyond; there was danger even with an escort; it merely exposed three or four unfortunate gendarmes to no purpose.

"Therefore," said the Bishop, "I intend to go without escort."

"You do not really mean that, Monseigneur!" exclaimed the mayor.

"I do mean it so thoroughly that I absolutely refuse any gendarmes, and shall set out in an hour."

"Set out?"

"Set out."

"Alone?"

"Alone."

"Monseigneur, you will not do that!"

"There exists yonder in the mountains," said the Bishop, a tiny community no bigger than that, which I have not seen for three years. They are my good friends, those gentle and honest shepherds. They own one goat out of every thirty that they tend. They make very pretty woollen cords of various colors, and they play the mountain airs on little flutes with six holes. They need to be told of the good God now and then. What would they say to a bishop who was afraid? What would they say if I did not go?"

"But the brigands, Monseigneur?"

"Hold," said the Bishop, "I must think of that. You are right. I may meet them. They, too, need to be told of the good God."

"But, Monseigneur, there is a band of them! A flock of wolves!"

"Monsieur le maire, it may be that it is of this very flock of wolves that Jesus has constituted me the shepherd. Who knows the ways of Providence?"

"They will rob you, Monseigneur."

"I have nothing."

"They will kill you."

"An old goodman of a priest, who passes along mumbling his prayers? Bah! To what purpose?"

"Oh, mon Dieu! what if you should meet them!"

"I should beg alms of them for my poor."

"Do not go, Monseigneur. In the name of Heaven! You are risking your life!"

"Monsieur le maire," said the Bishop, "is that really all? I am not in the world to guard my own life, but to guard souls."

They had to allow him to do as he pleased. He set out, accompanied only by a child who offered to serve as a guide. His obstinacy was bruited about the country-side, and caused great consternation.

He would take neither his sister nor Madame Magloire. He traversed the mountain on mule-back, encountered no one, and arrived safe and sound at the residence of his "good friends," the shepherds. He remained there for a fortnight, preaching, administering the sacrament, teaching, exhorting. When the time of his departure approached, he resolved to chant a Te Deum pontifically. He mentioned it to the cure. But what was to be done? There were no episcopal ornaments. They could only place at his disposal a wretched village sacristy, with a few ancient chasubles of threadbare damask adorned with imitation lace.

"Bah!" said the Bishop. "Let us announce our Te Deum from the pulpit, nevertheless, Monsieur le Cure. Things will arrange themselves."

They instituted a search in the churches of the neighborhood. All the magnificence of these humble parishes combined would not have sufficed to clothe the chorister of a cathedral properly.

While they were thus embarrassed, a large chest was brought and deposited in the presbytery for the Bishop, by two unknown horsemen, who departed on the instant. The chest was opened; it contained a cope of cloth of gold, a mitre ornamented with diamonds, an archbishop's cross, a magnificent crosier,—all the

pontifical vestments which had been stolen a month previously from the treasury of Notre Dame d'Embrun. In the chest was a paper, on which these words were written, "From Cravatte to Monseigneur Bienvenu."

"Did not I say that things would come right of themselves?" said the Bishop. Then he added, with a smile, "To him who contents himself with the surplice of a curate, God sends the cope of an archbishop."

"Monseigneur," murmured the cure, throwing back his head with a smile. "God—or the Devil."

The Bishop looked steadily at the cure, and repeated with authority, "God!"

When he returned to Chastelar, the people came out to stare at him as at a curiosity, all along the road. At the priest's house in Chastelar he rejoined Mademoiselle Baptistine and Madame Magloire, who were waiting for him, and he said to his sister: "Well! was I in the right? The poor priest went to his poor mountaineers with empty hands, and he returns from them with his hands full. I set out bearing only my faith in God; I have brought back the treasure of a cathedral."

That evening, before he went to bed, he said again: "Let us never fear robbers nor murderers. Those are dangers from without, petty dangers. Let us fear ourselves. Prejudices are the real robbers; vices are the real murderers. The great dangers lie within ourselves. What matters it what threatens our head or our purse! Let us think only of that which threatens our soul."

Then, turning to his sister: "Sister, never a precaution on the part of the priest, against his fellow-man. That which his fellow does, God permits. Let us confine ourselves to prayer, when we think that a danger is approaching us. Let us pray, not for ourselves, but that our brother may not fall into sin on our account."

However, such incidents were rare in his life. We relate those of which we know; but generally he passed his life in doing the same things at the same moment. One month of his year resembled one hour of his day.

As to what became of "the treasure" of the cathedral of Embrun, we should be embarrassed by any inquiry in that direction. It consisted of very handsome things, very tempting things, and things which were very well adapted to be stolen for the benefit of the unfortunate. Stolen they had already been elsewhere. Half of the adventure was completed; it only remained to impart a new direction to the theft, and to cause it to take a short trip in the direction of the poor. However, we make no assertions on this point. Only, a rather obscure note was found among the Bishop's papers, which may bear some relation to this matter, and which is couched in these terms, "The question is, to decide whether this should be turned over to the cathedral or to the hospital."

CHAPTER 8 PHILOSOPHY AFTER DRINKING

The senator above mentioned was a clever man, who had made his own way, heedless of those things which present obstacles, and which are called conscience, sworn faith, justice, duty: he had marched straight to his goal, without once flinching in the line of his advancement and his interest. He was an old attorney, softened by success; not a bad man by any means, who rendered all the small services in his power to his sons, his sons-in-law, his relations, and even to his friends, having wisely seized upon, in life, good sides, good opportunities, good windfalls. Everything else seemed to him very stupid. He was intelligent, and just sufficiently educated to think himself a disciple of Epicurus; while he was, in reality, only a product of Pigault-Lebrun. He laughed willingly and pleasantly over infinite and eternal things, and at the "Crotchets of that

good old fellow the Bishop." He even sometimes laughed at him with an amiable authority in the presence of M. Myriel himself, who listened to him.

On some semi-official occasion or other, I do not recollect what, Count*** [this senator] and M. Myriel were to dine with the prefect. At dessert, the senator, who was slightly exhilarated, though still perfectly dignified, exclaimed:—

"Egad, Bishop, let's have a discussion. It is hard for a senator and a bishop to look at each other without winking. We are two augurs. I am going to make a confession to you. I have a philosophy of my own."

"And you are right," replied the Bishop. "As one makes one's philosophy, so one lies on it. You are on the bed of purple, senator."

The senator was encouraged, and went on:—

"Let us be good fellows."

"Good devils even," said the Bishop.

"I declare to you," continued the senator, "that the Marquis d'Argens, Pyrrhon, Hobbes, and M. Naigeon are no rascals. I have all the philosophers in my library gilded on the edges."

"Like yourself, Count," interposed the Bishop.

The senator resumed:—

"I hate Diderot; he is an ideologist, a declaimer, and a revolutionist, a believer in God at bottom, and more bigoted than Voltaire. Voltaire made sport of Needham, and he was wrong, for Needham's eels prove that God is useless. A drop of vinegar in a spoonful of flour paste supplies the fiat lux. Suppose the drop to be larger and the spoonful bigger; you have the world. Man is the eel. Then what is the good of the Eternal Father? The Jehovah hypothesis tires me, Bishop. It is good for nothing but to produce shallow people, whose reasoning is hollow. Down with that great All, which torments me! Hurrah for Zero which leaves me in peace! Between you and me, and in order to empty my sack, and make confession to my pastor, as it behooves me to do, I will admit to you that I have good sense. I am not enthusiastic over your Jesus, who preaches renunciation and sacrifice to the last extremity. 'Tis the counsel of an avaricious man to beggars. Renunciation; why? Sacrifice; to what end? I do not see one wolf immolating himself for the happiness of another wolf. Let us stick to nature, then. We are at the top; let us have a superior philosophy. What is the advantage of being at the top, if one sees no further than the end of other people's noses? Let us live merrily. Life is all. That man has another future elsewhere, on high, below, anywhere, I don't believe; not one single word of it. Ah! sacrifice and renunciation are recommended to me; I must take heed to everything I do; I must cudgel my brains over good and evil, over the just and the unjust, over the fas and the nefas. Why? Because I shall have to render an account of my actions. When? After death. What a fine dream! After my death it will be a very clever person who can catch me. Have a handful of dust seized by a shadow-hand, if you can. Let us tell the truth, we who are initiated, and who have raised the veil of Isis: there is no such thing as either good or evil; there is vegetation. Let us seek the real. Let us get to the bottom of it. Let us go into it thoroughly. What the deuce! let us go to the bottom of it! We must scent out the truth; dig in the earth for it, and seize it. Then it gives you exquisite joys. Then you grow strong, and you laugh. I am square on the bottom, I am. Immortality, Bishop, is a chance, a waiting for dead men's shoes. Ah! what a charming promise! trust to it, if you like! What a fine lot Adam has! We are souls, and we shall be angels, with blue wings on our shoulder-blades. Do come to my assistance: is it not Tertullian who says that the blessed shall

travel from star to star? Very well. We shall be the grasshoppers of the stars. And then, besides, we shall see God. Ta, ta, ta! What twaddle all these paradises are! God is a nonsensical monster. I would not say that in the Moniteur, egad! but I may whisper it among friends. Inter pocula. To sacrifice the world to paradise is to let slip the prey for the shadow. Be the dupe of the infinite! I'm not such a fool. I am a nought. I call myself Monsieur le Comte Nought, senator. Did I exist before my birth? No. Shall I exist after death? No. What am I? A little dust collected in an organism. What am I to do on this earth? The choice rests with me: suffer or enjoy. Whither will suffering lead me? To nothingness; but I shall have suffered. Whither will enjoyment lead me? To nothingness; but I shall have enjoyed myself. My choice is made. One must eat or be eaten. I shall eat. It is better to be the tooth than the grass. Such is my wisdom. After which, go whither I push thee, the grave-digger is there; the Pantheon for some of us: all falls into the great hole. End. Finis. Total liquidation. This is the vanishing-point. Death is death, believe me. I laugh at the idea of there being any one who has anything to tell me on that subject. Fables of nurses; bugaboo for children; Jehovah for men. No; our to-morrow is the night. Beyond the tomb there is nothing but equal nothingness. You have been Sardanapalus, you have been Vincent de Paul—it makes no difference. That is the truth. Then live your life, above all things. Make use of your *I* while you have it. In truth, Bishop, I tell you that I have a philosophy of my own, and I have my philosophers. I don't let myself be taken in with that nonsense. Of course, there must be something for those who are down,—for the barefooted beggars, knife-grinders, and miserable wretches. Legends, chimeras, the soul, immortality, paradise, the stars, are provided for them to swallow. They gobble it down. They spread it on their dry bread. He who has nothing else has the good. God. That is the least he can have. I oppose no objection to that; but I reserve Monsieur Naigeon for myself. The good God is good for the populace."

The Bishop clapped his hands.

"That's talking!" he exclaimed. "What an excellent and really marvellous thing is this materialism! Not every one who wants it can have it. Ah! when one does have it, one is no longer a dupe, one does not stupidly allow one's self to be exiled like Cato, nor stoned like Stephen, nor burned alive like Jeanne d'Arc. Those who have succeeded in procuring this admirable materialism have the joy of feeling themselves irresponsible, and of thinking that they can devour everything without uneasiness,—places, sinecures, dignities, power, whether well or ill acquired, lucrative recantations, useful treacheries, savory capitulations of conscience,—and that they shall enter the tomb with their digestion accomplished. How agreeable that is! I do not say that with reference to you, senator. Nevertheless, it is impossible for me to refrain from congratulating you. You great lords have, so you say, a philosophy of your own, and for yourselves, which is exquisite, refined, accessible to the rich alone, good for all sauces, and which seasons the voluptuousness of life admirably. This philosophy has been extracted from the depths, and unearthed by special seekers. But you are good-natured princes, and you do not think it a bad thing that belief in the good God should constitute the philosophy of the people, very much as the goose stuffed with chestnuts is the truffled turkey of the poor."

CHAPTER 9 THE BROTHER AS DEPICTED BY THE SISTER

In order to furnish an idea of the private establishment of the Bishop of D——, and of the manner in which those two sainted women subordinated their actions, their thoughts, their feminine instincts even, which are easily alarmed, to the habits and purposes of the Bishop, without his even taking the trouble of

speaking in order to explain them, we cannot do better than transcribe in this place a letter from Mademoiselle Baptistine to Madame the Vicomtess de Boischevron, the friend of her childhood. This letter is in our possession.

D——, Dec. 16, 18—. MY GOOD MADAM: Not a day passes without our speaking of you. It is our established custom; but there is another reason besides. Just imagine, while washing and dusting the ceilings and walls, Madam Magloire has made some discoveries; now our two chambers hung with antique paper whitewashed over, would not discredit a chateau in the style of yours. Madam Magloire has pulled off all the paper. There were things beneath. My drawing-room, which contains no furniture, and which we use for spreading out the linen after washing, is fifteen feet in height, eighteen square, with a ceiling which was formerly painted and gilded, and with beams, as in yours. This was covered with a cloth while this was the hospital. And the woodwork was of the era of our grandmothers. But my room is the one you ought to see. Madam Magloire has discovered, under at least ten thicknesses of paper pasted on top, some paintings, which without being good are very tolerable. The subject is Telemachus being knighted by Minerva in some gardens, the name of which escapes me. In short, where the Roman ladies repaired on one single night. What shall I say to you? I have Romans, and Roman ladies [here occurs an illegible word], and the whole train. Madam Magloire has cleaned it all off; this summer she is going to have some small injuries repaired, and the whole revarnished, and my chamber will be a regular museum. She has also found in a corner of the attic two wooden pier-tables of ancient fashion. They asked us two crowns of six francs each to regild them, but it is much better to give the money to the poor; and they are very ugly besides, and I should much prefer a round table of mahogany.

I am always very happy. My brother is so good. He gives all he has to the poor and sick. We are very much cramped. The country is trying in the winter, and we really must do something for those who are in need. We are almost comfortably lighted and warmed. You see that these are great treats.

My brother has ways of his own. When he talks, he says that a bishop ought to be so. Just imagine! the door of our house is never fastened. Whoever chooses to enter finds himself at once in my brother's room. He fears nothing, even at night. That is his sort of bravery, he says.

He does not wish me or Madame Magloire feel any fear for him. He exposes himself to all sorts of dangers, and he does not like to have us even seem to notice it. One must know how to understand him.

He goes out in the rain, he walks in the water, he travels in winter. He fears neither suspicious roads nor dangerous encounters, nor night.

Last year he went quite alone into a country of robbers. He would not take us. He was absent for a fortnight. On his return nothing had happened to him; he was thought to be dead, but was perfectly well, and said, "This is the way I have been robbed!" And then he opened a trunk full of jewels, all the jewels of the cathedral of Embrun, which the thieves had given him.

When he returned on that occasion, I could not refrain from scolding him a little, taking care, however, not to speak except when the carriage was making a noise, so that no one might hear me.

At first I used to say to myself, "There are no dangers which will stop him; he is terrible." Now I have ended by getting used to it. I make a sign to Madam Magloire that she is not to oppose him. He risks himself as he sees fit. I carry off Madam Magloire, I enter my chamber, I pray for him and fall asleep. I am at ease, because I know that if anything were to happen to him, it would be the end of me. I should go to the good God with my brother and my bishop. It has cost Madam Magloire more trouble than it did me to accustom

herself to what she terms his imprudences. But now the habit has been acquired. We pray together, we tremble together, and we fall asleep. If the devil were to enter this house, he would be allowed to do so. After all, what is there for us to fear in this house? There is always some one with us who is stronger than we. The devil may pass through it, but the good God dwells here.

This suffices me. My brother has no longer any need of saying a word to me. I understand him without his speaking, and we abandon ourselves to the care of Providence. That is the way one has to do with a man who possesses grandeur of soul.

I have interrogated my brother with regard to the information which you desire on the subject of the Faux family. You are aware that he knows everything, and that he has memories, because he is still a very good royalist. They really are a very ancient Norman family of the generalship of Caen. Five hundred years ago there was a Raoul de Faux, a Jean de Faux, and a Thomas de Faux, who were gentlemen, and one of whom was a seigneur de Rochefort. The last was Guy-Etienne-Alexandre, and was commander of a regiment, and something in the light horse of Bretagne. His daughter, Marie-Louise, married Adrien-Charles de Gramont, son of the Duke Louis de Gramont, peer of France, colonel of the French guards, and lieutenant-general of the army. It is written Faux, Fauq, and Faoucq.

Good Madame, recommend us to the prayers of your sainted relative, Monsieur the Cardinal. As for your dear Sylvanie, she has done well in not wasting the few moments which she passes with you in writing to me. She is well, works as you would wish, and loves me.

That is all that I desire. The souvenir which she sent through you reached me safely, and it makes me very happy. My health is not so very bad, and yet I grow thinner every day. Farewell; my paper is at an end, and this forces me to leave you. A thousand good wishes. BAPTISTINE.

P.S. Your grand nephew is charming. Do you know that he will soon be five years old? Yesterday he saw some one riding by on horseback who had on knee-caps, and he said, "What has he got on his knees?" He is a charming child! His little brother is dragging an old broom about the room, like a carriage, and saying, "Hu!"

As will be perceived from this letter, these two women understood how to mould themselves to the Bishop's ways with that special feminine genius which comprehends the man better than he comprehends himself. The Bishop of D——, in spite of the gentle and candid air which never deserted him, sometimes did things that were grand, bold, and magnificent, without seeming to have even a suspicion of the fact. They trembled, but they let him alone. Sometimes Madame Magloire essayed a remonstrance in advance, but never at the time, nor afterwards. They never interfered with him by so much as a word or sign, in any action once entered upon. At certain moments, without his having occasion to mention it, when he was not even conscious of it himself in all probability, so perfect was his simplicity, they vaguely felt that he was acting as a bishop; then they were nothing more than two shadows in the house. They served him passively; and if obedience consisted in disappearing, they disappeared. They understood, with an admirable delicacy of instinct, that certain cares may be put under constraint. Thus, even when believing him to be in peril, they understood, I will not say his thought, but his nature, to such a degree that they no longer watched over him. They confided him to God.

Moreover, Baptistine said, as we have just read, that her brother's end would prove her own. Madame Magloire did not say this, but she knew it.

CHAPTER 10 THE BISHOP IN THE PRESENCE OF AN UNKNOWN LIGHT

At an epoch a little later than the date of the letter cited in the preceding pages, he did a thing which, if the whole town was to be believed, was even more hazardous than his trip across the mountains infested with bandits.

In the country near D—— a man lived quite alone. This man, we will state at once, was a former member of the Convention. His name was G——

Member of the Convention, G—— was mentioned with a sort of horror in the little world of D—— A member of the Convention—can you imagine such a thing? That existed from the time when people called each other thou, and when they said "citizen." This man was almost a monster. He had not voted for the death of the king, but almost. He was a quasi-regicide. He had been a terrible man. How did it happen that such a man had not been brought before a provost's court, on the return of the legitimate princes? They need not have cut off his head, if you please; clemency must be exercised, agreed; but a good banishment for life. An example, in short, etc. Besides, he was an atheist, like all the rest of those people. Gossip of the geese about the vulture.

Was G—— a vulture after all? Yes; if he were to be judged by the element of ferocity in this solitude of his. As he had not voted for the death of the king, he had not been included in the decrees of exile, and had been able to remain in France.

He dwelt at a distance of three-quarters of an hour from the city, far from any hamlet, far from any road, in some hidden turn of a very wild valley, no one knew exactly where. He had there, it was said, a sort of field, a hole, a lair. There were no neighbors, not even passers-by. Since he had dwelt in that valley, the path which led thither had disappeared under a growth of grass. The locality was spoken of as though it had been the dwelling of a hangman.

Nevertheless, the Bishop meditated on the subject, and from time to time he gazed at the horizon at a point where a clump of trees marked the valley of the former member of the Convention, and he said, "There is a soul yonder which is lonely."

And he added, deep in his own mind, "I owe him a visit."

But, let us avow it, this idea, which seemed natural at the first blush, appeared to him after a moment's reflection, as strange, impossible, and almost repulsive. For, at bottom, he shared the general impression, and the old member of the Convention inspired him, without his being clearly conscious of the fact himself, with that sentiment which borders on hate, and which is so well expressed by the word estrangement.

Still, should the scab of the sheep cause the shepherd to recoil? No. But what a sheep!

The good Bishop was perplexed. Sometimes he set out in that direction; then he returned.

Finally, the rumor one day spread through the town that a sort of young shepherd, who served the member of the Convention in his hovel, had come in quest of a doctor; that the old wretch was dying, that paralysis was gaining on him, and that he would not live over night.—"Thank God!" some added.

The Bishop took his staff, put on his cloak, on account of his too threadbare cassock, as we have mentioned, and because of the evening breeze which was sure to rise soon, and set out.

The sun was setting, and had almost touched the horizon when the Bishop arrived at the excommunicated spot. With a certain beating of the heart, he recognized the fact that he was near the lair. He strode over a ditch, leaped a hedge, made his way through a fence of dead boughs, entered a neglected paddock, took a few steps with a good deal of boldness, and suddenly, at the extremity of the waste land, and behind lofty brambles, he caught sight of the cavern.

It was a very low hut, poor, small, and clean, with a vine nailed against the outside.

Near the door, in an old wheel-chair, the arm-chair of the peasants, there was a white-haired man, smiling at the sun.

Near the seated man stood a young boy, the shepherd lad. He was offering the old man a jar of milk.

While the Bishop was watching him, the old man spoke: "Thank you," he said, "I need nothing." And his smile quitted the sun to rest upon the child.

The Bishop stepped forward. At the sound which he made in walking, the old man turned his head, and his face expressed the sum total of the surprise which a man can still feel after a long life.

"This is the first time since I have been here," said he, "that any one has entered here. Who are you, sir?"

The Bishop answered:—

"My name is Bienvenu Myriel."

"Bienvenu Myriel? I have heard that name. Are you the man whom the people call Monseigneur Welcome?"

"I am."

The old man resumed with a half-smile

"In that case, you are my bishop?"

"Something of that sort."

"Enter, sir."

The member of the Convention extended his hand to the Bishop, but the Bishop did not take it. The Bishop confined himself to the remark:—

"I am pleased to see that I have been misinformed. You certainly do not seem to me to be ill."

"Monsieur," replied the old man, "I am going to recover."

He paused, and then said:—

"I shall die three hours hence."

Then he continued:—

"I am something of a doctor; I know in what fashion the last hour draws on. Yesterday, only my feet were cold; to-day, the chill has ascended to my knees; now I feel it mounting to my waist; when it reaches the heart, I shall stop. The sun is beautiful, is it not? I had myself wheeled out here to take a last look at things. You can talk to me; it does not fatigue me. You have done well to come and look at a man who is on the point of death. It is well that there should be witnesses at that moment. One has one's caprices; I should

have liked to last until the dawn, but I know that I shall hardly live three hours. It will be night then. What does it matter, after all? Dying is a simple affair. One has no need of the light for that. So be it. I shall die by starlight."

The old man turned to the shepherd lad:—

"Go to thy bed; thou wert awake all last night; thou art tired."

The child entered the hut.

The old man followed him with his eyes, and added, as though speaking to himself:—

"I shall die while he sleeps. The two slumbers may be good neighbors."

The Bishop was not touched as it seems that he should have been. He did not think he discerned God in this manner of dying; let us say the whole, for these petty contradictions of great hearts must be indicated like the rest: he, who on occasion, was so fond of laughing at "His Grace," was rather shocked at not being addressed as Monseigneur, and he was almost tempted to retort "citizen." He was assailed by a fancy for peevish familiarity, common enough to doctors and priests, but which was not habitual with him. This man, after all, this member of the Convention, this representative of the people, had been one of the powerful ones of the earth; for the first time in his life, probably, the Bishop felt in a mood to be severe.

Meanwhile, the member of the Convention had been surveying him with a modest cordiality, in which one could have distinguished, possibly, that humility which is so fitting when one is on the verge of returning to dust.

The Bishop, on his side, although he generally restrained his curiosity, which, in his opinion, bordered on a fault, could not refrain from examining the member of the Convention with an attention which, as it did not have its course in sympathy, would have served his conscience as a matter of reproach, in connection with any other man. A member of the Convention produced on him somewhat the effect of being outside the pale of the law, even of the law of charity. G——, calm, his body almost upright, his voice vibrating, was one of those octogenarians who form the subject of astonishment to the physiologist. The Revolution had many of these men, proportioned to the epoch. In this old man one was conscious of a man put to the proof. Though so near to his end, he preserved all the gestures of health. In his clear glance, in his firm tone, in the robust movement of his shoulders, there was something calculated to disconcert death. Azrael, the Mohammedan angel of the sepulchre, would have turned back, and thought that he had mistaken the door. G—— seemed to be dying because he willed it so. There was freedom in his agony. His legs alone were motionless. It was there that the shadows held him fast. His feet were cold and dead, but his head survived with all the power of life, and seemed full of light. G——, at this solemn moment, resembled the king in that tale of the Orient who was flesh above and marble below.

There was a stone there. The Bishop sat down. The exordium was abrupt.

"I congratulate you," said he, in the tone which one uses for a reprimand. "You did not vote for the death of the king, after all."

The old member of the Convention did not appear to notice the bitter meaning underlying the words "after all." He replied. The smile had quite disappeared from his face.

"Do not congratulate me too much, sir. I did vote for the death of the tyrant."

It was the tone of austerity answering the tone of severity.

"What do you mean to say?" resumed the Bishop.

"I mean to say that man has a tyrant,—ignorance. I voted for the death of that tyrant. That tyrant engendered royalty, which is authority falsely understood, while science is authority rightly understood. Man should be governed only by science."

"And conscience," added the Bishop.

"It is the same thing. Conscience is the quantity of innate science which we have within us."

Monseigneur Bienvenu listened in some astonishment to this language, which was very new to him.

The member of the Convention resumed:—

"So far as Louis XVI. was concerned, I said `no.' I did not think that I had the right to kill a man; but I felt it my duty to exterminate evil. I voted the end of the tyrant, that is to say, the end of prostitution for woman, the end of slavery for man, the end of night for the child. In voting for the Republic, I voted for that. I voted for fraternity, concord, the dawn. I have aided in the overthrow of prejudices and errors. The crumbling away of prejudices and errors causes light. We have caused the fall of the old world, and the old world, that vase of miseries, has become, through its upsetting upon the human race, an urn of joy."

"Mixed joy," said the Bishop.

"You may say troubled joy, and to-day, after that fatal return of the past, which is called 1814, joy which has disappeared! Alas! The work was incomplete, I admit: we demolished the ancient regime in deeds; we were not able to suppress it entirely in ideas. To destroy abuses is not sufficient; customs must be modified. The mill is there no longer; the wind is still there."

"You have demolished. It may be of use to demolish, but I distrust a demolition complicated with wrath."

"Right has its wrath, Bishop; and the wrath of right is an element of progress. In any case, and in spite of whatever may be said, the French Revolution is the most important step of the human race since the advent of Christ. Incomplete, it may be, but sublime. It set free all the unknown social quantities; it softened spirits, it calmed, appeased, enlightened; it caused the waves of civilization to flow over the earth. It was a good thing. The French Revolution is the consecration of humanity."

The Bishop could not refrain from murmuring:—

"Yes? '93!"

The member of the Convention straightened himself up in his chair with an almost lugubrious solemnity, and exclaimed, so far as a dying man is capable of exclamation:—

"Ah, there you go; '93! I was expecting that word. A cloud had been forming for the space of fifteen hundred years; at the end of fifteen hundred years it burst. You are putting the thunderbolt on its trial."

The Bishop felt, without, perhaps, confessing it, that something within him had suffered extinction. Nevertheless, he put a good face on the matter. He replied:—

"The judge speaks in the name of justice; the priest speaks in the name of pity, which is nothing but a more lofty justice. A thunderbolt should commit no error." And he added, regarding the member of the Convention steadily the while, "Louis XVII.?"

The conventionary stretched forth his hand and grasped the Bishop's arm.

"Louis XVII.! let us see. For whom do you mourn? is it for the innocent child? very good; in that case I mourn with you. Is it for the royal child? I demand time for reflection. To me, the brother of Cartouche, an innocent child who was hung up by the armpits in the Place de Greve, until death ensued, for the sole crime of having been the brother of Cartouche, is no less painful than the grandson of Louis XV., an innocent child, martyred in the tower of the Temple, for the sole crime of having been grandson of Louis XV."

"Monsieur," said the Bishop, "I like not this conjunction of names."

"Cartouche? Louis XV.? To which of the two do you object?"

A momentary silence ensued. The Bishop almost regretted having come, and yet he felt vaguely and strangely shaken.

The conventionary resumed:—

"Ah, Monsieur Priest, you love not the crudities of the true. Christ loved them. He seized a rod and cleared out the Temple. His scourge, full of lightnings, was a harsh speaker of truths. When he cried, `Sinite parvulos,' he made no distinction between the little children. It would not have embarrassed him to bring together the Dauphin of Barabbas and the Dauphin of Herod. Innocence, Monsieur, is its own crown. Innocence has no need to be a highness. It is as august in rags as in fleurs de lys."

"That is true," said the Bishop in a low voice.

"I persist," continued the conventionary G—— "You have mentioned Louis XVII. to me. Let us come to an understanding. Shall we weep for all the innocent, all martyrs, all children, the lowly as well as the exalted? I agree to that. But in that case, as I have told you, we must go back further than '93, and our tears must begin before Louis XVII. I will weep with you over the children of kings, provided that you will weep with me over the children of the people."

"I weep for all," said the Bishop.

"Equally!" exclaimed conventionary G——; "and if the balance must incline, let it be on the side of the people. They have been suffering longer."

Another silence ensued. The conventionary was the first to break it. He raised himself on one elbow, took a bit of his cheek between his thumb and his forefinger, as one does mechanically when one interrogates and judges, and appealed to the Bishop with a gaze full of all the forces of the death agony. It was almost an explosion.

"Yes, sir, the people have been suffering a long while. And hold! that is not all, either; why have you just questioned me and talked to me about Louis XVII.? I know you not. Ever since I have been in these parts I have dwelt in this enclosure alone, never setting foot outside, and seeing no one but that child who helps me. Your name has reached me in a confused manner, it is true, and very badly pronounced, I must admit; but that signifies nothing: clever men have so many ways of imposing on that honest goodman, the people. By the way, I did not hear the sound of your carriage; you have left it yonder, behind the coppice at the fork of the roads, no doubt. I do not know you, I tell you. You have told me that you are the Bishop; but that affords me no information as to your moral personality. In short, I repeat my question. Who are you? You are a bishop; that is to say, a prince of the church, one of those gilded men with heraldic bearings and revenues, who have vast prebends,— the bishopric of D—— fifteen thousand francs settled income, ten thousand in perquisites; total, twenty-five thousand francs,— who have kitchens, who have liveries, who make good cheer, who eat moor-hens on Friday, who strut about, a lackey before, a lackey behind, in a gala coach, and

who have palaces, and who roll in their carriages in the name of Jesus Christ who went barefoot! You are a prelate,—revenues, palace, horses, servants, good table, all the sensualities of life; you have this like the rest, and like the rest, you enjoy it; it is well; but this says either too much or too little; this does not enlighten me upon the intrinsic and essential value of the man who comes with the probable intention of bringing wisdom to me. To whom do I speak? Who are you?"

The Bishop hung his head and replied, "Vermis sum—I am a worm."

"A worm of the earth in a carriage?" growled the conventionary.

It was the conventionary's turn to be arrogant, and the Bishop's to be humble.

The Bishop resumed mildly:—

"So be it, sir. But explain to me how my carriage, which is a few paces off behind the trees yonder, how my good table and the moor-hens which I eat on Friday, how my twenty-five thousand francs income, how my palace and my lackeys prove that clemency is not a duty, and that '93 was not inexorable.

The conventionary passed his hand across his brow, as though to sweep away a cloud.

"Before replying to you," he said, "I beseech you to pardon me. I have just committed a wrong, sir. You are at my house, you are my guest, I owe you courtesy. You discuss my ideas, and it becomes me to confine myself to combating your arguments. Your riches and your pleasures are advantages which I hold over you in the debate; but good taste dictates that I shall not make use of them. I promise you to make no use of them in the future."

"I thank you," said the Bishop.

G—— resumed.

"Let us return to the explanation which you have asked of me. Where were we? What were you saying to me? That '93 was inexorable?"

"Inexorable; yes," said the Bishop. "What think you of Marat clapping his hands at the guillotine?"

"What think you of Bossuet chanting the Te Deum over the dragonnades?"

The retort was a harsh one, but it attained its mark with the directness of a point of steel. The Bishop quivered under it; no reply occurred to him; but he was offended by this mode of alluding to Bossuet. The best of minds will have their fetiches, and they sometimes feel vaguely wounded by the want of respect of logic.

The conventionary began to pant; the asthma of the agony which is mingled with the last breaths interrupted his voice; still, there was a perfect lucidity of soul in his eyes. He went on:—

"Let me say a few words more in this and that direction; I am willing. Apart from the Revolution, which, taken as a whole, is an immense human affirmation, '93 is, alas! a rejoinder. You think it inexorable, sir; but what of the whole monarchy, sir? Carrier is a bandit; but what name do you give to Montrevel? Fouquier-Tainville is a rascal; but what is your opinion as to Lamoignon-Baville? Maillard is terrible; but Saulx-Tavannes, if you please? Duchene senior is ferocious; but what epithet will you allow me for the elder Letellier? Jourdan-Coupe-Tete is a monster; but not so great a one as M. the Marquis de Louvois. Sir, sir, I am sorry for Marie Antoinette, archduchess and queen; but I am also sorry for that poor Huguenot woman, who, in 1685, under Louis the Great, sir, while with a nursing infant, was bound, naked to the waist, to a

stake, and the child kept at a distance; her breast swelled with milk and her heart with anguish; the little one, hungry and pale, beheld that breast and cried and agonized; the executioner said to the woman, a mother and a nurse, `Abjure!' giving her her choice between the death of her infant and the death of her conscience. What say you to that torture of Tantalus as applied to a mother? Bear this well in mind sir: the French Revolution had its reasons for existence; its wrath will be absolved by the future; its result is the world made better. From its most terrible blows there comes forth a caress for the human race. I abridge, I stop, I have too much the advantage; moreover, I am dying."

And ceasing to gaze at the Bishop, the conventionary concluded his thoughts in these tranquil words:—

"Yes, the brutalities of progress are called revolutions. When they are over, this fact is recognized,—that the human race has been treated harshly, but that it has progressed."

The conventionary doubted not that he had successively conquered all the inmost intrenchments of the Bishop. One remained, however, and from this intrenchment, the last resource of Monseigneur Bienvenu's resistance, came forth this reply, wherein appeared nearly all the harshness of the beginning:—

"Progress should believe in God. Good cannot have an impious servitor. He who is an atheist is but a bad leader for the human race."

The former representative of the people made no reply. He was seized with a fit of trembling. He looked towards heaven, and in his glance a tear gathered slowly. When the eyelid was full, the tear trickled down his livid cheek, and he said, almost in a stammer, quite low, and to himself, while his eyes were plunged in the depths:—

"O thou! O ideal! Thou alone existest!"

The Bishop experienced an indescribable shock.

After a pause, the old man raised a finger heavenward and said:—

"The infinite is. He is there. If the infinite had no person, person would be without limit; it would not be infinite; in other words, it would not exist. There is, then, an *I*. That *I* of the infinite is God."

The dying man had pronounced these last words in a loud voice, and with the shiver of ecstasy, as though he beheld some one. When he had spoken, his eyes closed. The effort had exhausted him. It was evident that he had just lived through in a moment the few hours which had been left to him. That which he had said brought him nearer to him who is in death. The supreme moment was approaching.

The Bishop understood this; time pressed; it was as a priest that he had come: from extreme coldness he had passed by degrees to extreme emotion; he gazed at those closed eyes, he took that wrinkled, aged and ice-cold hand in his, and bent over the dying man.

"This hour is the hour of God. Do you not think that it would be regrettable if we had met in vain?"

The conventionary opened his eyes again. A gravity mingled with gloom was imprinted on his countenance.

"Bishop," said he, with a slowness which probably arose more from his dignity of soul than from the failing of his strength, "I have passed my life in meditation, study, and contemplation. I was sixty years of age when my country called me and commanded me to concern myself with its affairs. I obeyed. Abuses existed, I combated them; tyrannies existed, I destroyed them; rights and principles existed, I proclaimed and confessed them. Our territory was invaded, I defended it; France was menaced, I offered my breast. I was

not rich; I am poor. I have been one of the masters of the state; the vaults of the treasury were encumbered with specie to such a degree that we were forced to shore up the walls, which were on the point of bursting beneath the weight of gold and silver; I dined in Dead Tree Street, at twenty-two sous. I have succored the oppressed, I have comforted the suffering. I tore the cloth from the altar, it is true; but it was to bind up the wounds of my country. I have always upheld the march forward of the human race, forward towards the light, and I have sometimes resisted progress without pity. I have, when the occasion offered, protected my own adversaries, men of your profession. And there is at Peteghem, in Flanders, at the very spot where the Merovingian kings had their summer palace, a convent of Urbanists, the Abbey of Sainte Claire en Beaulieu, which I saved in 1793. I have done my duty according to my powers, and all the good that I was able. After which, I was hunted down, pursued, persecuted, blackened, jeered at, scorned, cursed, proscribed. For many years past, I with my white hair have been conscious that many people think they have the right to despise me; to the poor ignorant masses I present the visage of one damned. And I accept this isolation of hatred, without hating any one myself. Now I am eighty-six years old; I am on the point of death. What is it that you have come to ask of me?"

"Your blessing," said the Bishop.

And he knelt down.

When the Bishop raised his head again, the face of the conventionary had become august. He had just expired.

The Bishop returned home, deeply absorbed in thoughts which cannot be known to us. He passed the whole night in prayer. On the following morning some bold and curious persons attempted to speak to him about member of the Convention G——; he contented himself with pointing heavenward.

From that moment he redoubled his tenderness and brotherly feeling towards all children and sufferers.

Any allusion to "that old wretch of a G——" caused him to fall into a singular preoccupation. No one could say that the passage of that soul before his, and the reflection of that grand conscience upon his, did not count for something in his approach to perfection.

This "pastoral visit" naturally furnished an occasion for a murmur of comment in all the little local coteries.

"Was the bedside of such a dying man as that the proper place for a bishop? There was evidently no conversion to be expected. All those revolutionists are backsliders. Then why go there? What was there to be seen there? He must have been very curious indeed to see a soul carried off by the devil."

One day a dowager of the impertinent variety who thinks herself spiritual, addressed this sally to him, "Monseigneur, people are inquiring when Your Greatness will receive the red cap!"—"Oh! oh! that's a coarse color," replied the Bishop. "It is lucky that those who despise it in a cap revere it in a hat."

CHAPTER 11 A RESTRICTION

We should incur a great risk of deceiving ourselves, were we to conclude from this that Monseigneur Welcome was "a philosophical bishop," or a "patriotic cure." His meeting, which may almost be designated as his union, with conventionary G——, left behind it in his mind a sort of astonishment, which rendered him still more gentle. That is all.

Although Monseigneur Bienvenu was far from being a politician, this is, perhaps, the place to indicate very briefly what his attitude was in the events of that epoch, supposing that Monseigneur Bienvenu ever dreamed of having an attitude.

Let us, then, go back a few years.

Some time after the elevation of M. Myriel to the episcopate, the Emperor had made him a baron of the Empire, in company with many other bishops. The arrest of the Pope took place, as every one knows, on the night of the 5th to the 6th of July, 1809; on this occasion, M. Myriel was summoned by Napoleon to the synod of the bishops of France and Italy convened at Paris. This synod was held at Notre-Dame, and assembled for the first time on the 15th of June, 1811, under the presidency of Cardinal Fesch. M. Myriel was one of the ninety-five bishops who attended it. But he was present only at one sitting and at three or four private conferences. Bishop of a mountain diocese, living so very close to nature, in rusticity and deprivation, it appeared that he imported among these eminent personages, ideas which altered the temperature of the assembly. He very soon returned to D—— He was interrogated as to this speedy return, and he replied: "I embarrassed them. The outside air penetrated to them through me. I produced on them the effect of an open door."

On another occasion he said, "What would you have? Those gentlemen are princes. I am only a poor peasant bishop."

The fact is that he displeased them. Among other strange things, it is said that he chanced to remark one evening, when he found himself at the house of one of his most notable colleagues: "What beautiful clocks! What beautiful carpets! What beautiful liveries! They must be a great trouble. I would not have all those superfluities, crying incessantly in my ears: `There are people who are hungry! There are people who are cold! There are poor people! There are poor people!'"

Let us remark, by the way, that the hatred of luxury is not an intelligent hatred. This hatred would involve the hatred of the arts. Nevertheless, in churchmen, luxury is wrong, except in connection with representations and ceremonies. It seems to reveal habits which have very little that is charitable about them. An opulent priest is a contradiction. The priest must keep close to the poor. Now, can one come in contact incessantly night and day with all this distress, all these misfortunes, and this poverty, without having about one's own person a little of that misery, like the dust of labor? Is it possible to imagine a man near a brazier who is not warm? Can one imagine a workman who is working near a furnace, and who has neither a singed hair, nor blackened nails, nor a drop of sweat, nor a speck of ashes on his face? The first proof of charity in the priest, in the bishop especially, is poverty.

This is, no doubt, what the Bishop of D—— thought.

It must not be supposed, however, that he shared what we call the "ideas of the century" on certain delicate points. He took very little part in the theological quarrels of the moment, and maintained silence on questions in which Church and State were implicated; but if he had been strongly pressed, it seems that he would have been found to be an ultramontane rather than a gallican. Since we are making a portrait, and since we do not wish to conceal anything, we are forced to add that he was glacial towards Napoleon in his decline. Beginning with 1813, he gave in his adherence to or applauded all hostile manifestations. He refused to see him, as he passed through on his return from the island of Elba, and he abstained from ordering public prayers for the Emperor in his diocese during the Hundred Days.

Besides his sister, Mademoiselle Baptistine, he had two brothers, one a general, the other a prefect. He wrote to both with tolerable frequency. He was harsh for a time towards the former, because, holding a command in Provence at the epoch of the disembarkation at Cannes, the general had put himself at the head of twelve hundred men and had pursued the Emperor as though the latter had been a person whom one is desirous of allowing to escape. His correspondence with the other brother, the ex-prefect, a fine, worthy man who lived in retirement at Paris, Rue Cassette, remained more affectionate.

Thus Monseigneur Bienvenu also had his hour of party spirit, his hour of bitterness, his cloud. The shadow of the passions of the moment traversed this grand and gentle spirit occupied with eternal things. Certainly, such a man would have done well not to entertain any political opinions. Let there be no mistake as to our meaning: we are not confounding what is called "political opinions" with the grand aspiration for progress, with the sublime faith, patriotic, democratic, humane, which in our day should be the very foundation of every generous intellect. Without going deeply into questions which are only indirectly connected with the subject of this book, we will simply say this: It would have been well if Monseigneur Bienvenu had not been a Royalist, and if his glance had never been, for a single instant, turned away from that serene contemplation in which is distinctly discernible, above the fictions and the hatreds of this world, above the stormy vicissitudes of human things, the beaming of those three pure radiances, truth, justice, and charity.

While admitting that it was not for a political office that God created Monseigneur Welcome, we should have understood and admired his protest in the name of right and liberty, his proud opposition, his just but perilous resistance to the all-powerful Napoleon. But that which pleases us in people who are rising pleases us less in the case of people who are falling. We only love the fray so long as there is danger, and in any case, the combatants of the first hour have alone the right to be the exterminators of the last. He who has not been a stubborn accuser in prosperity should hold his peace in the face of ruin. The denunciator of success is the only legitimate executioner of the fall. As for us, when Providence intervenes and strikes, we let it work. 1812 commenced to disarm us. In 1813 the cowardly breach of silence of that taciturn legislative body, emboldened by catastrophe, possessed only traits which aroused indignation. And it was a crime to applaud, in 1814, in the presence of those marshals who betrayed; in the presence of that senate which passed from one dunghill to another, insulting after having deified; in the presence of that idolatry which was loosing its footing and spitting on its idol,— it was a duty to turn aside the head. In 1815, when the supreme disasters filled the air, when France was seized with a shiver at their sinister approach, when Waterloo could be dimly discerned opening before Napoleon, the mournful acclamation of the army and the people to the condemned of destiny had nothing laughable in it, and, after making all allowance for the despot, a heart like that of the Bishop of D——, ought not perhaps to have failed to recognize the august and touching features presented by the embrace of a great nation and a great man on the brink of the abyss.

With this exception, he was in all things just, true, equitable, intelligent, humble and dignified, beneficent and kindly, which is only another sort of benevolence. He was a priest, a sage, and a man. It must be admitted, that even in the political views with which we have just reproached him, and which we are disposed to judge almost with severity, he was tolerant and easy, more so, perhaps, than we who are speaking here. The porter of the town-hall had been placed there by the Emperor. He was an old non-commissioned officer of the old guard, a member of the Legion of Honor at Austerlitz, as much of a Bonapartist as the eagle. This poor fellow occasionally let slip inconsiderate remarks, which the law then stigmatized as seditious speeches. After the imperial profile disappeared from the Legion of Honor, he never dressed himself in his regimentals, as he said, so that he should not be obliged to wear his cross. He had himself devoutly removed

the imperial effigy from the cross which Napoleon had given him; this made a hole, and he would not put anything in its place. "I will die," he said, "rather than wear the three frogs upon my heart!" He liked to scoff aloud at Louis XVIII. "The gouty old creature in English gaiters!" he said; "let him take himself off to Prussia with that queue of his." He was happy to combine in the same imprecation the two things which he most detested, Prussia and England. He did it so often that he lost his place. There he was, turned out of the house, with his wife and children, and without bread. The Bishop sent for him, reproved him gently, and appointed him beadle in the cathedral.

In the course of nine years Monseigneur Bienvenu had, by dint of holy deeds and gentle manners, filled the town of D—— with a sort of tender and filial reverence. Even his conduct towards Napoleon had been accepted and tacitly pardoned, as it were, by the people, the good and weakly flock who adored their emperor, but loved their bishop.

CHAPTER 12 THE SOLITUDE OF MONSEIGNEUR WELCOME

A bishop is almost always surrounded by a full squadron of little abbes, just as a general is by a covey of young officers. This is what that charming Saint Francois de Sales calls somewhere "les pretres blancs-becs," callow priests. Every career has its aspirants, who form a train for those who have attained eminence in it. There is no power which has not its dependents. There is no fortune which has not its court. The seekers of the future eddy around the splendid present. Every metropolis has its staff of officials. Every bishop who possesses the least influence has about him his patrol of cherubim from the seminary, which goes the round, and maintains good order in the episcopal palace, and mounts guard over monseigneur's smile. To please a bishop is equivalent to getting one's foot in the stirrup for a sub-diaconate. It is necessary to walk one's path discreetly; the apostleship does not disdain the canonship.

Just as there are bigwigs elsewhere, there are big mitres in the Church. These are the bishops who stand well at Court, who are rich, well endowed, skilful, accepted by the world, who know how to pray, no doubt, but who know also how to beg, who feel little scruple at making a whole diocese dance attendance in their person, who are connecting links between the sacristy and diplomacy, who are abbes rather than priests, prelates rather than bishops. Happy those who approach them! Being persons of influence, they create a shower about them, upon the assiduous and the favored, and upon all the young men who understand the art of pleasing, of large parishes, prebends, archidiaconates, chaplaincies, and cathedral posts, while awaiting episcopal honors. As they advance themselves, they cause their satellites to progress also; it is a whole solar system on the march. Their radiance casts a gleam of purple over their suite. Their prosperity is crumbled up behind the scenes, into nice little promotions. The larger the diocese of the patron, the fatter the curacy for the favorite. And then, there is Rome. A bishop who understands how to become an archbishop, an archbishop who knows how to become a cardinal, carries you with him as conclavist; you enter a court of papal jurisdiction, you receive the pallium, and behold! you are an auditor, then a papal chamberlain, then monsignor, and from a Grace to an Eminence is only a step, and between the Eminence and the Holiness there is but the smoke of a ballot. Every skull-cap may dream of the tiara. The priest is nowadays the only man who can become a king in a regular manner; and what a king! the supreme king. Then what a nursery of aspirations is a seminary! How many blushing choristers, how many youthful abbes bear on their heads Perrette's pot of milk! Who knows how easy it is for ambition to call itself vocation? in good faith, perchance, and deceiving itself, devotee that it is.

Monseigneur Bienvenu, poor, humble, retiring, was not accounted among the big mitres. This was plain from the complete absence of young priests about him. We have seen that he "did not take" in Paris. Not a single future dreamed of engrafting itself on this solitary old man. Not a single sprouting ambition committed the folly of putting forth its foliage in his shadow. His canons and grand-vicars were good old men, rather vulgar like himself, walled up like him in this diocese, without exit to a cardinalship, and who resembled their bishop, with this difference, that they were finished and he was completed. The impossibility of growing great under Monseigneur Bienvenu was so well understood, that no sooner had the young men whom he ordained left the seminary than they got themselves recommended to the archbishops of Aix or of Auch, and went off in a great hurry. For, in short, we repeat it, men wish to be pushed. A saint who dwells in a paroxysm of abnegation is a dangerous neighbor; he might communicate to you, by contagion, an incurable poverty, an anchylosis of the joints, which are useful in advancement, and in short, more renunciation than you desire; and this infectious virtue is avoided. Hence the isolation of Monseigneur Bienvenu. We live in the midst of a gloomy society. Success; that is the lesson which falls drop by drop from the slope of corruption.

Be it said in passing, that success is a very hideous thing. Its false resemblance to merit deceives men. For the masses, success has almost the same profile as supremacy. Success, that Menaechmus of talent, has one dupe,—history. Juvenal and Tacitus alone grumble at it. In our day, a philosophy which is almost official has entered into its service, wears the livery of success, and performs the service of its antechamber. Succeed: theory. Prosperity argues capacity. Win in the lottery, and behold! you are a clever man. He who triumphs is venerated. Be born with a silver spoon in your mouth! everything lies in that. Be lucky, and you will have all the rest; be happy, and people will think you great. Outside of five or six immense exceptions, which compose the splendor of a century, contemporary admiration is nothing but short-sightedness. Gilding is gold. It does no harm to be the first arrival by pure chance, so long as you do arrive. The common herd is an old Narcissus who adores himself, and who applauds the vulgar herd. That enormous ability by virtue of which one is Moses, Aeschylus, Dante, Michael Angelo, or Napoleon, the multitude awards on the spot, and by acclamation, to whomsoever attains his object, in whatsoever it may consist. Let a notary transfigure himself into a deputy: let a false Corneille compose Tiridate; let a eunuch come to possess a harem; let a military Prudhomme accidentally win the decisive battle of an epoch; let an apothecary invent cardboard shoe-soles for the army of the Sambre-and-Meuse, and construct for himself, out of this cardboard, sold as leather, four hundred thousand francs of income; let a pork-packer espouse usury, and cause it to bring forth seven or eight millions, of which he is the father and of which it is the mother; let a preacher become a bishop by force of his nasal drawl; let the steward of a fine family be so rich on retiring from service that he is made minister of finances,—and men call that Genius, just as they call the face of Mousqueton Beauty, and the mien of Claude Majesty. With the constellations of space they confound the stars of the abyss which are made in the soft mire of the puddle by the feet of ducks.

CHAPTER 13 WHAT HE BELIEVED

We are not obliged to sound the Bishop of D—— on the score of orthodoxy. In the presence of such a soul we feel ourselves in no mood but respect. The conscience of the just man should be accepted on his word. Moreover, certain natures being given, we admit the possible development of all beauties of human virtue in a belief that differs from our own.

What did he think of this dogma, or of that mystery? These secrets of the inner tribunal of the conscience are known only to the tomb, where souls enter naked. The point on which we are certain is, that the difficulties of faith never resolved themselves into hypocrisy in his case. No decay is possible to the diamond. He believed to the extent of his powers. "Credo in Patrem," he often exclaimed. Moreover, he drew from good works that amount of satisfaction which suffices to the conscience, and which whispers to a man, "Thou art with God!"

The point which we consider it our duty to note is, that outside of and beyond his faith, as it were, the Bishop possessed an excess of love. In was in that quarter, quia multum amavit,—because he loved much—that he was regarded as vulnerable by "serious men," "grave persons" and "reasonable people"; favorite locutions of our sad world where egotism takes its word of command from pedantry. What was this excess of love? It was a serene benevolence which overflowed men, as we have already pointed out, and which, on occasion, extended even to things. He lived without disdain. He was indulgent towards God's creation. Every man, even the best, has within him a thoughtless harshness which he reserves for animals. The Bishop of D—— had none of that harshness, which is peculiar to many priests, nevertheless. He did not go as far as the Brahmin, but he seemed to have weighed this saying of Ecclesiastes: "Who knoweth whither the soul of the animal goeth?" Hideousness of aspect, deformity of instinct, troubled him not, and did not arouse his indignation. He was touched, almost softened by them. It seemed as though he went thoughtfully away to seek beyond the bounds of life which is apparent, the cause, the explanation, or the excuse for them. He seemed at times to be asking God to commute these penalties. He examined without wrath, and with the eye of a linguist who is deciphering a palimpsest, that portion of chaos which still exists in nature. This revery sometimes caused him to utter odd sayings. One morning he was in his garden, and thought himself alone, but his sister was walking behind him, unseen by him: suddenly he paused and gazed at something on the ground; it was a large, black, hairy, frightful spider. His sister heard him say:—

"Poor beast! It is not its fault!"

Why not mention these almost divinely childish sayings of kindness? Puerile they may be; but these sublime puerilities were peculiar to Saint Francis d'Assisi and of Marcus Aurelius. One day he sprained his ankle in his effort to avoid stepping on an ant. Thus lived this just man. Sometimes he fell asleep in his garden, and then there was nothing more venerable possible.

Monseigneur Bienvenu had formerly been, if the stories anent his youth, and even in regard to his manhood, were to be believed, a passionate, and, possibly, a violent man. His universal suavity was less an instinct of nature than the result of a grand conviction which had filtered into his heart through the medium of life, and had trickled there slowly, thought by thought; for, in a character, as in a rock, there may exist apertures made by drops of water. These hollows are uneffaceable; these formations are indestructible.

In 1815, as we think we have already said, he reached his seventy-fifth birthday, but he did not appear to be more than sixty. He was not tall; he was rather plump; and, in order to combat this tendency, he was fond of taking long strolls on foot; his step was firm, and his form was but slightly bent, a detail from which we do not pretend to draw any conclusion. Gregory XVI., at the age of eighty, held himself erect and smiling, which did not prevent him from being a bad bishop. Monseigneur Welcome had what the people term a "fine head," but so amiable was he that they forgot that it was fine.

When he conversed with that infantile gayety which was one of his charms, and of which we have already spoken, people felt at their ease with him, and joy seemed to radiate from his whole person. His fresh and ruddy complexion, his very white teeth, all of which he had preserved, and which were displayed

by his smile, gave him that open and easy air which cause the remark to be made of a man, "He's a good fellow"; and of an old man, "He is a fine man." That, it will be recalled, was the effect which he produced upon Napoleon. On the first encounter, and to one who saw him for the first time, he was nothing, in fact, but a fine man. But if one remained near him for a few hours, and beheld him in the least degree pensive, the fine man became gradually transfigured, and took on some imposing quality, I know not what; his broad and serious brow, rendered august by his white locks, became august also by virtue of meditation; majesty radiated from his goodness, though his goodness ceased not to be radiant; one experienced something of the emotion which one would feel on beholding a smiling angel slowly unfold his wings, without ceasing to smile. Respect, an unutterable respect, penetrated you by degrees and mounted to your heart, and one felt that one had before him one of those strong, thoroughly tried, and indulgent souls where thought is so grand that it can no longer be anything but gentle.

As we have seen, prayer, the celebration of the offices of religion, alms-giving, the consolation of the afflicted, the cultivation of a bit of land, fraternity, frugality, hospitality, renunciation, confidence, study, work, filled every day of his life. Filled is exactly the word; certainly the Bishop's day was quite full to the brim, of good words and good deeds. Nevertheless, it was not complete if cold or rainy weather prevented his passing an hour or two in his garden before going to bed, and after the two women had retired. It seemed to be a sort of rite with him, to prepare himself for slumber by meditation in the presence of the grand spectacles of the nocturnal heavens. Sometimes, if the two old women were not asleep, they heard him pacing slowly along the walks at a very advanced hour of the night. He was there alone, communing with himself, peaceful, adoring, comparing the serenity of his heart with the serenity of the ether, moved amid the darkness by the visible splendor of the constellations and the invisible splendor of God, opening his heart to the thoughts which fall from the Unknown. At such moments, while he offered his heart at the hour when nocturnal flowers offer their perfume, illuminated like a lamp amid the starry night, as he poured himself out in ecstasy in the midst of the universal radiance of creation, he could not have told himself, probably, what was passing in his spirit; he felt something take its flight from him, and something descend into him. Mysterious exchange of the abysses of the soul with the abysses of the universe!

He thought of the grandeur and presence of God; of the future eternity, that strange mystery; of the eternity past, a mystery still more strange; of all the infinities, which pierced their way into all his senses, beneath his eyes; and, without seeking to comprehend the incomprehensible, he gazed upon it. He did not study God; he was dazzled by him. He considered those magnificent conjunctions of atoms, which communicate aspects to matter, reveal forces by verifying them, create individualities in unity, proportions in extent, the innumerable in the infinite, and, through light, produce beauty. These conjunctions are formed and dissolved incessantly; hence life and death.

He seated himself on a wooden bench, with his back against a decrepit vine; he gazed at the stars, past the puny and stunted silhouettes of his fruit-trees. This quarter of an acre, so poorly planted, so encumbered with mean buildings and sheds, was dear to him, and satisfied his wants.

What more was needed by this old man, who divided the leisure of his life, where there was so little leisure, between gardening in the daytime and contemplation at night? Was not this narrow enclosure, with the heavens for a ceiling, sufficient to enable him to adore God in his most divine works, in turn? Does not this comprehend all, in fact? and what is there left to desire beyond it? A little garden in which to walk, and immensity in which to dream. At one's feet that which can be cultivated and plucked; over head that which one can study and meditate upon: some flowers on earth, and all the stars in the sky.

CHAPTER 14 WHAT HE THOUGHT

One last word.

Since this sort of details might, particularly at the present moment, and to use an expression now in fashion, give to the Bishop of D—— a certain "pantheistical" physiognomy, and induce the belief, either to his credit or discredit, that he entertained one of those personal philosophies which are peculiar to our century, which sometimes spring up in solitary spirits, and there take on a form and grow until they usurp the place of religion, we insist upon it, that not one of those persons who knew Monseigneur Welcome would have thought himself authorized to think anything of the sort. That which enlightened this man was his heart. His wisdom was made of the light which comes from there.

No systems; many works. Abstruse speculations contain vertigo; no, there is nothing to indicate that he risked his mind in apocalypses. The apostle may be daring, but the bishop must be timid. He would probably have felt a scruple at sounding too far in advance certain problems which are, in a manner, reserved for terrible great minds. There is a sacred horror beneath the porches of the enigma; those gloomy openings stand yawning there, but something tells you, you, a passer-by in life, that you must not enter. Woe to him who penetrates thither!

Geniuses in the impenetrable depths of abstraction and pure speculation, situated, so to speak, above all dogmas, propose their ideas to God. Their prayer audaciously offers discussion. Their adoration interrogates. This is direct religion, which is full of anxiety and responsibility for him who attempts its steep cliffs.

Human meditation has no limits. At his own risk and peril, it analyzes and digs deep into its own bedazzlement. One might almost say, that by a sort of splendid reaction, it with it dazzles nature; the mysterious world which surrounds us renders back what it has received; it is probable that the contemplators are contemplated. However that may be, there are on earth men who—are they men?— perceive distinctly at the verge of the horizons of revery the heights of the absolute, and who have the terrible vision of the infinite mountain. Monseigneur Welcome was one of these men; Monseigneur Welcome was not a genius. He would have feared those sublimities whence some very great men even, like Swedenborg and Pascal, have slipped into insanity. Certainly, these powerful reveries have their moral utility, and by these arduous paths one approaches to ideal perfection. As for him, he took the path which shortens,— the Gospel's.

He did not attempt to impart to his chasuble the folds of Elijah's mantle; he projected no ray of future upon the dark groundswell of events; he did not see to condense in flame the light of things; he had nothing of the prophet and nothing of the magician about him. This humble soul loved, and that was all.

That he carried prayer to the pitch of a superhuman aspiration is probable: but one can no more pray too much than one can love too much; and if it is a heresy to pray beyond the texts, Saint Theresa and Saint Jerome would be heretics.

He inclined towards all that groans and all that expiates. The universe appeared to him like an immense malady; everywhere he felt fever, everywhere he heard the sound of suffering, and, without seeking to solve the enigma, he strove to dress the wound. The terrible spectacle of created things developed tenderness in him; he was occupied only in finding for himself, and in inspiring others with the best way to compassionate and relieve. That which exists was for this good and rare priest a permanent subject of sadness which sought consolation.

There are men who toil at extracting gold; he toiled at the extraction of pity. Universal misery was his mine. The sadness which reigned everywhere was but an excuse for unfailing kindness. Love each other; he declared this to be complete, desired nothing further, and that was the whole of his doctrine. One day, that man who believed himself to be a "philosopher," the senator who has already been alluded to, said to the Bishop: "Just survey the spectacle of the world: all war against all; the strongest has the most wit. Your love each other is nonsense."—"Well," replied Monseigneur Welcome, without contesting the point, "if it is nonsense, the soul should shut itself up in it, as the pearl in the oyster." Thus he shut himself up, he lived there, he was absolutely satisfied with it, leaving on one side the prodigious questions which attract and terrify, the fathomless perspectives of abstraction, the precipices of metaphysics—all those profundities which converge, for the apostle in God, for the atheist in nothingness; destiny, good and evil, the way of being against being, the conscience of man, the thoughtful somnambulism of the animal, the transformation in death, the recapitulation of existences which the tomb contains, the incomprehensible grafting of successive loves on the persistent *I*, the essence, the substance, the Nile, and the Ens, the soul, nature, liberty, necessity; perpendicular problems, sinister obscurities, where lean the gigantic archangels of the human mind; formidable abysses, which Lucretius, Manou, Saint Paul, Dante, contemplate with eyes flashing lightning, which seems by its steady gaze on the infinite to cause stars to blaze forth there.

Monseigneur Bienvenu was simply a man who took note of the exterior of mysterious questions without scrutinizing them, and without troubling his own mind with them, and who cherished in his own soul a grave respect for darkness.

PART 2. THE FALL

CHAPTER 1 THE EVENING OF A DAY OF WALKING

Early in the month of October, 1815, about an hour before sunset, a man who was travelling on foot entered the little town of D—— The few inhabitants who were at their windows or on their thresholds at the moment stared at this traveller with a sort of uneasiness. It was difficult to encounter a wayfarer of more wretched appearance. He was a man of medium stature, thickset and robust, in the prime of life. He might have been forty-six or forty-eight years old. A cap with a drooping leather visor partly concealed his face, burned and tanned by sun and wind, and dripping with perspiration. His shirt of coarse yellow linen, fastened at the neck by a small silver anchor, permitted a view of his hairy breast: he had a cravat twisted into a string; trousers of blue drilling, worn and threadbare, white on one knee and torn on the other; an old gray, tattered blouse, patched on one of the elbows with a bit of green cloth sewed on with twine; a tightly packed soldier knapsack, well buckled and perfectly new, on his back; an enormous, knotty stick in his hand; iron-shod shoes on his stockingless feet; a shaved head and a long beard.

The sweat, the heat, the journey on foot, the dust, added I know not what sordid quality to this dilapidated whole. His hair was closely cut, yet bristling, for it had begun to grow a little, and did not seem to have been cut for some time.

No one knew him. He was evidently only a chance passer-by. Whence came he? From the south; from the seashore, perhaps, for he made his entrance into D—— by the same street which, seven months previously, had witnessed the passage of the Emperor Napoleon on his way from Cannes to Paris. This man must have been walking all day. He seemed very much fatigued. Some women of the ancient market town which is situated below the city had seen him pause beneath the trees of the boulevard Gassendi, and drink at the fountain which stands at the end of the promenade. He must have been very thirsty: for the children who followed him saw him stop again for a drink, two hundred paces further on, at the fountain in the market-place.

On arriving at the corner of the Rue Poichevert, he turned to the left, and directed his steps toward the town-hall. He entered, then came out a quarter of an hour later. A gendarme was seated near the door, on the stone bench which General Drouot had mounted on the 4th of March to read to the frightened throng of the inhabitants of D—— the proclamation of the Gulf Juan. The man pulled off his cap and humbly saluted the gendarme.

The gendarme, without replying to his salute, stared attentively at him, followed him for a while with his eyes, and then entered the town-hall.

There then existed at D—— a fine inn at the sign of the Cross of Colbas. This inn had for a landlord a certain Jacquin Labarre, a man of consideration in the town on account of his relationship to another Labarre, who kept the inn of the Three Dauphins in Grenoble, and had served in the Guides. At the time of

the Emperor's landing, many rumors had circulated throughout the country with regard to this inn of the Three Dauphins. It was said that General Bertrand, disguised as a carter, had made frequent trips thither in the month of January, and that he had distributed crosses of honor to the soldiers and handfuls of gold to the citizens. The truth is, that when the Emperor entered Grenoble he had refused to install himself at the hotel of the prefecture; he had thanked the mayor, saying, "I am going to the house of a brave man of my acquaintance"; and he had betaken himself to the Three Dauphins. This glory of the Labarre of the Three Dauphins was reflected upon the Labarre of the Cross of Colbas, at a distance of five and twenty leagues. It was said of him in the town, "That is the cousin of the man of Grenoble."

The man bent his steps towards this inn, which was the best in the country-side. He entered the kitchen, which opened on a level with the street. All the stoves were lighted; a huge fire blazed gayly in the fireplace. The host, who was also the chief cook, was going from one stew-pan to another, very busily superintending an excellent dinner designed for the wagoners, whose loud talking, conversation, and laughter were audible from an adjoining apartment. Any one who has travelled knows that there is no one who indulges in better cheer than wagoners. A fat marmot, flanked by white partridges and heather-cocks, was turning on a long spit before the fire; on the stove, two huge carps from Lake Lauzet and a trout from Lake Alloz were cooking.

The host, hearing the door open and seeing a newcomer enter, said, without raising his eyes from his stoves:—

"What do you wish, sir?"

"Food and lodging," said the man.

"Nothing easier," replied the host. At that moment he turned his head, took in the traveller's appearance with a single glance, and added, "By paying for it."

The man drew a large leather purse from the pocket of his blouse, and answered, "I have money."

"In that case, we are at your service," said the host.

The man put his purse back in his pocket, removed his knapsack from his back, put it on the ground near the door, retained his stick in his hand, and seated himself on a low stool close to the fire. D—— is in the mountains. The evenings are cold there in October.

But as the host went back and forth, he scrutinized the traveller.

"Will dinner be ready soon?" said the man.

"Immediately," replied the landlord.

While the newcomer was warming himself before the fire, with his back turned, the worthy host, Jacquin Labarre, drew a pencil from his pocket, then tore off the corner of an old newspaper which was lying on a small table near the window. On the white margin he wrote a line or two, folded it without sealing, and then intrusted this scrap of paper to a child who seemed to serve him in the capacity both of scullion and lackey. The landlord whispered a word in the scullion's ear, and the child set off on a run in the direction of the town-hall.

The traveller saw nothing of all this.

Once more he inquired, "Will dinner be ready soon?"

"Immediately," responded the host.

The child returned. He brought back the paper. The host unfolded it eagerly, like a person who is expecting a reply. He seemed to read it attentively, then tossed his head, and remained thoughtful for a moment. Then he took a step in the direction of the traveller, who appeared to be immersed in reflections which were not very serene.

"I cannot receive you, sir," said he.

The man half rose.

"What! Are you afraid that I will not pay you? Do you want me to pay you in advance? I have money, I tell you."

"It is not that."

"What then?"

"You have money—"

"Yes," said the man.

"And I," said the host, "have no room."

The man resumed tranquilly, "Put me in the stable."

"I cannot."

"Why?"

"The horses take up all the space."

"Very well!" retorted the man; "a corner of the loft then, a truss of straw. We will see about that after dinner."

"I cannot give you any dinner."

This declaration, made in a measured but firm tone, struck the stranger as grave. He rose.

"Ah! bah! But I am dying of hunger. I have been walking since sunrise. I have travelled twelve leagues. I pay. I wish to eat."

"I have nothing," said the landlord.

The man burst out laughing, and turned towards the fireplace and the stoves: "Nothing! and all that?"

"All that is engaged."

"By whom?"

"By messieurs the wagoners."

"How many are there of them?"

"Twelve."

"There is enough food there for twenty."

"They have engaged the whole of it and paid for it in advance."

The man seated himself again, and said, without raising his voice, "I am at an inn; I am hungry, and I shall remain."

Then the host bent down to his ear, and said in a tone which made him start, "Go away!"

At that moment the traveller was bending forward and thrusting some brands into the fire with the iron-shod tip of his staff; he turned quickly round, and as he opened his mouth to reply, the host gazed steadily at him and added, still in a low voice: "Stop! there's enough of that sort of talk. Do you want me to tell you your name? Your name is Jean Valjean. Now do you want me to tell you who you are? When I saw you come in I suspected something; I sent to the town-hall, and this was the reply that was sent to me. Can you read?"

So saying, he held out to the stranger, fully unfolded, the paper which had just travelled from the inn to the town-hall, and from the town-hall to the inn. The man cast a glance upon it. The landlord resumed after a pause.

"I am in the habit of being polite to every one. Go away!"

The man dropped his head, picked up the knapsack which he had deposited on the ground, and took his departure.

He chose the principal street. He walked straight on at a venture, keeping close to the houses like a sad and humiliated man. He did not turn round a single time. Had he done so, he would have seen the host of the Cross of Colbas standing on his threshold, surrounded by all the guests of his inn, and all the passers-by in the street, talking vivaciously, and pointing him out with his finger; and, from the glances of terror and distrust cast by the group, he might have divined that his arrival would speedily become an event for the whole town.

He saw nothing of all this. People who are crushed do not look behind them. They know but too well the evil fate which follows them.

Thus he proceeded for some time, walking on without ceasing, traversing at random streets of which he knew nothing, forgetful of his fatigue, as is often the case when a man is sad. All at once he felt the pangs of hunger sharply. Night was drawing near. He glanced about him, to see whether he could not discover some shelter.

The fine hostelry was closed to him; he was seeking some very humble public house, some hovel, however lowly.

Just then a light flashed up at the end of the streets; a pine branch suspended from a cross-beam of iron was outlined against the white sky of the twilight. He proceeded thither.

It proved to be, in fact, a public house. The public house which is in the Rue de Chaffaut.

The wayfarer halted for a moment, and peeped through the window into the interior of the low-studded room of the public house, illuminated by a small lamp on a table and by a large fire on the hearth. Some men were engaged in drinking there. The landlord was warming himself. An iron pot, suspended from a crane, bubbled over the flame.

The entrance to this public house, which is also a sort of an inn, is by two doors. One opens on the street, the other upon a small yard filled with manure. The traveller dare not enter by the street door. He slipped into the yard, halted again, then raised the latch timidly and opened the door.

"Who goes there?" said the master.

"Some one who wants supper and bed."

"Good. We furnish supper and bed here."

He entered. All the men who were drinking turned round. The lamp illuminated him on one side, the firelight on the other. They examined him for some time while he was taking off his knapsack.

The host said to him, "There is the fire. The supper is cooking in the pot. Come and warm yourself, comrade."

He approached and seated himself near the hearth. He stretched out his feet, which were exhausted with fatigue, to the fire; a fine odor was emitted by the pot. All that could be distinguished of his face, beneath his cap, which was well pulled down, assumed a vague appearance of comfort, mingled with that other poignant aspect which habitual suffering bestows.

It was, moreover, a firm, energetic, and melancholy profile. This physiognomy was strangely composed; it began by seeming humble, and ended by seeming severe. The eye shone beneath its lashes like a fire beneath brushwood.

One of the men seated at the table, however, was a fishmonger who, before entering the public house of the Rue de Chaffaut, had been to stable his horse at Labarre's. It chanced that he had that very morning encountered this unprepossessing stranger on the road between Bras d'Asse and—I have forgotten the name. I think it was Escoublon. Now, when he met him, the man, who then seemed already extremely weary, had requested him to take him on his crupper; to which the fishmonger had made no reply except by redoubling his gait. This fishmonger had been a member half an hour previously of the group which surrounded Jacquin Labarre, and had himself related his disagreeable encounter of the morning to the people at the Cross of Colbas. From where he sat he made an imperceptible sign to the tavern-keeper. The tavern-keeper went to him. They exchanged a few words in a low tone. The man had again become absorbed in his reflections.

The tavern-keeper returned to the fireplace, laid his hand abruptly on the shoulder of the man, and said to him:—

"You are going to get out of here."

The stranger turned round and replied gently, "Ah! You know?—"

"Yes."

"I was sent away from the other inn."

"And you are to be turned out of this one."

"Where would you have me go?"

"Elsewhere."

The man took his stick and his knapsack and departed.

As he went out, some children who had followed him from the Cross of Colbas, and who seemed to be lying in wait for him, threw stones at him. He retraced his steps in anger, and threatened them with his stick: the children dispersed like a flock of birds.

He passed before the prison. At the door hung an iron chain attached to a bell. He rang.

The wicket opened.

"Turnkey," said he, removing his cap politely, "will you have the kindness to admit me, and give me a lodging for the night?"

A voice replied:—

"The prison is not an inn. Get yourself arrested, and you will be admitted."

The wicket closed again.

He entered a little street in which there were many gardens. Some of them are enclosed only by hedges, which lends a cheerful aspect to the street. In the midst of these gardens and hedges he caught sight of a small house of a single story, the window of which was lighted up. He peered through the pane as he had done at the public house. Within was a large whitewashed room, with a bed draped in printed cotton stuff, and a cradle in one corner, a few wooden chairs, and a double-barrelled gun hanging on the wall. A table was spread in the centre of the room. A copper lamp illuminated the tablecloth of coarse white linen, the pewter jug shining like silver, and filled with wine, and the brown, smoking soup-tureen. At this table sat a man of about forty, with a merry and open countenance, who was dandling a little child on his knees. Close by a very young woman was nursing another child. The father was laughing, the child was laughing, the mother was smiling.

The stranger paused a moment in revery before this tender and calming spectacle. What was taking place within him? He alone could have told. It is probable that he thought that this joyous house would be hospitable, and that, in a place where he beheld so much happiness, he would find perhaps a little pity.

He tapped on the pane with a very small and feeble knock.

They did not hear him.

He tapped again.

He heard the woman say, "It seems to me, husband, that some one is knocking."

"No," replied the husband.

He tapped a third time.

The husband rose, took the lamp, and went to the door, which he opened.

He was a man of lofty stature, half peasant, half artisan. He wore a huge leather apron, which reached to his left shoulder, and which a hammer, a red handkerchief, a powder-horn, and all sorts of objects which were upheld by the girdle, as in a pocket, caused to bulge out. He carried his head thrown backwards; his shirt, widely opened and turned back, displayed his bull neck, white and bare. He had thick eyelashes, enormous black whiskers, prominent eyes, the lower part of his face like a snout; and besides all this, that air of being on his own ground, which is indescribable.

"Pardon me, sir," said the wayfarer, "Could you, in consideration of payment, give me a plate of soup and a corner of that shed yonder in the garden, in which to sleep? Tell me; can you? For money?"

"Who are you?" demanded the master of the house.

The man replied: "I have just come from Puy-Moisson. I have walked all day long. I have travelled twelve leagues. Can you?— if I pay?"

"I would not refuse," said the peasant, "to lodge any respectable man who would pay me. But why do you not go to the inn?"

"There is no room."

"Bah! Impossible. This is neither a fair nor a market day. Have you been to Labarre?"

"Yes."

"Well?"

The traveller replied with embarrassment: "I do not know. He did not receive me."

"Have you been to What's-his-name's, in the Rue Chaffaut?"

The stranger's embarrassment increased; he stammered, "He did not receive me either."

The peasant's countenance assumed an expression of distrust; he surveyed the newcomer from head to feet, and suddenly exclaimed, with a sort of shudder:—

"Are you the man?—"

He cast a fresh glance upon the stranger, took three steps backwards, placed the lamp on the table, and took his gun down from the wall.

Meanwhile, at the words, Are you the man? the woman had risen, had clasped her two children in her arms, and had taken refuge precipitately behind her husband, staring in terror at the stranger, with her bosom uncovered, and with frightened eyes, as she murmured in a low tone, "Tso-maraude."[1]

All this took place in less time than it requires to picture it to one's self. After having scrutinized the man for several moments, as one scrutinizes a viper, the master of the house returned to the door and said:—

"Clear out!"

"For pity's sake, a glass of water," said the man.

"A shot from my gun!" said the peasant.

Then he closed the door violently, and the man heard him shoot two large bolts. A moment later, the window-shutter was closed, and the sound of a bar of iron which was placed against it was audible outside.

Night continued to fall. A cold wind from the Alps was blowing. By the light of the expiring day the stranger perceived, in one of the gardens which bordered the street, a sort of hut, which seemed to him to be built of sods. He climbed over the wooden fence resolutely, and found himself in the garden. He approached the hut; its door consisted of a very low and narrow aperture, and it resembled those buildings which road-laborers construct for themselves along the roads. He thought without doubt, that it was, in fact, the dwelling of a road-laborer; he was suffering from cold and hunger, but this was, at least, a shelter from the cold. This sort of dwelling is not usually occupied at night. He threw himself flat on his face, and crawled into the hut. It was warm there, and he found a tolerably good bed of straw. He lay, for a moment, stretched out on this bed, without the power to make a movement, so fatigued was he. Then, as the knapsack on his back was in his way, and as it furnished, moreover, a pillow ready to his hand, he set about unbuckling one of the straps. At that moment, a ferocious growl became audible. He raised his eyes. The head of an enormous dog was outlined in the darkness at the entrance of the hut.

It was a dog's kennel.

He was himself vigorous and formidable; he armed himself with his staff, made a shield of his knapsack, and made his way out of the kennel in the best way he could, not without enlarging the rents in his rags.

He left the garden in the same manner, but backwards, being obliged, in order to keep the dog respectful, to have recourse to that manoeuvre with his stick which masters in that sort of fencing designate as la rose couverte.

When he had, not without difficulty, repassed the fence, and found himself once more in the street, alone, without refuge, without shelter, without a roof over his head, chased even from that bed of straw and from that miserable kennel, he dropped rather than seated himself on a stone, and it appears that a passer-by heard him exclaim, "I am not even a dog!"

He soon rose again and resumed his march. He went out of the town, hoping to find some tree or haystack in the fields which would afford him shelter.

He walked thus for some time, with his head still drooping. When he felt himself far from every human habitation, he raised his eyes and gazed searchingly about him. He was in a field. Before him was one of those low hills covered with close-cut stubble, which, after the harvest, resemble shaved heads.

The horizon was perfectly black. This was not alone the obscurity of night; it was caused by very low-hanging clouds which seemed to rest upon the hill itself, and which were mounting and filling the whole sky. Meanwhile, as the moon was about to rise, and as there was still floating in the zenith a remnant of the brightness of twilight, these clouds formed at the summit of the sky a sort of whitish arch, whence a gleam of light fell upon the earth.

The earth was thus better lighted than the sky, which produces a particularly sinister effect, and the hill, whose contour was poor and mean, was outlined vague and wan against the gloomy horizon. The whole effect was hideous, petty, lugubrious, and narrow.

There was nothing in the field or on the hill except a deformed tree, which writhed and shivered a few paces distant from the wayfarer.

This man was evidently very far from having those delicate habits of intelligence and spirit which render one sensible to the mysterious aspects of things; nevertheless, there was something in that sky, in that hill, in that plain, in that tree, which was so profoundly desolate, that after a moment of immobility and revery he turned back abruptly. There are instants when nature seems hostile.

He retraced his steps; the gates of D—— were closed. D——, which had sustained sieges during the wars of religion, was still surrounded in 1815 by ancient walls flanked by square towers which have been demolished since. He passed through a breach and entered the town again.

It might have been eight o'clock in the evening. As he was not acquainted with the streets, he recommenced his walk at random.

In this way he came to the prefecture, then to the seminary. As he passed through the Cathedral Square, he shook his fist at the church.

At the corner of this square there is a printing establishment. It is there that the proclamations of the Emperor and of the Imperial Guard to the army, brought from the Island of Elba and dictated by Napoleon himself, were printed for the first time.

Worn out with fatigue, and no longer entertaining any hope, he lay down on a stone bench which stands at the doorway of this printing office.

At that moment an old woman came out of the church. She saw the man stretched out in the shadow. "What are you doing there, my friend?" said she.

He answered harshly and angrily: "As you see, my good woman, I am sleeping." The good woman, who was well worthy the name, in fact, was the Marquise de R——

"On this bench?" she went on.

"I have had a mattress of wood for nineteen years," said the man; "to-day I have a mattress of stone."

"You have been a soldier?"

"Yes, my good woman, a soldier."

"Why do you not go to the inn?"

"Because I have no money."

"Alas!" said Madame de R——, "I have only four sous in my purse."

"Give it to me all the same."

The man took the four sous. Madame de R—— continued: "You cannot obtain lodgings in an inn for so small a sum. But have you tried? It is impossible for you to pass the night thus. You are cold and hungry, no doubt. Some one might have given you a lodging out of charity."

"I have knocked at all doors."

"Well?"

"I have been driven away everywhere."

The "good woman" touched the man's arm, and pointed out to him on the other side of the street a small, low house, which stood beside the Bishop's palace.

"You have knocked at all doors?"

"Yes."

"Have you knocked at that one?"

"No."

"Knock there."

CHAPTER 2 PRUDENCE COUNSELLED TO WISDOM

That evening, the Bishop of D——, after his promenade through the town, remained shut up rather late in his room. He was busy over a great work on Duties, which was never completed, unfortunately. He was carefully compiling everything that the Fathers and the doctors have said on this important subject. His book was divided into two parts: firstly, the duties of all; secondly, the duties of each individual, according to the class to which he belongs. The duties of all are the great duties. There are four of these. Saint Matthew points them out: duties towards God (Matt. vi.); duties towards one's self (Matt. v. 29, 30); duties towards one's neighbor (Matt. vii. 12); duties towards animals (Matt. vi. 20, 25). As for the other duties the Bishop

found them pointed out and prescribed elsewhere: to sovereigns and subjects, in the Epistle to the Romans; to magistrates, to wives, to mothers, to young men, by Saint Peter; to husbands, fathers, children and servants, in the Epistle to the Ephesians; to the faithful, in the Epistle to the Hebrews; to virgins, in the Epistle to the Corinthians. Out of these precepts he was laboriously constructing a harmonious whole, which he desired to present to souls.

At eight o'clock he was still at work, writing with a good deal of inconvenience upon little squares of paper, with a big book open on his knees, when Madame Magloire entered, according to her wont, to get the silver-ware from the cupboard near his bed. A moment later, the Bishop, knowing that the table was set, and that his sister was probably waiting for him, shut his book, rose from his table, and entered the dining-room.

The dining-room was an oblong apartment, with a fireplace, which had a door opening on the street (as we have said), and a window opening on the garden.

Madame Magloire was, in fact, just putting the last touches to the table.

As she performed this service, she was conversing with Mademoiselle Baptistine.

A lamp stood on the table; the table was near the fireplace. A wood fire was burning there.

One can easily picture to one's self these two women, both of whom were over sixty years of age. Madame Magloire small, plump, vivacious; Mademoiselle Baptistine gentle, slender, frail, somewhat taller than her brother, dressed in a gown of puce-colored silk, of the fashion of 1806, which she had purchased at that date in Paris, and which had lasted ever since. To borrow vulgar phrases, which possess the merit of giving utterance in a single word to an idea which a whole page would hardly suffice to express, Madame Magloire had the air of a peasant, and Mademoiselle Baptistine that of a lady. Madame Magloire wore a white quilted cap, a gold Jeannette cross on a velvet ribbon upon her neck, the only bit of feminine jewelry that there was in the house, a very white fichu puffing out from a gown of coarse black woollen stuff, with large, short sleeves, an apron of cotton cloth in red and green checks, knotted round the waist with a green ribbon, with a stomacher of the same attached by two pins at the upper corners, coarse shoes on her feet, and yellow stockings, like the women of Marseilles. Mademoiselle Baptistine's gown was cut on the patterns of 1806, with a short waist, a narrow, sheath-like skirt, puffed sleeves, with flaps and buttons. She concealed her gray hair under a frizzed wig known as the baby wig. Madame Magloire had an intelligent, vivacious, and kindly air; the two corners of her mouth unequally raised, and her upper lip, which was larger than the lower, imparted to her a rather crabbed and imperious look. So long as Monseigneur held his peace, she talked to him resolutely with a mixture of respect and freedom; but as soon as Monseigneur began to speak, as we have seen, she obeyed passively like her mistress. Mademoiselle Baptistine did not even speak. She confined herself to obeying and pleasing him. She had never been pretty, even when she was young; she had large, blue, prominent eyes, and a long arched nose; but her whole visage, her whole person, breathed forth an ineffable goodness, as we stated in the beginning. She had always been predestined to gentleness; but faith, charity, hope, those three virtues which mildly warm the soul, had gradually elevated that gentleness to sanctity. Nature had made her a lamb, religion had made her an angel. Poor sainted virgin! Sweet memory which has vanished!

Mademoiselle Baptistine has so often narrated what passed at the episcopal residence that evening, that there are many people now living who still recall the most minute details.

At the moment when the Bishop entered, Madame Magloire was talking with considerable vivacity. She was haranguing Mademoiselle Baptistine on a subject which was familiar to her and to which the Bishop was also accustomed. The question concerned the lock upon the entrance door.

It appears that while procuring some provisions for supper, Madame Magloire had heard things in divers places. People had spoken of a prowler of evil appearance; a suspicious vagabond had arrived who must be somewhere about the town, and those who should take it into their heads to return home late that night might be subjected to unpleasant encounters. The police was very badly organized, moreover, because there was no love lost between the Prefect and the Mayor, who sought to injure each other by making things happen. It behooved wise people to play the part of their own police, and to guard themselves well, and care must be taken to duly close, bar and barricade their houses, and to fasten the doors well.

Madame Magloire emphasized these last words; but the Bishop had just come from his room, where it was rather cold. He seated himself in front of the fire, and warmed himself, and then fell to thinking of other things. He did not take up the remark dropped with design by Madame Magloire. She repeated it. Then Mademoiselle Baptistine, desirous of satisfying Madame Magloire without displeasing her brother, ventured to say timidly:—

"Did you hear what Madame Magloire is saying, brother?"

"I have heard something of it in a vague way," replied the Bishop. Then half-turning in his chair, placing his hands on his knees, and raising towards the old servant woman his cordial face, which so easily grew joyous, and which was illuminated from below by the firelight,—"Come, what is the matter? What is the matter? Are we in any great danger?"

Then Madame Magloire began the whole story afresh, exaggerating it a little without being aware of the fact. It appeared that a Bohemian, a bare-footed vagabond, a sort of dangerous mendicant, was at that moment in the town. He had presented himself at Jacquin Labarre's to obtain lodgings, but the latter had not been willing to take him in. He had been seen to arrive by the way of the boulevard Gassendi and roam about the streets in the gloaming. A gallows-bird with a terrible face.

"Really!" said the Bishop.

This willingness to interrogate encouraged Madame Magloire; it seemed to her to indicate that the Bishop was on the point of becoming alarmed; she pursued triumphantly:—

"Yes, Monseigneur. That is how it is. There will be some sort of catastrophe in this town to-night. Every one says so. And withal, the police is so badly regulated" (a useful repetition). "The idea of living in a mountainous country, and not even having lights in the streets at night! One goes out. Black as ovens, indeed! And I say, Monseigneur, and Mademoiselle there says with me—"

"I," interrupted his sister, "say nothing. What my brother does is well done."

Madame Magloire continued as though there had been no protest:—

"We say that this house is not safe at all; that if Monseigneur will permit, I will go and tell Paulin Musebois, the locksmith, to come and replace the ancient locks on the doors; we have them, and it is only the work of a moment; for I say that nothing is more terrible than a door which can be opened from the outside with a latch by the first passer-by; and I say that we need bolts, Monseigneur, if only for this night; moreover, Monseigneur has the habit of always saying `come in'; and besides, even in the middle of the night, O mon Dieu! there is no need to ask permission."

At that moment there came a tolerably violent knock on the door.

"Come in," said the Bishop.

CHAPTER 3 THE HEROISM OF PASSIVE OBEDIENCE

The door opened.

It opened wide with a rapid movement, as though some one had given it an energetic and resolute push.

A man entered.

We already know the man. It was the wayfarer whom we have seen wandering about in search of shelter.

He entered, advanced a step, and halted, leaving the door open behind him. He had his knapsack on his shoulders, his cudgel in his hand, a rough, audacious, weary, and violent expression in his eyes. The fire on the hearth lighted him up. He was hideous. It was a sinister apparition.

Madame Magloire had not even the strength to utter a cry. She trembled, and stood with her mouth wide open.

Mademoiselle Baptistine turned round, beheld the man entering, and half started up in terror; then, turning her head by degrees towards the fireplace again, she began to observe her brother, and her face became once more profoundly calm and serene.

The Bishop fixed a tranquil eye on the man.

As he opened his mouth, doubtless to ask the new-comer what he desired, the man rested both hands on his staff, directed his gaze at the old man and the two women, and without waiting for the Bishop to speak, he said, in a loud voice:—

"See here. My name is Jean Valjean. I am a convict from the galleys. I have passed nineteen years in the galleys. I was liberated four days ago, and am on my way to Pontarlier, which is my destination. I have been walking for four days since I left Toulon. I have travelled a dozen leagues to-day on foot. This evening, when I arrived in these parts, I went to an inn, and they turned me out, because of my yellow passport, which I had shown at the town-hall. I had to do it. I went to an inn. They said to me, `Be off,' at both places. No one would take me. I went to the prison; the jailer would not admit me. I went into a dog's kennel; the dog bit me and chased me off, as though he had been a man. One would have said that he knew who I was. I went into the fields, intending to sleep in the open air, beneath the stars. There were no stars. I thought it was going to rain, and I re-entered the town, to seek the recess of a doorway. Yonder, in the square, I meant to sleep on a stone bench. A good woman pointed out your house to me, and said to me, `Knock there!' I have knocked. What is this place? Do you keep an inn? I have money—savings. One hundred and nine francs fifteen sous, which I earned in the galleys by my labor, in the course of nineteen years. I will pay. What is that to me? I have money. I am very weary; twelve leagues on foot; I am very hungry. Are you willing that I should remain?"

"Madame Magloire," said the Bishop, "you will set another place."

The man advanced three paces, and approached the lamp which was on the table. "Stop," he resumed, as though he had not quite understood; "that's not it. Did you hear? I am a galley-slave; a convict. I come from the galleys." He drew from his pocket a large sheet of yellow paper, which he unfolded. "Here's my passport. Yellow, as you see. This serves to expel me from every place where I go. Will you read it? I know how to read. I learned in the galleys. There is a school there for those who choose to learn. Hold, this is what they put on this passport: `Jean Valjean, discharged convict, native of'—that is nothing to you—`has been nineteen years in the galleys: five years for house-breaking and burglary; fourteen years for having attempted to escape on four occasions. He is a very dangerous man.' There! Every one has cast me out. Are you willing to receive me? Is this an inn? Will you give me something to eat and a bed? Have you a stable?"

"Madame Magloire," said the Bishop, "you will put white sheets on the bed in the alcove." We have already explained the character of the two women's obedience.

Madame Magloire retired to execute these orders.

The Bishop turned to the man.

"Sit down, sir, and warm yourself. We are going to sup in a few moments, and your bed will be prepared while you are supping."

At this point the man suddenly comprehended. The expression of his face, up to that time sombre and harsh, bore the imprint of stupefaction, of doubt, of joy, and became extraordinary. He began stammering like a crazy man:—

"Really? What! You will keep me? You do not drive me forth? A convict! You call me sir! You do not address me as thou? `Get out of here, you dog!' is what people always say to me. I felt sure that you would expel me, so I told you at once who I am. Oh, what a good woman that was who directed me hither! I am going to sup! A bed with a mattress and sheets, like the rest of the world! a bed! It is nineteen years since I have slept in a bed! You actually do not want me to go! You are good people. Besides, I have money. I will pay well. Pardon me, monsieur the inn-keeper, but what is your name? I will pay anything you ask. You are a fine man. You are an inn-keeper, are you not?"

"I am," replied the Bishop, "a priest who lives here."

"A priest!" said the man. "Oh, what a fine priest! Then you are not going to demand any money of me? You are the cure, are you not? the cure of this big church? Well! I am a fool, truly! I had not perceived your skull-cap."

As he spoke, he deposited his knapsack and his cudgel in a corner, replaced his passport in his pocket, and seated himself. Mademoiselle Baptistine gazed mildly at him. He continued:

"You are humane, Monsieur le Cure; you have not scorned me. A good priest is a very good thing. Then you do not require me to pay?"

"No," said the Bishop; "keep your money. How much have you? Did you not tell me one hundred and nine francs?"

"And fifteen sous," added the man.

"One hundred and nine francs fifteen sous. And how long did it take you to earn that?"

"Nineteen years."

"Nineteen years!"

The Bishop sighed deeply.

The man continued: "I have still the whole of my money. In four days I have spent only twenty-five sous, which I earned by helping unload some wagons at Grasse. Since you are an abbe, I will tell you that we had a chaplain in the galleys. And one day I saw a bishop there. Monseigneur is what they call him. He was the Bishop of Majore at Marseilles. He is the cure who rules over the other cures, you understand. Pardon me, I say that very badly; but it is such a far-off thing to me! You understand what we are! He said mass in the middle of the galleys, on an altar. He had a pointed thing, made of gold, on his head; it glittered in the bright light of midday. We were all ranged in lines on the three sides, with cannons with lighted matches facing us. We could not see very well. He spoke; but he was too far off, and we did not hear. That is what a bishop is like."

While he was speaking, the Bishop had gone and shut the door, which had remained wide open.

Madame Magloire returned. She brought a silver fork and spoon, which she placed on the table.

"Madame Magloire," said the Bishop, "place those things as near the fire as possible." And turning to his guest: "The night wind is harsh on the Alps. You must be cold, sir."

Each time that he uttered the word sir, in his voice which was so gently grave and polished, the man's face lighted up. Monsieur to a convict is like a glass of water to one of the shipwrecked of the Medusa. Ignominy thirsts for consideration.

"This lamp gives a very bad light," said the Bishop.

Madame Magloire understood him, and went to get the two silver candlesticks from the chimney-piece in Monseigneur's bed-chamber, and placed them, lighted, on the table.

"Monsieur le Cure," said the man, "you are good; you do not despise me. You receive me into your house. You light your candles for me. Yet I have not concealed from you whence I come and that I am an unfortunate man."

The Bishop, who was sitting close to him, gently touched his hand. "You could not help telling me who you were. This is not my house; it is the house of Jesus Christ. This door does not demand of him who enters whether he has a name, but whether he has a grief. You suffer, you are hungry and thirsty; you are welcome. And do not thank me; do not say that I receive you in my house. No one is at home here, except the man who needs a refuge. I say to you, who are passing by, that you are much more at home here than I am myself. Everything here is yours. What need have I to know your name? Besides, before you told me you had one which I knew."

The man opened his eyes in astonishment.

"Really? You knew what I was called?"

"Yes," replied the Bishop, "you are called my brother."

"Stop, Monsieur le Cure," exclaimed the man. "I was very hungry when I entered here; but you are so good, that I no longer know what has happened to me."

The Bishop looked at him, and said,—

"You have suffered much?"

"Oh, the red coat, the ball on the ankle, a plank to sleep on, heat, cold, toil, the convicts, the thrashings, the double chain for nothing, the cell for one word; even sick and in bed, still the chain! Dogs, dogs are happier! Nineteen years! I am forty-six. Now there is the yellow passport. That is what it is like."

"Yes," resumed the Bishop, "you have come from a very sad place. Listen. There will be more joy in heaven over the tear-bathed face of a repentant sinner than over the white robes of a hundred just men. If you emerge from that sad place with thoughts of hatred and of wrath against mankind, you are deserving of pity; if you emerge with thoughts of good-will and of peace, you are more worthy than any one of us."

In the meantime, Madame Magloire had served supper: soup, made with water, oil, bread, and salt; a little bacon, a bit of mutton, figs, a fresh cheese, and a large loaf of rye bread. She had, of her own accord, added to the Bishop's ordinary fare a bottle of his old Mauves wine.

The Bishop's face at once assumed that expression of gayety which is peculiar to hospitable natures. "To table!" he cried vivaciously. As was his custom when a stranger supped with him, he made the man sit on his right. Mademoiselle Baptistine, perfectly peaceable and natural, took her seat at his left.

The Bishop asked a blessing; then helped the soup himself, according to his custom. The man began to eat with avidity.

All at once the Bishop said: "It strikes me there is something missing on this table."

Madame Magloire had, in fact, only placed the three sets of forks and spoons which were absolutely necessary. Now, it was the usage of the house, when the Bishop had any one to supper, to lay out the whole six sets of silver on the table-cloth—an innocent ostentation. This graceful semblance of luxury was a kind of child's play, which was full of charm in that gentle and severe household, which raised poverty into dignity.

Madame Magloire understood the remark, went out without saying a word, and a moment later the three sets of silver forks and spoons demanded by the Bishop were glittering upon the cloth, symmetrically arranged before the three persons seated at the table.

CHAPTER 4 DETAILS CONCERNING THE CHEESE-DAIRIES OF PONTARLIER

Now, in order to convey an idea of what passed at that table, we cannot do better than to transcribe here a passage from one of Mademoiselle Baptistine's letters to Madame Boischevron, wherein the conversation between the convict and the Bishop is described with ingenious minuteness.

"… This man paid no attention to any one. He ate with the voracity of a starving man. However, after supper he said:

"`Monsieur le Cure of the good God, all this is far too good for me; but I must say that the carters who would not allow me to eat with them keep a better table than you do.'

"Between ourselves, the remark rather shocked me. My brother replied:—

"`They are more fatigued than I.'

"`No,' returned the man, `they have more money. You are poor; I see that plainly. You cannot be even a curate. Are you really a cure? Ah, if the good God were but just, you certainly ought to be a cure!'

"`The good God is more than just,' said my brother.

"A moment later he added:—

"`Monsieur Jean Valjean, is it to Pontarlier that you are going?'

"`With my road marked out for me.'

"I think that is what the man said. Then he went on:—

"`I must be on my way by daybreak to-morrow. Travelling is hard. If the nights are cold, the days are hot.'

"`You are going to a good country,' said my brother. `During the Revolution my family was ruined. I took refuge in Franche-Comte at first, and there I lived for some time by the toil of my hands. My will was good. I found plenty to occupy me. One has only to choose. There are paper mills, tanneries, distilleries, oil factories, watch factories on a large scale, steel mills, copper works, twenty iron foundries at least, four of which, situated at Lods, at Chatillon, at Audincourt, and at Beure, are tolerably large.'

"I think I am not mistaken in saying that those are the names which my brother mentioned. Then he interrupted himself and addressed me:—

"`Have we not some relatives in those parts, my dear sister?'

"I replied,—

"`We did have some; among others, M. de Lucenet, who was captain of the gates at Pontarlier under the old regime.'

"`Yes,' resumed my brother; `but in '93, one had no longer any relatives, one had only one's arms. I worked. They have, in the country of Pontarlier, whither you are going, Monsieur Valjean, a truly patriarchal and truly charming industry, my sister. It is their cheese-dairies, which they call fruitieres.'

"Then my brother, while urging the man to eat, explained to him, with great minuteness, what these fruitieres of Pontarlier were; that they were divided into two classes: the big barns which belong to the rich, and where there are forty or fifty cows which produce from seven to eight thousand cheeses each summer, and the associated fruitieres, which belong to the poor; these are the peasants of mid-mountain, who hold their cows in common, and share the proceeds. `They engage the services of a cheese-maker, whom they call the grurin; the grurin receives the milk of the associates three times a day, and marks the quantity on a double tally. It is towards the end of April that the work of the cheese-dairies begins; it is towards the middle of June that the cheese-makers drive their cows to the mountains.'

"The man recovered his animation as he ate. My brother made him drink that good Mauves wine, which he does not drink himself, because he says that wine is expensive. My brother imparted all these details with that easy gayety of his with which you are acquainted, interspersing his words with graceful attentions to me. He recurred frequently to that comfortable trade of grurin, as though he wished the man to understand, without advising him directly and harshly, that this would afford him a refuge. One thing struck me. This man was what I have told you. Well, neither during supper, nor during the entire evening, did my brother utter a single word, with the exception of a few words about Jesus when he entered, which could remind the man of what he was, nor of what my brother was. To all appearances, it was an occasion for preaching him a little sermon, and of impressing the Bishop on the convict, so that a mark of the passage might remain behind. This might have appeared to any one else who had this, unfortunate man in his hands to afford a chance to nourish his soul as well as his body, and to bestow upon him some reproach, seasoned with moralizing and

advice, or a little commiseration, with an exhortation to conduct himself better in the future. My brother did not even ask him from what country he came, nor what was his history. For in his history there is a fault, and my brother seemed to avoid everything which could remind him of it. To such a point did he carry it, that at one time, when my brother was speaking of the mountaineers of Pontarlier, who exercise a gentle labor near heaven, and who, he added, are happy because they are innocent, he stopped short, fearing lest in this remark there might have escaped him something which might wound the man. By dint of reflection, I think I have comprehended what was passing in my brother's heart. He was thinking, no doubt, that this man, whose name is Jean Valjean, had his misfortune only too vividly present in his mind; that the best thing was to divert him from it, and to make him believe, if only momentarily, that he was a person like any other, by treating him just in his ordinary way. Is not this indeed, to understand charity well? Is there not, dear Madame, something truly evangelical in this delicacy which abstains from sermon, from moralizing, from allusions? and is not the truest pity, when a man has a sore point, not to touch it at all? It has seemed to me that this might have been my brother's private thought. In any case, what I can say is that, if he entertained all these ideas, he gave no sign of them; from beginning to end, even to me he was the same as he is every evening, and he supped with this Jean Valjean with the same air and in the same manner in which he would have supped with M. Gedeon le Provost, or with the curate of the parish.

"Towards the end, when he had reached the figs, there came a knock at the door. It was Mother Gerbaud, with her little one in her arms. My brother kissed the child on the brow, and borrowed fifteen sous which I had about me to give to Mother Gerbaud. The man was not paying much heed to anything then. He was no longer talking, and he seemed very much fatigued. After poor old Gerbaud had taken her departure, my brother said grace; then he turned to the man and said to him, `You must be in great need of your bed.' Madame Magloire cleared the table very promptly. I understood that we must retire, in order to allow this traveller to go to sleep, and we both went up stairs. Nevertheless, I sent Madame Magloire down a moment later, to carry to the man's bed a goat skin from the Black Forest, which was in my room. The nights are frigid, and that keeps one warm. It is a pity that this skin is old; all the hair is falling out. My brother bought it while he was in Germany, at Tottlingen, near the sources of the Danube, as well as the little ivory-handled knife which I use at table.

"Madame Magloire returned immediately. We said our prayers in the drawing-room, where we hang up the linen, and then we each retired to our own chambers, without saying a word to each other."

CHAPTER 5 TRANQUILLITY

After bidding his sister good night, Monseigneur Bienvenu took one of the two silver candlesticks from the table, handed the other to his guest, and said to him,—

"Monsieur, I will conduct you to your room."

The man followed him.

As might have been observed from what has been said above, the house was so arranged that in order to pass into the oratory where the alcove was situated, or to get out of it, it was necessary to traverse the Bishop's bedroom.

At the moment when he was crossing this apartment, Madame Magloire was putting away the silverware in the cupboard near the head of the bed. This was her last care every evening before she went to bed.

The Bishop installed his guest in the alcove. A fresh white bed had been prepared there. The man set the candle down on a small table.

"Well," said the Bishop, "may you pass a good night. To-morrow morning, before you set out, you shall drink a cup of warm milk from our cows."

"Thanks, Monsieur l'Abbe," said the man.

Hardly had he pronounced these words full of peace, when all of a sudden, and without transition, he made a strange movement, which would have frozen the two sainted women with horror, had they witnessed it. Even at this day it is difficult for us to explain what inspired him at that moment. Did he intend to convey a warning or to throw out a menace? Was he simply obeying a sort of instinctive impulse which was obscure even to himself? He turned abruptly to the old man, folded his arms, and bending upon his host a savage gaze, he exclaimed in a hoarse voice:—

"Ah! really! You lodge me in your house, close to yourself like this?"

He broke off, and added with a laugh in which there lurked something monstrous:—

"Have you really reflected well? How do you know that I have not been an assassin?"

The Bishop replied:—

"That is the concern of the good God."

Then gravely, and moving his lips like one who is praying or talking to himself, he raised two fingers of his right hand and bestowed his benediction on the man, who did not bow, and without turning his head or looking behind him, he returned to his bedroom.

When the alcove was in use, a large serge curtain drawn from wall to wall concealed the altar. The Bishop knelt before this curtain as he passed and said a brief prayer. A moment later he was in his garden, walking, meditating, conteplating, his heart and soul wholly absorbed in those grand and mysterious things which God shows at night to the eyes which remain open.

As for the man, he was actually so fatigued that he did not even profit by the nice white sheets. Snuffing out his candle with his nostrils after the manner of convicts, he dropped, all dressed as he was, upon the bed, where he immediately fell into a profound sleep.

Midnight struck as the Bishop returned from his garden to his apartment.

A few minutes later all were asleep in the little house.

CHAPTER 6 JEAN VALJEAN

Towards the middle of the night Jean Valjean woke.

Jean Valjean came from a poor peasant family of Brie. He had not learned to read in his childhood. When he reached man's estate, be became a tree-pruner at Faverolles. His mother was named Jeanne

Mathieu; his father was called Jean Valjean or Vlajean, probably a sobriquet, and a contraction of viola Jean, "here's Jean."

Jean Valjean was of that thoughtful but not gloomy disposition which constitutes the peculiarity of affectionate natures. On the whole, however, there was something decidedly sluggish and insignificant about Jean Valjean in appearance, at least. He had lost his father and mother at a very early age. His mother had died of a milk fever, which had not been properly attended to. His father, a tree-pruner, like himself, had been killed by a fall from a tree. All that remained to Jean Valjean was a sister older than himself,—a widow with seven children, boys and girls. This sister had brought up Jean Valjean, and so long as she had a husband she lodged and fed her young brother.

The husband died. The eldest of the seven children was eight years old. The youngest, one.

Jean Valjean had just attained his twenty-fifth year. He took the father's place, and, in his turn, supported the sister who had brought him up. This was done simply as a duty and even a little churlishly on the part of Jean Valjean. Thus his youth had been spent in rude and ill-paid toil. He had never known a "kind woman friend" in his native parts. He had not had the time to fall in love.

He returned at night weary, and ate his broth without uttering a word. His sister, mother Jeanne, often took the best part of his repast from his bowl while he was eating,—a bit of meat, a slice of bacon, the heart of the cabbage,—to give to one of her children. As he went on eating, with his head bent over the table and almost into his soup, his long hair falling about his bowl and concealing his eyes, he had the air of perceiving nothing and allowing it. There was at Faverolles, not far from the Valjean thatched cottage, on the other side of the lane, a farmer's wife named Marie-Claude; the Valjean children, habitually famished, sometimes went to borrow from Marie-Claude a pint of milk, in their mother's name, which they drank behind a hedge or in some alley corner, snatching the jug from each other so hastily that the little girls spilled it on their aprons and down their necks. If their mother had known of this marauding, she would have punished the delinquents severely. Jean Valjean gruffly and grumblingly paid Marie-Claude for the pint of milk behind their mother's back, and the children were not punished.

In pruning season he earned eighteen sous a day; then he hired out as a hay-maker, as laborer, as neat-herd on a farm, as a drudge. He did whatever he could. His sister worked also but what could she do with seven little children? It was a sad group enveloped in misery, which was being gradually annihilated. A very hard winter came. Jean had no work. The family had no bread. No bread literally. Seven children!

One Sunday evening, Maubert Isabeau, the baker on the Church Square at Faverolles, was preparing to go to bed, when he heard a violent blow on the grated front of his shop. He arrived in time to see an arm passed through a hole made by a blow from a fist, through the grating and the glass. The arm seized a loaf of bread and carried it off. Isabeau ran out in haste; the robber fled at the full speed of his legs. Isabeau ran after him and stopped him. The thief had flung away the loaf, but his arm was still bleeding. It was Jean Valjean.

This took place in 1795. Jean Valjean was taken before the tribunals of the time for theft and breaking and entering an inhabited house at night. He had a gun which he used better than any one else in the world, he was a bit of a poacher, and this injured his case. There exists a legitimate prejudice against poachers. The poacher, like the smuggler, smacks too strongly of the brigand. Nevertheless, we will remark cursorily, there is still an abyss between these races of men and the hideous assassin of the towns. The poacher lives in the forest, the smuggler lives in the mountains or on the sea. The cities make ferocious men because they

make corrupt men. The mountain, the sea, the forest, make savage men; they develop the fierce side, but often without destroying the humane side.

Jean Valjean was pronounced guilty. The terms of the Code were explicit. There occur formidable hours in our civilization; there are moments when the penal laws decree a shipwreck. What an ominous minute is that in which society draws back and consummates the irreparable abandonment of a sentient being! Jean Valjean was condemned to five years in the galleys.

On the 22d of April, 1796, the victory of Montenotte, won by the general-in-chief of the army of Italy, whom the message of the Directory to the Five Hundred, of the 2d of Floreal, year IV., calls Buona-Parte, was announced in Paris; on that same day a great gang of galley-slaves was put in chains at Bicetre. Jean Valjean formed a part of that gang. An old turnkey of the prison, who is now nearly eighty years old, still recalls perfectly that unfortunate wretch who was chained to the end of the fourth line, in the north angle of the courtyard. He was seated on the ground like the others. He did not seem to comprehend his position, except that it was horrible. It is probable that he, also, was disentangling from amid the vague ideas of a poor man, ignorant of everything, something excessive. While the bolt of his iron collar was being riveted behind his head with heavy blows from the hammer, he wept, his tears stifled him, they impeded his speech; he only managed to say from time to time, "I was a tree-pruner at Faverolles." Then still sobbing, he raised his right hand and lowered it gradually seven times, as though he were touching in succession seven heads of unequal heights, and from this gesture it was divined that the thing which he had done, whatever it was, he had done for the sake of clothing and nourishing seven little children.

He set out for Toulon. He arrived there, after a journey of twenty-seven days, on a cart, with a chain on his neck. At Toulon he was clothed in the red cassock. All that had constituted his life, even to his name, was effaced; he was no longer even Jean Valjean; he was number 24,601. What became of his sister? What became of the seven children? Who troubled himself about that? What becomes of the handful of leaves from the young tree which is sawed off at the root?

It is always the same story. These poor living beings, these creatures of God, henceforth without support, without guide, without refuge, wandered away at random,—who even knows?— each in his own direction perhaps, and little by little buried themselves in that cold mist which engulfs solitary destinies; gloomy shades, into which disappear in succession so many unlucky heads, in the sombre march of the human race. They quitted the country. The clock-tower of what had been their village forgot them; the boundary line of what had been their field forgot them; after a few years' residence in the galleys, Jean Valjean himself forgot them. In that heart, where there had been a wound, there was a scar. That is all. Only once, during all the time which he spent at Toulon, did he hear his sister mentioned. This happened, I think, towards the end of the fourth year of his captivity. I know not through what channels the news reached him. Some one who had known them in their own country had seen his sister. She was in Paris. She lived in a poor street Rear Saint-Sulpice, in the Rue du Gindre. She had with her only one child, a little boy, the youngest. Where were the other six? Perhaps she did not know herself. Every morning she went to a printing office, No. 3 Rue du Sabot, where she was a folder and stitcher. She was obliged to be there at six o'clock in the morning—long before daylight in winter. In the same building with the printing office there was a school, and to this school she took her little boy, who was seven years old. But as she entered the printing office at six, and the school only opened at seven, the child had to wait in the courtyard, for the school to open, for an hour—one hour of a winter night in the open air! They would not allow the child to come into the printing office, because he was in the way, they said. When the workmen passed in the morning, they beheld this poor little being seated on

the pavement, overcome with drowsiness, and often fast asleep in the shadow, crouched down and doubled up over his basket. When it rained, an old woman, the portress, took pity on him; she took him into her den, where there was a pallet, a spinning-wheel, and two wooden chairs, and the little one slumbered in a corner, pressing himself close to the cat that he might suffer less from cold. At seven o'clock the school opened, and he entered. That is what was told to Jean Valjean.

They talked to him about it for one day; it was a moment, a flash, as though a window had suddenly been opened upon the destiny of those things whom he had loved; then all closed again. He heard nothing more forever. Nothing from them ever reached him again; he never beheld them; he never met them again; and in the continuation of this mournful history they will not be met with any more.

Towards the end of this fourth year Jean Valjean's turn to escape arrived. His comrades assisted him, as is the custom in that sad place. He escaped. He wandered for two days in the fields at liberty, if being at liberty is to be hunted, to turn the head every instant, to quake at the slightest noise, to be afraid of everything,—of a smoking roof, of a passing man, of a barking dog, of a galloping horse, of a striking clock, of the day because one can see, of the night because one cannot see, of the highway, of the path, of a bush, of sleep. On the evening of the second day he was captured. He had neither eaten nor slept for thirty-six hours. The maritime tribunal condemned him, for this crime, to a prolongation of his term for three years, which made eight years. In the sixth year his turn to escape occurred again; he availed himself of it, but could not accomplish his flight fully. He was missing at roll-call. The cannon were fired, and at night the patrol found him hidden under the keel of a vessel in process of construction; he resisted the galley guards who seized him. Escape and rebellion. This case, provided for by a special code, was punished by an addition of five years, two of them in the double chain. Thirteen years. In the tenth year his turn came round again; he again profited by it; he succeeded no better. Three years for this fresh attempt. Sixteen years. Finally, I think it was during his thirteenth year, he made a last attempt, and only succeeded in getting retaken at the end of four hours of absence. Three years for those four hours. Nineteen years. In October, 1815, he was released; he had entered there in 1796, for having broken a pane of glass and taken a loaf of bread.

Room for a brief parenthesis. This is the second time, during his studies on the penal question and damnation by law, that the author of this book has come across the theft of a loaf of bread as the point of departure for the disaster of a destiny. Claude Gaux had stolen a loaf; Jean Valjean had stolen a loaf. English statistics prove the fact that four thefts out of five in London have hunger for their immediate cause.

Jean Valjean had entered the galleys sobbing and shuddering; he emerged impassive. He had entered in despair; he emerged gloomy.

What had taken place in that soul?

CHAPTER 7 THE INTERIOR OF DESPAIR

Let us try to say it.

It is necessary that society should look at these things, because it is itself which creates them.

He was, as we have said, an ignorant man, but he was not a fool. The light of nature was ignited in him. Unhappiness, which also possesses a clearness of vision of its own, augmented the small amount of daylight which existed in this mind. Beneath the cudgel, beneath the chain, in the cell, in hardship, beneath the

burning sun of the galleys, upon the plank bed of the convict, he withdrew into his own consciousness and meditated.

He constituted himself the tribunal.

He began by putting himself on trial.

He recognized the fact that he was not an innocent man unjustly punished. He admitted that he had committed an extreme and blameworthy act; that that loaf of bread would probably not have been refused to him had he asked for it; that, in any case, it would have been better to wait until he could get it through compassion or through work; that it is not an unanswerable argument to say, "Can one wait when one is hungry?" That, in the first place, it is very rare for any one to die of hunger, literally; and next, that, fortunately or unfortunately, man is so constituted that he can suffer long and much, both morally and physically, without dying; that it is therefore necessary to have patience; that that would even have been better for those poor little children; that it had been an act of madness for him, a miserable, unfortunate wretch, to take society at large violently by the collar, and to imagine that one can escape from misery through theft; that that is in any case a poor door through which to escape from misery through which infamy enters; in short, that he was in the wrong.

Then he asked himself—

Whether he had been the only one in fault in his fatal history. Whether it was not a serious thing, that he, a laborer, out of work, that he, an industrious man, should have lacked bread. And whether, the fault once committed and confessed, the chastisement had not been ferocious and disproportioned. Whether there had not been more abuse on the part of the law, in respect to the penalty, than there had been on the part of the culprit in respect to his fault. Whether there had not been an excess of weights in one balance of the scale, in the one which contains expiation. Whether the over-weight of the penalty was not equivalent to the annihilation of the crime, and did not result in reversing the situation, of replacing the fault of the delinquent by the fault of the repression, of converting the guilty man into the victim, and the debtor into the creditor, and of ranging the law definitely on the side of the man who had violated it.

Whether this penalty, complicated by successive aggravations for attempts at escape, had not ended in becoming a sort of outrage perpetrated by the stronger upon the feebler, a crime of society against the individual, a crime which was being committed afresh every day, a crime which had lasted nineteen years.

He asked himself whether human society could have the right to force its members to suffer equally in one case for its own unreasonable lack of foresight, and in the other case for its pitiless foresight; and to seize a poor man forever between a defect and an excess, a default of work and an excess of punishment.

Whether it was not outrageous for society to treat thus precisely those of its members who were the least well endowed in the division of goods made by chance, and consequently the most deserving of consideration.

These questions put and answered, he judged society and condemned it.

He condemned it to his hatred.

He made it responsible for the fate which he was suffering, and he said to himself that it might be that one day he should not hesitate to call it to account. He declared to himself that there was no equilibrium between the harm which he had caused and the harm which was being done to him; he finally arrived at the conclusion that his punishment was not, in truth, unjust, but that it most assuredly was iniquitous.

Anger may be both foolish and absurd; one can be irritated wrongfully; one is exasperated only when there is some show of right on one's side at bottom. Jean Valjean felt himself exasperated.

And besides, human society had done him nothing but harm; he had never seen anything of it save that angry face which it calls Justice, and which it shows to those whom it strikes. Men had only touched him to bruise him. Every contact with them had been a blow. Never, since his infancy, since the days of his mother, of his sister, had he ever encountered a friendly word and a kindly glance. From suffering to suffering, he had gradually arrived at the conviction that life is a war; and that in this war he was the conquered. He had no other weapon than his hate. He resolved to whet it in the galleys and to bear it away with him when he departed.

There was at Toulon a school for the convicts, kept by the Ignorantin friars, where the most necessary branches were taught to those of the unfortunate men who had a mind for them. He was of the number who had a mind. He went to school at the age of forty, and learned to read, to write, to cipher. He felt that to fortify his intelligence was to fortify his hate. In certain cases, education and enlightenment can serve to eke out evil.

This is a sad thing to say; after having judged society, which had caused his unhappiness, he judged Providence, which had made society, and he condemned it also.

Thus during nineteen years of torture and slavery, this soul mounted and at the same time fell. Light entered it on one side, and darkness on the other.

Jean Valjean had not, as we have seen, an evil nature. He was still good when he arrived at the galleys. He there condemned society, and felt that he was becoming wicked; he there condemned Providence, and was conscious that he was becoming impious.

It is difficult not to indulge in meditation at this point.

Does human nature thus change utterly and from top to bottom? Can the man created good by God be rendered wicked by man? Can the soul be completely made over by fate, and become evil, fate being evil? Can the heart become misshapen and contract incurable deformities and infirmities under the oppression of a disproportionate unhappiness, as the vertebral column beneath too low a vault? Is there not in every human soul, was there not in the soul of Jean Valjean in particular, a first spark, a divine element, incorruptible in this world, immortal in the other, which good can develop, fan, ignite, and make to glow with splendor, and which evil can never wholly extinguish?

Grave and obscure questions, to the last of which every physiologist would probably have responded no, and that without hesitation, had he beheld at Toulon, during the hours of repose, which were for Jean Valjean hours of revery, this gloomy galley-slave, seated with folded arms upon the bar of some capstan, with the end of his chain thrust into his pocket to prevent its dragging, serious, silent, and thoughtful, a pariah of the laws which regarded the man with wrath, condemned by civilization, and regarding heaven with severity.

Certainly,—and we make no attempt to dissimulate the fact,— the observing physiologist would have beheld an irremediable misery; he would, perchance, have pitied this sick man, of the law's making; but he would not have even essayed any treatment; he would have turned aside his gaze from the caverns of which he would have caught a glimpse within this soul, and, like Dante at the portals of hell, he would have effaced

from this existence the word which the finger of God has, nevertheless, inscribed upon the brow of every man,—hope.

Was this state of his soul, which we have attempted to analyze, as perfectly clear to Jean Valjean as we have tried to render it for those who read us? Did Jean Valjean distinctly perceive, after their formation, and had he seen distinctly during the process of their formation, all the elements of which his moral misery was composed? Had this rough and unlettered man gathered a perfectly clear perception of the succession of ideas through which he had, by degrees, mounted and descended to the lugubrious aspects which had, for so many years, formed the inner horizon of his spirit? Was he conscious of all that passed within him, and of all that was working there? That is something which we do not presume to state; it is something which we do not even believe. There was too much ignorance in Jean Valjean, even after his misfortune, to prevent much vagueness from still lingering there. At times he did not rightly know himself what he felt. Jean Valjean was in the shadows; he suffered in the shadows; he hated in the shadows; one might have said that he hated in advance of himself. He dwelt habitually in this shadow, feeling his way like a blind man and a dreamer. Only, at intervals, there suddenly came to him, from without and from within, an access of wrath, a surcharge of suffering, a livid and rapid flash which illuminated his whole soul, and caused to appear abruptly all around him, in front, behind, amid the gleams of a frightful light, the hideous precipices and the sombre perspective of his destiny.

The flash passed, the night closed in again; and where was he? He no longer knew. The peculiarity of pains of this nature, in which that which is pitiless—that is to say, that which is brutalizing—predominates, is to transform a man, little by little, by a sort of stupid transfiguration, into a wild beast; sometimes into a ferocious beast.

Jean Valjean's successive and obstinate attempts at escape would alone suffice to prove this strange working of the law upon the human soul. Jean Valjean would have renewed these attempts, utterly useless and foolish as they were, as often as the opportunity had presented itself, without reflecting for an instant on the result, nor on the experiences which he had already gone through. He escaped impetuously, like the wolf who finds his cage open. Instinct said to him, "Flee!" Reason would have said, "Remain!" But in the presence of so violent a temptation, reason vanished; nothing remained but instinct. The beast alone acted. When he was recaptured, the fresh severities inflicted on him only served to render him still more wild.

One detail, which we must not omit, is that he possessed a physical strength which was not approached by a single one of the denizens of the galleys. At work, at paying out a cable or winding up a capstan, Jean Valjean was worth four men. He sometimes lifted and sustained enormous weights on his back; and when the occasion demanded it, he replaced that implement which is called a jack-screw, and was formerly called orgueil [pride], whence, we may remark in passing, is derived the name of the Rue Montorgueil, near the Halles [Fishmarket] in Paris. His comrades had nicknamed him Jean the Jack-screw. Once, when they were repairing the balcony of the town-hall at Toulon, one of those admirable caryatids of Puget, which support the balcony, became loosened, and was on the point of falling. Jean Valjean, who was present, supported the caryatid with his shoulder, and gave the workmen time to arrive.

His suppleness even exceeded his strength. Certain convicts who were forever dreaming of escape, ended by making a veritable science of force and skill combined. It is the science of muscles. An entire system of mysterious statics is daily practised by prisoners, men who are forever envious of the flies and birds. To climb a vertical surface, and to find points of support where hardly a projection was visible, was play to Jean Valjean. An angle of the wall being given, with the tension of his back and legs, with his elbows

and his heels fitted into the unevenness of the stone, he raised himself as if by magic to the third story. He sometimes mounted thus even to the roof of the galley prison.

He spoke but little. He laughed not at all. An excessive emotion was required to wring from him, once or twice a year, that lugubrious laugh of the convict, which is like the echo of the laugh of a demon. To all appearance, he seemed to be occupied in the constant contemplation of something terrible.

He was absorbed, in fact.

Athwart the unhealthy perceptions of an incomplete nature and a crushed intelligence, he was confusedly conscious that some monstrous thing was resting on him. In that obscure and wan shadow within which he crawled, each time that he turned his neck and essayed to raise his glance, he perceived with terror, mingled with rage, a sort of frightful accumulation of things, collecting and mounting above him, beyond the range of his vision,— laws, prejudices, men, and deeds,—whose outlines escaped him, whose mass terrified him, and which was nothing else than that prodigious pyramid which we call civilization. He distinguished, here and there in that swarming and formless mass, now near him, now afar off and on inaccessible table-lands, some group, some detail, vividly illuminated; here the galley-sergeant and his cudgel; there the gendarme and his sword; yonder the mitred archbishop; away at the top, like a sort of sun, the Emperor, crowned and dazzling. It seemed to him that these distant splendors, far from dissipating his night, rendered it more funereal and more black. All this— laws, prejudices, deeds, men, things—went and came above him, over his head, in accordance with the complicated and mysterious movement which God imparts to civilization, walking over him and crushing him with I know not what peacefulness in its cruelty and inexorability in its indifference. Souls which have fallen to the bottom of all possible misfortune, unhappy men lost in the lowest of those limbos at which no one any longer looks, the reproved of the law, feel the whole weight of this human society, so formidable for him who is without, so frightful for him who is beneath, resting upon their heads.

In this situation Jean Valjean meditated; and what could be the nature of his meditation?

If the grain of millet beneath the millstone had thoughts, it would, doubtless, think that same thing which Jean Valjean thought.

All these things, realities full of spectres, phantasmagories full of realities, had eventually created for him a sort of interior state which is almost indescribable.

At times, amid his convict toil, he paused. He fell to thinking. His reason, at one and the same time riper and more troubled than of yore, rose in revolt. Everything which had happened to him seemed to him absurd; everything that surrounded him seemed to him impossible. He said to himself, "It is a dream." He gazed at the galley-sergeant standing a few paces from him; the galley-sergeant seemed a phantom to him. All of a sudden the phantom dealt him a blow with his cudgel.

Visible nature hardly existed for him. It would almost be true to say that there existed for Jean Valjean neither sun, nor fine summer days, nor radiant sky, nor fresh April dawns. I know not what vent-hole daylight habitually illumined his soul.

To sum up, in conclusion, that which can be summed up and translated into positive results in all that we have just pointed out, we will confine ourselves to the statement that, in the course of nineteen years, Jean Valjean, the inoffensive tree-pruner of Faverolles, the formidable convict of Toulon, had become capable, thanks to the manner in which the galleys had moulded him, of two sorts of evil action: firstly, of evil action

which was rapid, unpremeditated, dashing, entirely instinctive, in the nature of reprisals for the evil which he had undergone; secondly, of evil action which was serious, grave, consciously argued out and premeditated, with the false ideas which such a misfortune can furnish. His deliberate deeds passed through three successive phases, which natures of a certain stamp can alone traverse,—reasoning, will, perseverance. He had for moving causes his habitual wrath, bitterness of soul, a profound sense of indignities suffered, the reaction even against the good, the innocent, and the just, if there are any such. The point of departure, like the point of arrival, for all his thoughts, was hatred of human law; that hatred which, if it be not arrested in its development by some providential incident, becomes, within a given time, the hatred of society, then the hatred of the human race, then the hatred of creation, and which manifests itself by a vague, incessant, and brutal desire to do harm to some living being, no matter whom. It will be perceived that it was not without reason that Jean Valjean's passport described him as a very dangerous man.

From year to year this soul had dried away slowly, but with fatal sureness. When the heart is dry, the eye is dry. On his departure from the galleys it had been nineteen years since he had shed a tear.

CHAPTER 8 BILLOWS AND SHADOWS

A man overboard!

What matters it? The vessel does not halt. The wind blows. That sombre ship has a path which it is forced to pursue. It passes on.

The man disappears, then reappears; he plunges, he rises again to the surface; he calls, he stretches out his arms; he is not heard. The vessel, trembling under the hurricane, is wholly absorbed in its own workings; the passengers and sailors do not even see the drowning man; his miserable head is but a speck amid the immensity of the waves. He gives vent to desperate cries from out of the depths. What a spectre is that retreating sail! He gazes and gazes at it frantically. It retreats, it grows dim, it diminishes in size. He was there but just now, he was one of the crew, he went and came along the deck with the rest, he had his part of breath and of sunlight, he was a living man. Now, what has taken place? He has slipped, he has fallen; all is at an end.

He is in the tremendous sea. Under foot he has nothing but what flees and crumbles. The billows, torn and lashed by the wind, encompass him hideously; the tossings of the abyss bear him away; all the tongues of water dash over his head; a populace of waves spits upon him; confused openings half devour him; every time that he sinks, he catches glimpses of precipices filled with night; frightful and unknown vegetations seize him, knot about his feet, draw him to them; he is conscious that he is becoming an abyss, that he forms part of the foam; the waves toss him from one to another; he drinks in the bitterness; the cowardly ocean attacks him furiously, to drown him; the enormity plays with his agony. It seems as though all that water were hate.

Nevertheless, he struggles.

He tries to defend himself; he tries to sustain himself; he makes an effort; he swims. He, his petty strength all exhausted instantly, combats the inexhaustible.

Where, then, is the ship? Yonder. Barely visible in the pale shadows of the horizon.

The wind blows in gusts; all the foam overwhelms him. He raises his eyes and beholds only the lividness of the clouds. He witnesses, amid his death-pangs, the immense madness of the sea. He is tortured by this madness; he hears noises strange to man, which seem to come from beyond the limits of the earth, and from one knows not what frightful region beyond.

There are birds in the clouds, just as there are angels above human distresses; but what can they do for him? They sing and fly and float, and he, he rattles in the death agony.

He feels himself buried in those two infinities, the ocean and the sky, at one and the same time: the one is a tomb; the other is a shroud.

Night descends; he has been swimming for hours; his strength is exhausted; that ship, that distant thing in which there were men, has vanished; he is alone in the formidable twilight gulf; he sinks, he stiffens himself, he twists himself; he feels under him the monstrous billows of the invisible; he shouts.

There are no more men. Where is God? He shouts. Help! Help! He still shouts on.

Nothing on the horizon; nothing in heaven.

He implores the expanse, the waves, the seaweed, the reef; they are deaf. He beseeches the tempest; the imperturbable tempest obeys only the infinite.

Around him darkness, fog, solitude, the stormy and nonsentient tumult, the undefined curling of those wild waters. In him horror and fatigue. Beneath him the depths. Not a point of support. He thinks of the gloomy adventures of the corpse in the limitless shadow. The bottomless cold paralyzes him. His hands contract convulsively; they close, and grasp nothingness. Winds, clouds, whirlwinds, gusts, useless stars! What is to be done? The desperate man gives up; he is weary, he chooses the alternative of death; he resists not; he lets himself go; he abandons his grip; and then he tosses forevermore in the lugubrious dreary depths of engulfment. Oh, implacable march of human societies! Oh, losses of men and of souls on the way! Ocean into which falls all that the law lets slip! Disastrous absence of help! Oh, moral death!

The sea is the inexorable social night into which the penal laws fling their condemned. The sea is the immensity of wretchedness.

The soul, going down stream in this gulf, may become a corpse. Who shall resuscitate it?

CHAPTER 9 NEW TROUBLES

When the hour came for him to take his departure from the galleys, when Jean Valjean heard in his ear the strange words, Thou art free! the moment seemed improbable and unprecedented; a ray of vivid light, a ray of the true light of the living, suddenly penetrated within him. But it was not long before this ray paled. Jean Valjean had been dazzled by the idea of liberty. He had believed in a new life. He very speedily perceived what sort of liberty it is to which a yellow passport is provided.

And this was encompassed with much bitterness. He had calculated that his earnings, during his sojourn in the galleys, ought to amount to a hundred and seventy-one francs. It is but just to add that he had forgotten to include in his calculations the forced repose of Sundays and festival days during nineteen years, which entailed a diminution of about eighty francs. At all events, his hoard had been reduced by various local levies to the sum of one hundred and nine francs fifteen sous, which had been counted out to him on his

departure. He had understood nothing of this, and had thought himself wronged. Let us say the word—robbed.

On the day following his liberation, he saw, at Grasse, in front of an orange-flower distillery, some men engaged in unloading bales. He offered his services. Business was pressing; they were accepted. He set to work. He was intelligent, robust, adroit; he did his best; the master seemed pleased. While he was at work, a gendarme passed, observed him, and demanded his papers. It was necessary to show him the yellow passport. That done, Jean Valjean resumed his labor. A little while before he had questioned one of the workmen as to the amount which they earned each day at this occupation; he had been told thirty sous. When evening arrived, as he was forced to set out again on the following day, he presented himself to the owner of the distillery and requested to be paid. The owner did not utter a word, but handed him fifteen sous. He objected. He was told, "That is enough for thee." He persisted. The master looked him straight between the eyes, and said to him "Beware of the prison."

There, again, he considered that he had been robbed.

Society, the State, by diminishing his hoard, had robbed him wholesale. Now it was the individual who was robbing him at retail.

Liberation is not deliverance. One gets free from the galleys, but not from the sentence.

That is what happened to him at Grasse. We have seen in what manner he was received at D——

CHAPTER 10 THE MAN AROUSED

As the Cathedral clock struck two in the morning, Jean Valjean awoke.

What woke him was that his bed was too good. It was nearly twenty years since he had slept in a bed, and, although he had not undressed, the sensation was too novel not to disturb his slumbers.

He had slept more than four hours. His fatigue had passed away. He was accustomed not to devote many hours to repose.

He opened his eyes and stared into the gloom which surrounded him; then he closed them again, with the intention of going to sleep once more.

When many varied sensations have agitated the day, when various matters preoccupy the mind, one falls asleep once, but not a second time. Sleep comes more easily than it returns. This is what happened to Jean Valjean. He could not get to sleep again, and he fell to thinking.

He was at one of those moments when the thoughts which one has in one's mind are troubled. There was a sort of dark confusion in his brain. His memories of the olden time and of the immediate present floated there pell-mell and mingled confusedly, losing their proper forms, becoming disproportionately large, then suddenly disappearing, as in a muddy and perturbed pool. Many thoughts occurred to him; but there was one which kept constantly presenting itself afresh, and which drove away all others. We will mention this thought at once: he had observed the six sets of silver forks and spoons and the ladle which Madame Magloire had placed on the table.

Those six sets of silver haunted him.—They were there.—A few paces distant.—Just as he was traversing the adjoining room to reach the one in which he then was, the old servant-woman had been in the act of placing them in a little cupboard near the head of the bed.— He had taken careful note of this cupboard.—On the right, as you entered from the dining-room.—They were solid.—And old silver.— From the ladle one could get at least two hundred francs.— Double what he had earned in nineteen years.—It is true that he would have earned more if "the administration had not robbed him."

His mind wavered for a whole hour in fluctuations with which there was certainly mingled some struggle. Three o'clock struck. He opened his eyes again, drew himself up abruptly into a sitting posture, stretched out his arm and felt of his knapsack, which he had thrown down on a corner of the alcove; then he hung his legs over the edge of the bed, and placed his feet on the floor, and thus found himself, almost without knowing it, seated on his bed.

He remained for a time thoughtfully in this attitude, which would have been suggestive of something sinister for any one who had seen him thus in the dark, the only person awake in that house where all were sleeping. All of a sudden he stooped down, removed his shoes and placed them softly on the mat beside the bed; then he resumed his thoughtful attitude, and became motionless once more.

Throughout this hideous meditation, the thoughts which we have above indicated moved incessantly through his brain; entered, withdrew, re-entered, and in a manner oppressed him; and then he thought, also, without knowing why, and with the mechanical persistence of revery, of a convict named Brevet, whom he had known in the galleys, and whose trousers had been upheld by a single suspender of knitted cotton. The checkered pattern of that suspender recurred incessantly to his mind.

He remained in this situation, and would have so remained indefinitely, even until daybreak, had not the clock struck one—the half or quarter hour. It seemed to him that that stroke said to him, "Come on!"

He rose to his feet, hesitated still another moment, and listened; all was quiet in the house; then he walked straight ahead, with short steps, to the window, of which he caught a glimpse. The night was not very dark; there was a full moon, across which coursed large clouds driven by the wind. This created, outdoors, alternate shadow and gleams of light, eclipses, then bright openings of the clouds; and indoors a sort of twilight. This twilight, sufficient to enable a person to see his way, intermittent on account of the clouds, resembled the sort of livid light which falls through an air-hole in a cellar, before which the passersby come and go. On arriving at the window, Jean Valjean examined it. It had no grating; it opened in the garden and was fastened, according to the fashion of the country, only by a small pin. He opened it; but as a rush of cold and piercing air penetrated the room abruptly, he closed it again immediately. He scrutinized the garden with that attentive gaze which studies rather than looks. The garden was enclosed by a tolerably low white wall, easy to climb. Far away, at the extremity, he perceived tops of trees, spaced at regular intervals, which indicated that the wall separated the garden from an avenue or lane planted with trees.

Having taken this survey, he executed a movement like that of a man who has made up his mind, strode to his alcove, grasped his knapsack, opened it, fumbled in it, pulled out of it something which he placed on the bed, put his shoes into one of his pockets, shut the whole thing up again, threw the knapsack on his shoulders, put on his cap, drew the visor down over his eyes, felt for his cudgel, went and placed it in the angle of the window; then returned to the bed, and resolutely seized the object which he had deposited there. It resembled a short bar of iron, pointed like a pike at one end. It would have been difficult to distinguish in that darkness for what employment that bit of iron could have been designed. Perhaps it was a lever; possibly it was a club.

In the daytime it would have been possible to recognize it as nothing more than a miner's candlestick. Convicts were, at that period, sometimes employed in quarrying stone from the lofty hills which environ Toulon, and it was not rare for them to have miners' tools at their command. These miners' candlesticks are of massive iron, terminated at the lower extremity by a point, by means of which they are stuck into the rock.

He took the candlestick in his right hand; holding his breath and trying to deaden the sound of his tread, he directed his steps to the door of the adjoining room, occupied by the Bishop, as we already know.

On arriving at this door, he found it ajar. The Bishop had not closed it.

CHAPTER 11 WHAT HE DOES

Jean Valjean listened. Not a sound.

He gave the door a push.

He pushed it gently with the tip of his finger, lightly, with the furtive and uneasy gentleness of a cat which is desirous of entering.

The door yielded to this pressure, and made an imperceptible and silent movement, which enlarged the opening a little.

He waited a moment; then gave the door a second and a bolder push.

It continued to yield in silence. The opening was now large enough to allow him to pass. But near the door there stood a little table, which formed an embarrassing angle with it, and barred the entrance.

Jean Valjean recognized the difficulty. It was necessary, at any cost, to enlarge the aperture still further.

He decided on his course of action, and gave the door a third push, more energetic than the two preceding. This time a badly oiled hinge suddenly emitted amid the silence a hoarse and prolonged cry.

Jean Valjean shuddered. The noise of the hinge rang in his ears with something of the piercing and formidable sound of the trump of the Day of Judgment.

In the fantastic exaggerations of the first moment he almost imagined that that hinge had just become animated, and had suddenly assumed a terrible life, and that it was barking like a dog to arouse every one, and warn and to wake those who were asleep. He halted, shuddering, bewildered, and fell back from the tips of his toes upon his heels. He heard the arteries in his temples beating like two forge hammers, and it seemed to him that his breath issued from his breast with the roar of the wind issuing from a cavern. It seemed impossible to him that the horrible clamor of that irritated hinge should not have disturbed the entire household, like the shock of an earthquake; the door, pushed by him, had taken the alarm, and had shouted; the old man would rise at once; the two old women would shriek out; people would come to their assistance; in less than a quarter of an hour the town would be in an uproar, and the gendarmerie on hand. For a moment he thought himself lost.

He remained where he was, petrified like the statue of salt, not daring to make a movement. Several minutes elapsed. The door had fallen wide open. He ventured to peep into the next room. Nothing had stirred there. He lent an ear. Nothing was moving in the house. The noise made by the rusty hinge had not awakened any one.

This first danger was past; but there still reigned a frightful tumult within him. Nevertheless, he did not retreat. Even when he had thought himself lost, he had not drawn back. His only thought now was to finish as soon as possible. He took a step and entered the room.

This room was in a state of perfect calm. Here and there vague and confused forms were distinguishable, which in the daylight were papers scattered on a table, open folios, volumes piled upon a stool, an arm-chair heaped with clothing, a prie-Dieu, and which at that hour were only shadowy corners and whitish spots. Jean Valjean advanced with precaution, taking care not to knock against the furniture. He could hear, at the extremity of the room, the even and tranquil breathing of the sleeping Bishop.

He suddenly came to a halt. He was near the bed. He had arrived there sooner than he had thought for.

Nature sometimes mingles her effects and her spectacles with our actions with sombre and intelligent appropriateness, as though she desired to make us reflect. For the last half-hour a large cloud had covered the heavens. At the moment when Jean Valjean paused in front of the bed, this cloud parted, as though on purpose, and a ray of light, traversing the long window, suddenly illuminated the Bishop's pale face. He was sleeping peacefully. He lay in his bed almost completely dressed, on account of the cold of the Basses-Alps, in a garment of brown wool, which covered his arms to the wrists. His head was thrown back on the pillow, in the careless attitude of repose; his hand, adorned with the pastoral ring, and whence had fallen so many good deeds and so many holy actions, was hanging over the edge of the bed. His whole face was illumined with a vague expression of satisfaction, of hope, and of felicity. It was more than a smile, and almost a radiance. He bore upon his brow the indescribable reflection of a light which was invisible. The soul of the just contemplates in sleep a mysterious heaven.

A reflection of that heaven rested on the Bishop.

It was, at the same time, a luminous transparency, for that heaven was within him. That heaven was his conscience.

At the moment when the ray of moonlight superposed itself, so to speak, upon that inward radiance, the sleeping Bishop seemed as in a glory. It remained, however, gentle and veiled in an ineffable half-light. That moon in the sky, that slumbering nature, that garden without a quiver, that house which was so calm, the hour, the moment, the silence, added some solemn and unspeakable quality to the venerable repose of this man, and enveloped in a sort of serene and majestic aureole that white hair, those closed eyes, that face in which all was hope and all was confidence, that head of an old man, and that slumber of an infant.

There was something almost divine in this man, who was thus august, without being himself aware of it.

Jean Valjean was in the shadow, and stood motionless, with his iron candlestick in his hand, frightened by this luminous old man. Never had he beheld anything like this. This confidence terrified him. The moral world has no grander spectacle than this: a troubled and uneasy conscience, which has arrived on the brink of an evil action, contemplating the slumber of the just.

That slumber in that isolation, and with a neighbor like himself, had about it something sublime, of which he was vaguely but imperiously conscious.

No one could have told what was passing within him, not even himself. In order to attempt to form an idea of it, it is necessary to think of the most violent of things in the presence of the most gentle. Even on his visage it would have been impossible to distinguish anything with certainty. It was a sort of haggard astonishment. He gazed at it, and that was all. But what was his thought? It would have been impossible to

divine it. What was evident was, that he was touched and astounded. But what was the nature of this emotion?

His eye never quitted the old man. The only thing which was clearly to be inferred from his attitude and his physiognomy was a strange indecision. One would have said that he was hesitating between the two abysses,— the one in which one loses one's self and that in which one saves one's self. He seemed prepared to crush that skull or to kiss that hand.

At the expiration of a few minutes his left arm rose slowly towards his brow, and he took off his cap; then his arm fell back with the same deliberation, and Jean Valjean fell to meditating once more, his cap in his left hand, his club in his right hand, his hair bristling all over his savage head.

The Bishop continued to sleep in profound peace beneath that terrifying gaze.

The gleam of the moon rendered confusedly visible the crucifix over the chimney-piece, which seemed to be extending its arms to both of them, with a benediction for one and pardon for the other.

Suddenly Jean Valjean replaced his cap on his brow; then stepped rapidly past the bed, without glancing at the Bishop, straight to the cupboard, which he saw near the head; he raised his iron candlestick as though to force the lock; the key was there; he opened it; the first thing which presented itself to him was the basket of silverware; he seized it, traversed the chamber with long strides, without taking any precautions and without troubling himself about the noise, gained the door, re-entered the oratory, opened the window, seized his cudgel, bestrode the window-sill of the ground-floor, put the silver into his knapsack, threw away the basket, crossed the garden, leaped over the wall like a tiger, and fled.

CHAPTER 12 THE BISHOP WORKS

The next morning at sunrise Monseigneur Bienvenu was strolling in his garden. Madame Magloire ran up to him in utter consternation.

"Monseigneur, Monseigneur!" she exclaimed, "does your Grace know where the basket of silver is?"

"Yes," replied the Bishop.

"Jesus the Lord be blessed!" she resumed; "I did not know what had become of it."

The Bishop had just picked up the basket in a flower-bed. He presented it to Madame Magloire.

"Here it is."

"Well!" said she. "Nothing in it! And the silver?"

"Ah," returned the Bishop, "so it is the silver which troubles you? I don't know where it is."

"Great, good God! It is stolen! That man who was here last night has stolen it."

In a twinkling, with all the vivacity of an alert old woman, Madame Magloire had rushed to the oratory, entered the alcove, and returned to the Bishop. The Bishop had just bent down, and was sighing as he examined a plant of cochlearia des Guillons, which the basket had broken as it fell across the bed. He rose up at Madame Magloire's cry.

"Monseigneur, the man is gone! The silver has been stolen!"

As she uttered this exclamation, her eyes fell upon a corner of the garden, where traces of the wall having been scaled were visible. The coping of the wall had been torn away.

"Stay! yonder is the way he went. He jumped over into Cochefilet Lane. Ah, the abomination! He has stolen our silver!"

The Bishop remained silent for a moment; then he raised his grave eyes, and said gently to Madame Magloire:—

"And, in the first place, was that silver ours?"

Madame Magloire was speechless. Another silence ensued; then the Bishop went on:—

"Madame Magloire, I have for a long time detained that silver wrongfully. It belonged to the poor. Who was that man? A poor man, evidently."

"Alas! Jesus!" returned Madame Magloire. "It is not for my sake, nor for Mademoiselle's. It makes no difference to us. But it is for the sake of Monseigneur. What is Monseigneur to eat with now?"

The Bishop gazed at her with an air of amazement.

"Ah, come! Are there no such things as pewter forks and spoons?"

Madame Magloire shrugged her shoulders.

"Pewter has an odor."

"Iron forks and spoons, then."

Madame Magloire made an expressive grimace.

"Iron has a taste."

"Very well," said the Bishop; "wooden ones then."

A few moments later he was breakfasting at the very table at which Jean Valjean had sat on the previous evening. As he ate his breakfast, Monseigneur Welcome remarked gayly to his sister, who said nothing, and to Madame Magloire, who was grumbling under her breath, that one really does not need either fork or spoon, even of wood, in order to dip a bit of bread in a cup of milk.

"A pretty idea, truly," said Madame Magloire to herself, as she went and came, "to take in a man like that! and to lodge him close to one's self! And how fortunate that he did nothing but steal! Ah, mon Dieu! it makes one shudder to think of it!"

As the brother and sister were about to rise from the table, there came a knock at the door.

"Come in," said the Bishop.

The door opened. A singular and violent group made its appearance on the threshold. Three men were holding a fourth man by the collar. The three men were gendarmes; the other was Jean Valjean.

A brigadier of gendarmes, who seemed to be in command of the group, was standing near the door. He entered and advanced to the Bishop, making a military salute.

"Monseigneur—" said he.

At this word, Jean Valjean, who was dejected and seemed overwhelmed, raised his head with an air of stupefaction.

"Monseigneur!" he murmured. "So he is not the cure?"

"Silence!" said the gendarme. "He is Monseigneur the Bishop."

In the meantime, Monseigneur Bienvenu had advanced as quickly as his great age permitted.

"Ah! here you are!" he exclaimed, looking at Jean Valjean. "I am glad to see you. Well, but how is this? I gave you the candlesticks too, which are of silver like the rest, and for which you can certainly get two hundred francs. Why did you not carry them away with your forks and spoons?"

Jean Valjean opened his eyes wide, and stared at the venerable Bishop with an expression which no human tongue can render any account of.

"Monseigneur," said the brigadier of gendarmes, "so what this man said is true, then? We came across him. He was walking like a man who is running away. We stopped him to look into the matter. He had this silver—"

"And he told you," interposed the Bishop with a smile, "that it had been given to him by a kind old fellow of a priest with whom he had passed the night? I see how the matter stands. And you have brought him back here? It is a mistake."

"In that case," replied the brigadier, "we can let him go?"

"Certainly," replied the Bishop.

The gendarmes released Jean Valjean, who recoiled.

"Is it true that I am to be released?" he said, in an almost inarticulate voice, and as though he were talking in his sleep.

"Yes, thou art released; dost thou not understand?" said one of the gendarmes.

"My friend," resumed the Bishop, "before you go, here are your candlesticks. Take them."

He stepped to the chimney-piece, took the two silver candlesticks, and brought them to Jean Valjean. The two women looked on without uttering a word, without a gesture, without a look which could disconcert the Bishop.

Jean Valjean was trembling in every limb. He took the two candlesticks mechanically, and with a bewildered air.

"Now," said the Bishop, "go in peace. By the way, when you return, my friend, it is not necessary to pass through the garden. You can always enter and depart through the street door. It is never fastened with anything but a latch, either by day or by night."

Then, turning to the gendarmes:—

"You may retire, gentlemen."

The gendarmes retired.

Jean Valjean was like a man on the point of fainting.

The Bishop drew near to him, and said in a low voice:—

"Do not forget, never forget, that you have promised to use this money in becoming an honest man."

Jean Valjean, who had no recollection of ever having promised anything, remained speechless. The Bishop had emphasized the words when he uttered them. He resumed with solemnity:—

"Jean Valjean, my brother, you no longer belong to evil, but to good. It is your soul that I buy from you; I withdraw it from black thoughts and the spirit of perdition, and I give it to God."

CHAPTER 13 LITTLE GERVAIS

Jean Valjean left the town as though he were fleeing from it. He set out at a very hasty pace through the fields, taking whatever roads and paths presented themselves to him, without perceiving that he was incessantly retracing his steps. He wandered thus the whole morning, without having eaten anything and without feeling hungry. He was the prey of a throng of novel sensations. He was conscious of a sort of rage; he did not know against whom it was directed. He could not have told whether he was touched or humiliated. There came over him at moments a strange emotion which he resisted and to which he opposed the hardness acquired during the last twenty years of his life. This state of mind fatigued him. He perceived with dismay that the sort of frightful calm which the injustice of his misfortune had conferred upon him was giving way within him. He asked himself what would replace this. At times he would have actually preferred to be in prison with the gendarmes, and that things should not have happened in this way; it would have agitated him less. Although the season was tolerably far advanced, there were still a few late flowers in the hedge-rows here and there, whose odor as he passed through them in his march recalled to him memories of his childhood. These memories were almost intolerable to him, it was so long since they had recurred to him.

Unutterable thoughts assembled within him in this manner all day long.

As the sun declined to its setting, casting long shadows athwart the soil from every pebble, Jean Valjean sat down behind a bush upon a large ruddy plain, which was absolutely deserted. There was nothing on the horizon except the Alps. Not even the spire of a distant village. Jean Valjean might have been three leagues distant from D—— A path which intersected the plain passed a few paces from the bush.

In the middle of this meditation, which would have contributed not a little to render his rags terrifying to any one who might have encountered him, a joyous sound became audible.

He turned his head and saw a little Savoyard, about ten years of age, coming up the path and singing, his hurdy-gurdy on his hip, and his marmot-box on his back,

One of those gay and gentle children, who go from land to land affording a view of their knees through the holes in their trousers.

Without stopping his song, the lad halted in his march from time to time, and played at knuckle-bones with some coins which he had in his hand—his whole fortune, probably.

Among this money there was one forty-sou piece.

The child halted beside the bush, without perceiving Jean Valjean, and tossed up his handful of sous, which, up to that time, he had caught with a good deal of adroitness on the back of his hand.

This time the forty-sou piece escaped him, and went rolling towards the brushwood until it reached Jean Valjean.

Jean Valjean set his foot upon it.

In the meantime, the child had looked after his coin and had caught sight of him.

He showed no astonishment, but walked straight up to the man.

The spot was absolutely solitary. As far as the eye could see there was not a person on the plain or on the path. The only sound was the tiny, feeble cries of a flock of birds of passage, which was traversing the heavens at an immense height. The child was standing with his back to the sun, which cast threads of gold in his hair and empurpled with its blood-red gleam the savage face of Jean Valjean.

"Sir," said the little Savoyard, with that childish confidence which is composed of ignorance and innocence, "my money."

"What is your name?" said Jean Valjean.

"Little Gervais, sir."

"Go away," said Jean Valjean.

"Sir," resumed the child, "give me back my money."

Jean Valjean dropped his head, and made no reply.

The child began again, "My money, sir."

Jean Valjean's eyes remained fixed on the earth.

"My piece of money!" cried the child, "my white piece! my silver!"

It seemed as though Jean Valjean did not hear him. The child grasped him by the collar of his blouse and shook him. At the same time he made an effort to displace the big iron-shod shoe which rested on his treasure.

"I want my piece of money! my piece of forty sous!"

The child wept. Jean Valjean raised his head. He still remained seated. His eyes were troubled. He gazed at the child, in a sort of amazement, then he stretched out his hand towards his cudgel and cried in a terrible voice, "Who's there?"

"I, sir," replied the child. "Little Gervais! I! Give me back my forty sous, if you please! Take your foot away, sir, if you please!"

Then irritated, though he was so small, and becoming almost menacing:—

"Come now, will you take your foot away? Take your foot away, or we'll see!"

"Ah! It's still you!" said Jean Valjean, and rising abruptly to his feet, his foot still resting on the silver piece, he added:—

"Will you take yourself off!"

The frightened child looked at him, then began to tremble from head to foot, and after a few moments of stupor he set out, running at the top of his speed, without daring to turn his neck or to utter a cry.

Nevertheless, lack of breath forced him to halt after a certain distance, and Jean Valjean heard him sobbing, in the midst of his own revery.

At the end of a few moments the child had disappeared.

The sun had set.

The shadows were descending around Jean Valjean. He had eaten nothing all day; it is probable that he was feverish.

He had remained standing and had not changed his attitude after the child's flight. The breath heaved his chest at long and irregular intervals. His gaze, fixed ten or twelve paces in front of him, seemed to be scrutinizing with profound attention the shape of an ancient fragment of blue earthenware which had fallen in the grass. All at once he shivered; he had just begun to feel the chill of evening.

He settled his cap more firmly on his brow, sought mechanically to cross and button his blouse, advanced a step and stopped to pick up his cudgel.

At that moment he caught sight of the forty-sou piece, which his foot had half ground into the earth, and which was shining among the pebbles. It was as though he had received a galvanic shock. "What is this?" he muttered between his teeth. He recoiled three paces, then halted, without being able to detach his gaze from the spot which his foot had trodden but an instant before, as though the thing which lay glittering there in the gloom had been an open eye riveted upon him.

At the expiration of a few moments he darted convulsively towards the silver coin, seized it, and straightened himself up again and began to gaze afar off over the plain, at the same time casting his eyes towards all points of the horizon, as he stood there erect and shivering, like a terrified wild animal which is seeking refuge.

He saw nothing. Night was falling, the plain was cold and vague, great banks of violet haze were rising in the gleam of the twilight.

He said, "Ah!" and set out rapidly in the direction in which the child had disappeared. After about thirty paces he paused, looked about him and saw nothing.

Then he shouted with all his might:—

"Little Gervais! Little Gervais!"

He paused and waited.

There was no reply.

The landscape was gloomy and deserted. He was encompassed by space. There was nothing around him but an obscurity in which his gaze was lost, and a silence which engulfed his voice.

An icy north wind was blowing, and imparted to things around him a sort of lugubrious life. The bushes shook their thin little arms with incredible fury. One would have said that they were threatening and pursuing some one.

He set out on his march again, then he began to run; and from time to time he halted and shouted into that solitude, with a voice which was the most formidable and the most disconsolate that it was possible to hear, "Little Gervais! Little Gervais!"

Assuredly, if the child had heard him, he would have been alarmed and would have taken good care not to show himself. But the child was no doubt already far away.

He encountered a priest on horseback. He stepped up to him and said:—

"Monsieur le Cure, have you seen a child pass?"

"No," said the priest.

"One named Little Gervais?"

"I have seen no one."

He drew two five-franc pieces from his money-bag and handed them to the priest.

"Monsieur le Cure, this is for your poor people. Monsieur le Cure, he was a little lad, about ten years old, with a marmot, I think, and a hurdy-gurdy. One of those Savoyards, you know?"

"I have not seen him."

"Little Gervais? There are no villages here? Can you tell me?"

"If he is like what you say, my friend, he is a little stranger. Such persons pass through these parts. We know nothing of them."

Jean Valjean seized two more coins of five francs each with violence, and gave them to the priest.

"For your poor," he said.

Then he added, wildly:—

"Monsieur l'Abbe, have me arrested. I am a thief."

The priest put spurs to his horse and fled in haste, much alarmed.

Jean Valjean set out on a run, in the direction which he had first taken.

In this way he traversed a tolerably long distance, gazing, calling, shouting, but he met no one. Two or three times he ran across the plain towards something which conveyed to him the effect of a human being reclining or crouching down; it turned out to be nothing but brushwood or rocks nearly on a level with the earth. At length, at a spot where three paths intersected each other, he stopped. The moon had risen. He sent his gaze into the distance and shouted for the last time, "Little Gervais! Little Gervais! Little Gervais!" His shout died away in the mist, without even awakening an echo. He murmured yet once more, "Little Gervais!" but in a feeble and almost inarticulate voice. It was his last effort; his legs gave way abruptly under him, as though an invisible power had suddenly overwhelmed him with the weight of his evil conscience; he fell exhausted, on a large stone, his fists clenched in his hair and his face on his knees, and he cried, "I am a wretch!"

Then his heart burst, and he began to cry. It was the first time that he had wept in nineteen years.

When Jean Valjean left the Bishop's house, he was, as we have seen, quite thrown out of everything that had been his thought hitherto. He could not yield to the evidence of what was going on within him. He hardened himself against the angelic action and the gentle words of the old man. "You have promised me to become an honest man. I buy your soul. I take it away from the spirit of perversity; I give it to the good God."

This recurred to his mind unceasingly. To this celestial kindness he opposed pride, which is the fortress of evil within us. He was indistinctly conscious that the pardon of this priest was the greatest assault and the most formidable attack which had moved him yet; that his obduracy was finally settled if he resisted this clemency; that if he yielded, he should be obliged to renounce that hatred with which the actions of other men had filled his soul through so many years, and which pleased him; that this time it was necessary to

conquer or to be conquered; and that a struggle, a colossal and final struggle, had been begun between his viciousness and the goodness of that man.

In the presence of these lights, he proceeded like a man who is intoxicated. As he walked thus with haggard eyes, did he have a distinct perception of what might result to him from his adventure at D——? Did he understand all those mysterious murmurs which warn or importune the spirit at certain moments of life? Did a voice whisper in his ear that he had just passed the solemn hour of his destiny; that there no longer remained a middle course for him; that if he were not henceforth the best of men, he would be the worst; that it behooved him now, so to speak, to mount higher than the Bishop, or fall lower than the convict; that if he wished to become good be must become an angel; that if he wished to remain evil, he must become a monster?

Here, again, some questions must be put, which we have already put to ourselves elsewhere: did he catch some shadow of all this in his thought, in a confused way? Misfortune certainly, as we have said, does form the education of the intelligence; nevertheless, it is doubtful whether Jean Valjean was in a condition to disentangle all that we have here indicated. If these ideas occurred to him, he but caught glimpses of, rather than saw them, and they only succeeded in throwing him into an unutterable and almost painful state of emotion. On emerging from that black and deformed thing which is called the galleys, the Bishop had hurt his soul, as too vivid a light would have hurt his eyes on emerging from the dark. The future life, the possible life which offered itself to him henceforth, all pure and radiant, filled him with tremors and anxiety. He no longer knew where he really was. Like an owl, who should suddenly see the sun rise, the convict had been dazzled and blinded, as it were, by virtue.

That which was certain, that which he did not doubt, was that he was no longer the same man, that everything about him was changed, that it was no longer in his power to make it as though the Bishop had not spoken to him and had not touched him.

In this state of mind he had encountered little Gervais, and had robbed him of his forty sous. Why? He certainly could not have explained it; was this the last effect and the supreme effort, as it were, of the evil thoughts which he had brought away from the galleys,— a remnant of impulse, a result of what is called in statics, acquired force? It was that, and it was also, perhaps, even less than that. Let us say it simply, it was not he who stole; it was not the man; it was the beast, who, by habit and instinct, had simply placed his foot upon that money, while the intelligence was struggling amid so many novel and hitherto unheard-of thoughts besetting it.

When intelligence re-awakened and beheld that action of the brute, Jean Valjean recoiled with anguish and uttered a cry of terror.

It was because,—strange phenomenon, and one which was possible only in the situation in which he found himself,—in stealing the money from that child, he had done a thing of which he was no longer capable.

However that may be, this last evil action had a decisive effect on him; it abruptly traversed that chaos which he bore in his mind, and dispersed it, placed on one side the thick obscurity, and on the other the light, and acted on his soul, in the state in which it then was, as certain chemical reagents act upon a troubled mixture by precipitating one element and clarifying the other.

First of all, even before examining himself and reflecting, all bewildered, like one who seeks to save himself, he tried to find the child in order to return his money to him; then, when he recognized the fact that

this was impossible, he halted in despair. At the moment when he exclaimed "I am a wretch!" he had just perceived what he was, and he was already separated from himself to such a degree, that he seemed to himself to be no longer anything more than a phantom, and as if he had, there before him, in flesh and blood, the hideous galley-convict, Jean Valjean, cudgel in hand, his blouse on his hips, his knapsack filled with stolen objects on his back, with his resolute and gloomy visage, with his thoughts filled with abominable projects.

Excess of unhappiness had, as we have remarked, made him in some sort a visionary. This, then, was in the nature of a vision. He actually saw that Jean Valjean, that sinister face, before him. He had almost reached the point of asking himself who that man was, and he was horrified by him.

His brain was going through one of those violent and yet perfectly calm moments in which revery is so profound that it absorbs reality. One no longer beholds the object which one has before one, and one sees, as though apart from one's self, the figures which one has in one's own mind.

Thus he contemplated himself, so to speak, face to face, and at the same time, athwart this hallucination, he perceived in a mysterious depth a sort of light which he at first took for a torch. On scrutinizing this light which appeared to his conscience with more attention, he recognized the fact that it possessed a human form and that this torch was the Bishop.

His conscience weighed in turn these two men thus placed before it,— the Bishop and Jean Valjean. Nothing less than the first was required to soften the second. By one of those singular effects, which are peculiar to this sort of ecstasies, in proportion as his revery continued, as the Bishop grew great and resplendent in his eyes, so did Jean Valjean grow less and vanish. After a certain time he was no longer anything more than a shade. All at once he disappeared. The Bishop alone remained; he filled the whole soul of this wretched man with a magnificent radiance.

Jean Valjean wept for a long time. He wept burning tears, he sobbed with more weakness than a woman, with more fright than a child.

As he wept, daylight penetrated more and more clearly into his soul; an extraordinary light; a light at once ravishing and terrible. His past life, his first fault, his long expiation, his external brutishness, his internal hardness, his dismissal to liberty, rejoicing in manifold plans of vengeance, what had happened to him at the Bishop's, the last thing that he had done, that theft of forty sous from a child, a crime all the more cowardly, and all the more monstrous since it had come after the Bishop's pardon,—all this recurred to his mind and appeared clearly to him, but with a clearness which he had never hitherto witnessed. He examined his life, and it seemed horrible to him; his soul, and it seemed frightful to him. In the meantime a gentle light rested over this life and this soul. It seemed to him that he beheld Satan by the light of Paradise.

How many hours did he weep thus? What did he do after he had wept? Whither did he go! No one ever knew. The only thing which seems to be authenticated is that that same night the carrier who served Grenoble at that epoch, and who arrived at D—— about three o'clock in the morning, saw, as he traversed the street in which the Bishop's residence was situated, a man in the attitude of prayer, kneeling on the pavement in the shadow, in front of the door of Monseigneur Welcome.

PART 3. IN THE YEAR 1817

CHAPTER 1 THE YEAR 1817

1817 is the year which Louis XVIII., with a certain royal assurance which was not wanting in pride, entitled the twenty-second of his reign. It is the year in which M. Bruguiere de Sorsum was celebrated. All the hairdressers' shops, hoping for powder and the return of the royal bird, were besmeared with azure and decked with fleurs-de-lys. It was the candid time at which Count Lynch sat every Sunday as church-warden in the church-warden's pew of Saint-Germain-des-Pres, in his costume of a peer of France, with his red ribbon and his long nose and the majesty of profile peculiar to a man who has performed a brilliant action. The brilliant action performed by M. Lynch was this: being mayor of Bordeaux, on the 12th of March, 1814, he had surrendered the city a little too promptly to M. the Duke d'Angouleme. Hence his peerage. In 1817 fashion swallowed up little boys of from four to six years of age in vast caps of morocco leather with ear-tabs resembling Esquimaux mitres. The French army was dressed in white, after the mode of the Austrian; the regiments were called legions; instead of numbers they bore the names of departments; Napoleon was at St. Helena; and since England refused him green cloth, he was having his old coats turned. In 1817 Pelligrini sang; Mademoiselle Bigottini danced; Potier reigned; Odry did not yet exist. Madame Saqui had succeeded to Forioso. There were still Prussians in France. M. Delalot was a personage. Legitimacy had just asserted itself by cutting off the hand, then the head, of Pleignier, of Carbonneau, and of Tolleron. The Prince de Talleyrand, grand chamberlain, and the Abbe Louis, appointed minister of finance, laughed as they looked at each other, with the laugh of the two augurs; both of them had celebrated, on the 14th of July, 1790, the mass of federation in the Champ de Mars; Talleyrand had said it as bishop, Louis had served it in the capacity of deacon. In 1817, in the side-alleys of this same Champ de Mars, two great cylinders of wood might have been seen lying in the rain, rotting amid the grass, painted blue, with traces of eagles and bees, from which the gilding was falling. These were the columns which two years before had upheld the Emperor's platform in the Champ de Mai. They were blackened here and there with the scorches of the bivouac of Austrians encamped near Gros-Caillou. Two or three of these columns had disappeared in these bivouac fires, and had warmed the large hands of the Imperial troops. The Field of May had this remarkable point: that it had been held in the month of June and in the Field of March (Mars). In this year, 1817, two things were popular: the Voltaire-Touquet and the snuff-box a la Charter. The most recent Parisian sensation was the crime of Dautun, who had thrown his brother's head into the fountain of the Flower-Market.

They had begun to feel anxious at the Naval Department, on account of the lack of news from that fatal frigate, The Medusa, which was destined to cover Chaumareix with infamy and Gericault with glory. Colonel Selves was going to Egypt to become Soliman-Pasha. The palace of Thermes, in the Rue de La Harpe, served as a shop for a cooper. On the platform of the octagonal tower of the Hotel de Cluny, the little shed of boards, which had served as an observatory to Messier, the naval astronomer under Louis XVI., was still to be seen. The Duchesse de Duras read to three or four friends her unpublished Ourika, in her boudoir

furnished by X. in sky-blue satin. The N's were scratched off the Louvre. The bridge of Austerlitz had abdicated, and was entitled the bridge of the King's Garden [du Jardin du Roi], a double enigma, which disguised the bridge of Austerlitz and the Jardin des Plantes at one stroke. Louis XVIII., much preoccupied while annotating Horace with the corner of his finger-nail, heroes who have become emperors, and makers of wooden shoes who have become dauphins, had two anxieties,—Napoleon and Mathurin Bruneau. The French Academy had given for its prize subject, The Happiness procured through Study. M. Bellart was officially eloquent. In his shadow could be seen germinating that future advocate-general of Broe, dedicated to the sarcasms of Paul-Louis Courier. There was a false Chateaubriand, named Marchangy, in the interim, until there should be a false Marchangy, named d'Arlincourt. Claire d'Albe and Malek-Adel were masterpieces; Madame Cottin was proclaimed the chief writer of the epoch. The Institute had the academician, Napoleon Bonaparte, stricken from its list of members. A royal ordinance erected Angouleme into a naval school; for the Duc d'Angouleme, being lord high admiral, it was evident that the city of Angouleme had all the qualities of a seaport; otherwise the monarchical principle would have received a wound. In the Council of Ministers the question was agitated whether vignettes representing slack-rope performances, which adorned Franconi's advertising posters, and which attracted throngs of street urchins, should be tolerated. M. Paer, the author of Agnese, a good sort of fellow, with a square face and a wart on his cheek, directed the little private concerts of the Marquise de Sasenaye in the Rue Ville l'Eveque. All the young girls were singing the Hermit of Saint-Avelle, with words by Edmond Geraud. The Yellow Dwarf was transferred into Mirror. The Cafe Lemblin stood up for the Emperor, against the Cafe Valois, which upheld the Bourbons. The Duc de Berri, already surveyed from the shadow by Louvel, had just been married to a princess of Sicily. Madame de Stael had died a year previously. The body-guard hissed Mademoiselle Mars. The grand newspapers were all very small. Their form was restricted, but their liberty was great. The Constitutionnel was constitutional. La Minerve called Chateaubriand Chateaubriant. That t made the good middle-class people laugh heartily at the expense of the great writer. In journals which sold themselves, prostituted journalists, insulted the exiles of 1815. David had no longer any talent, Arnault had no longer any wit, Carnot was no longer honest, Soult had won no battles; it is true that Napoleon had no longer any genius. No one is ignorant of the fact that letters sent to an exile by post very rarely reached him, as the police made it their religious duty to intercept them. This is no new fact; Descartes complained of it in his exile. Now David, having, in a Belgian publication, shown some displeasure at not receiving letters which had been written to him, it struck the royalist journals as amusing; and they derided the prescribed man well on this occasion. What separated two men more than an abyss was to say, the regicides, or to say the voters; to say the enemies, or to say the allies; to say Napoleon, or to say Buonaparte. All sensible people were agreed that the era of revolution had been closed forever by King Louis XVIII., surnamed "The Immortal Author of the Charter." On the platform of the Pont-Neuf, the word Redivivus was carved on the pedestal that awaited the statue of Henry IV. M. Piet, in the Rue Therese, No. 4, was making the rough draft of his privy assembly to consolidate the monarchy. The leaders of the Right said at grave conjunctures, "We must write to Bacot." MM. Canuel, O'Mahoney, and De Chappedelaine were preparing the sketch, to some extent with Monsieur's approval, of what was to become later on "The Conspiracy of the Bord de l'Eau"—of the waterside. L'Epingle Noire was already plotting in his own quarter. Delaverderie was conferring with Trogoff. M. Decazes, who was liberal to a degree, reigned. Chateaubriand stood every morning at his window at No. 27 Rue Saint-Dominique, clad in footed trousers, and slippers, with a madras kerchief knotted over his gray hair, with his eyes fixed on a mirror, a complete set of dentist's instruments spread out before him, cleaning his teeth, which were charming, while he dictated The Monarchy according to the Charter to M. Pilorge, his secretary. Criticism, assuming an authoritative tone, preferred Lafon to Talma. M. de Feletez signed himself

A.; M. Hoffmann signed himself Z. Charles Nodier wrote Therese Aubert. Divorce was abolished. Lyceums called themselves colleges. The collegians, decorated on the collar with a golden fleur-de-lys, fought each other apropos of the King of Rome. The counter-police of the chateau had denounced to her Royal Highness Madame, the portrait, everywhere exhibited, of M. the Duc d'Orleans, who made a better appearance in his uniform of a colonel-general of hussars than M. the Duc de Berri, in his uniform of colonel-general of dragoons— a serious inconvenience. The city of Paris was having the dome of the Invalides regilded at its own expense. Serious men asked themselves what M. de Trinquelague would do on such or such an occasion; M. Clausel de Montals differed on divers points from M. Clausel de Coussergues; M. de Salaberry was not satisfied. The comedian Picard, who belonged to the Academy, which the comedian Moliere had not been able to do, had The Two Philiberts played at the Odeon, upon whose pediment the removal of the letters still allowed THEATRE OF THE EMPRESS to be plainly read. People took part for or against Cugnet de Montarlot. Fabvier was factious; Bavoux was revolutionary. The Liberal, Pelicier, published an edition of Voltaire, with the following title: Works of Voltaire, of the French Academy. "That will attract purchasers," said the ingenious editor. The general opinion was that M. Charles Loyson would be the genius of the century; envy was beginning to gnaw at him—a sign of glory; and this verse was composed on him:—

"Even when Loyson steals, one feels that he has paws."

As Cardinal Fesch refused to resign, M. de Pins, Archbishop of Amasie, administered the diocese of Lyons. The quarrel over the valley of Dappes was begun between Switzerland and France by a memoir from Captain, afterwards General Dufour. Saint-Simon, ignored, was erecting his sublime dream. There was a celebrated Fourier at the Academy of Science, whom posterity has forgotten; and in some garret an obscure Fourier, whom the future will recall. Lord Byron was beginning to make his mark; a note to a poem by Millevoye introduced him to France in these terms: a certain Lord Baron. David d'Angers was trying to work in marble. The Abbe Caron was speaking, in terms of praise, to a private gathering of seminarists in the blind alley of Feuillantines, of an unknown priest, named Felicite-Robert, who, at a latter date, became Lamennais. A thing which smoked and clattered on the Seine with the noise of a swimming dog went and came beneath the windows of the Tuileries, from the Pont Royal to the Pont Louis XV.; it was a piece of mechanism which was not good for much; a sort of plaything, the idle dream of a dream-ridden inventor; an utopia—a steamboat. The Parisians stared indifferently at this useless thing. M. de Vaublanc, the reformer of the Institute by a coup d'etat, the distinguished author of numerous academicians, ordinances, and batches of members, after having created them, could not succeed in becoming one himself. The Faubourg Saint-Germain and the pavilion de Marsan wished to have M. Delaveau for prefect of police, on account of his piety. Dupuytren and Recamier entered into a quarrel in the amphitheatre of the School of Medicine, and threatened each other with their fists on the subject of the divinity of Jesus Christ. Cuvier, with one eye on Genesis and the other on nature, tried to please bigoted reaction by reconciling fossils with texts and by making mastodons flatter Moses.

M. Francois de Neufchateau, the praiseworthy cultivator of the memory of Parmentier, made a thousand efforts to have pomme de terre [potato] pronounced parmentiere, and succeeded therein not at all. The Abbe Gregoire, ex-bishop, ex-conventionary, ex-senator, had passed, in the royalist polemics, to the state of "Infamous Gregoire." The locution of which we have made use—passed to the state of—has been condemned as a neologism by M. Royer Collard. Under the third arch of the Pont de Jena, the new stone with which, the two years previously, the mining aperture made by Blucher to blow up the bridge had been stopped up, was still recognizable on account of its whiteness. Justice summoned to its bar a man who, on seeing the Comte d'Artois enter Notre Dame, had said aloud: "Sapristi! I regret the time when I saw

Bonaparte and Talma enter the Bel Sauvage, arm in arm." A seditious utterance. Six months in prison. Traitors showed themselves unbuttoned; men who had gone over to the enemy on the eve of battle made no secret of their recompense, and strutted immodestly in the light of day, in the cynicism of riches and dignities; deserters from Ligny and Quatre-Bras, in the brazenness of their well-paid turpitude, exhibited their devotion to the monarchy in the most barefaced manner.

This is what floats up confusedly, pell-mell, for the year 1817, and is now forgotten. History neglects nearly all these particulars, and cannot do otherwise; the infinity would overwhelm it. Nevertheless, these details, which are wrongly called trivial,— there are no trivial facts in humanity, nor little leaves in vegetation,—are useful. It is of the physiognomy of the years that the physiognomy of the centuries is composed. In this year of 1817 four young Parisians arranged "a fine farce."

CHAPTER 2 A DOUBLE QUARTETTE

These Parisians came, one from Toulouse, another from Limoges, the third from Cahors, and the fourth from Montauban; but they were students; and when one says student, one says Parisian: to study in Paris is to be born in Paris.

These young men were insignificant; every one has seen such faces; four specimens of humanity taken at random; neither good nor bad, neither wise nor ignorant, neither geniuses nor fools; handsome, with that charming April which is called twenty years. They were four Oscars; for, at that epoch, Arthurs did not yet exist. Burn for him the perfumes of Araby! exclaimed romance. Oscar advances. Oscar, I shall behold him! People had just emerged from Ossian; elegance was Scandinavian and Caledonian; the pure English style was only to prevail later, and the first of the Arthurs, Wellington, had but just won the battle of Waterloo.

These Oscars bore the names, one of Felix Tholomyes, of Toulouse; the second, Listolier, of Cahors; the next, Fameuil, of Limoges; the last, Blachevelle, of Montauban. Naturally, each of them had his mistress. Blachevelle loved Favourite, so named because she had been in England; Listolier adored Dahlia, who had taken for her nickname the name of a flower; Fameuil idolized Zephine, an abridgment of Josephine; Tholomyes had Fantine, called the Blonde, because of her beautiful, sunny hair.

Favourite, Dahlia, Zephine, and Fantine were four ravishing young women, perfumed and radiant, still a little like working-women, and not yet entirely divorced from their needles; somewhat disturbed by intrigues, but still retaining on their faces something of the serenity of toil, and in their souls that flower of honesty which survives the first fall in woman. One of the four was called the young, because she was the youngest of them, and one was called the old; the old one was twenty-three. Not to conceal anything, the three first were more experienced, more heedless, and more emancipated into the tumult of life than Fantine the Blonde, who was still in her first illusions.

Dahlia, Zephine, and especially Favourite, could not have said as much. There had already been more than one episode in their romance, though hardly begun; and the lover who had borne the name of Adolph in the first chapter had turned out to be Alphonse in the second, and Gustave in the third. Poverty and coquetry are two fatal counsellors; one scolds and the other flatters, and the beautiful daughters of the people have both of them whispering in their ear, each on its own side. These badly guarded souls listen. Hence the falls which they accomplish, and the stones which are thrown at them. They are overwhelmed with splendor of all that is immaculate and inaccessible. Alas! what if the Jungfrau were hungry?

Favourite having been in England, was admired by Dahlia and Zephine. She had had an establishment of her own very early in life. Her father was an old unmarried professor of mathematics, a brutal man and a braggart, who went out to give lessons in spite of his age. This professor, when he was a young man, had one day seen a chambermaid's gown catch on a fender; he had fallen in love in consequence of this accident. The result had been Favourite. She met her father from time to time, and he bowed to her. One morning an old woman with the air of a devotee, had entered her apartments, and had said to her, "You do not know me, Mamemoiselle?" "No." "I am your mother." Then the old woman opened the sideboard, and ate and drank, had a mattress which she owned brought in, and installed herself. This cross and pious old mother never spoke to Favourite, remained hours without uttering a word, breakfasted, dined, and supped for four, and went down to the porter's quarters for company, where she spoke ill of her daughter.

It was having rosy nails that were too pretty which had drawn Dahlia to Listolier, to others perhaps, to idleness. How could she make such nails work? She who wishes to remain virtuous must not have pity on her hands. As for Zephine, she had conquered Fameuil by her roguish and caressing little way of saying "Yes, sir."

The young men were comrades; the young girls were friends. Such loves are always accompanied by such friendships.

Goodness and philosophy are two distinct things; the proof of this is that, after making all due allowances for these little irregular households, Favourite, Zephine, and Dahlia were philosophical young women, while Fantine was a good girl.

Good! some one will exclaim; and Tholomyes? Solomon would reply that love forms a part of wisdom. We will confine ourselves to saying that the love of Fantine was a first love, a sole love, a faithful love.

She alone, of all the four, was not called "thou" by a single one of them.

Fantine was one of those beings who blossom, so to speak, from the dregs of the people. Though she had emerged from the most unfathomable depths of social shadow, she bore on her brow the sign of the anonymous and the unknown. She was born at M. sur M. Of what parents? Who can say? She had never known father or mother. She was called Fantine. Why Fantine? She had never borne any other name. At the epoch of her birth the Directory still existed. She had no family name; she had no family; no baptismal name; the Church no longer existed. She bore the name which pleased the first random passer-by, who had encountered her, when a very small child, running bare-legged in the street. She received the name as she received the water from the clouds upon her brow when it rained. She was called little Fantine. No one knew more than that. This human creature had entered life in just this way. At the age of ten, Fantine quitted the town and went to service with some farmers in the neighborhood. At fifteen she came to Paris "to seek her fortune." Fantine was beautiful, and remained pure as long as she could. She was a lovely blonde, with fine teeth. She had gold and pearls for her dowry; but her gold was on her head, and her pearls were in her mouth.

She worked for her living; then, still for the sake of her living,— for the heart, also, has its hunger,—she loved.

She loved Tholomyes.

An amour for him; passion for her. The streets of the Latin quarter, filled with throngs of students and grisettes, saw the beginning of their dream. Fantine had long evaded Tholomyes in the mazes of the hill of

the Pantheon, where so many adventurers twine and untwine, but in such a way as constantly to encounter him again. There is a way of avoiding which resembles seeking. In short, the eclogue took place.

Blachevelle, Listolier, and Fameuil formed a sort of group of which Tholomyes was the head. It was he who possessed the wit.

Tholomyes was the antique old student; he was rich; he had an income of four thousand francs; four thousand francs! a splendid scandal on Mount Sainte-Genevieve. Tholomyes was a fast man of thirty, and badly preserved. He was wrinkled and toothless, and he had the beginning of a bald spot, of which he himself said with sadness, the skull at thirty, the knee at forty. His digestion was mediocre, and he had been attacked by a watering in one eye. But in proportion as his youth disappeared, gayety was kindled; he replaced his teeth with buffooneries, his hair with mirth, his health with irony, his weeping eye laughed incessantly. He was dilapidated but still in flower. His youth, which was packing up for departure long before its time, beat a retreat in good order, bursting with laughter, and no one saw anything but fire. He had had a piece rejected at the Vaudeville. He made a few verses now and then. In addition to this he doubted everything to the last degree, which is a vast force in the eyes of the weak. Being thus ironical and bald, he was the leader. Iron is an English word. Is it possible that irony is derived from it?

One day Tholomyes took the three others aside, with the gesture of an oracle, and said to them:—

"Fantine, Dahlia, Zephine, and Favourite have been teasing us for nearly a year to give them a surprise. We have promised them solemnly that we would. They are forever talking about it to us, to me in particular, just as the old women in Naples cry to Saint Januarius, `Faccia gialluta, fa o miracolo, Yellow face, perform thy miracle,' so our beauties say to me incessantly, `Tholomyes, when will you bring forth your surprise?' At the same time our parents keep writing to us. Pressure on both sides. The moment has arrived, it seems to me; let us discuss the question."

Thereupon, Tholomyes lowered his voice and articulated something so mirthful, that a vast and enthusiastic grin broke out upon the four mouths simultaneously, and Blachevelle exclaimed, "That is an idea."

A smoky tap-room presented itself; they entered, and the remainder of their confidential colloquy was lost in shadow.

The result of these shades was a dazzling pleasure party which took place on the following Sunday, the four young men inviting the four young girls.

CHAPTER 3 FOUR AND FOUR

It is hard nowadays to picture to one's self what a pleasure-trip of students and grisettes to the country was like, forty-five years ago. The suburbs of Paris are no longer the same; the physiognomy of what may be called circumparisian life has changed completely in the last half-century; where there was the cuckoo, there is the railway car; where there was a tender-boat, there is now the steamboat; people speak of Fecamp nowadays as they spoke of Saint-Cloud in those days. The Paris of 1862 is a city which has France for its outskirts.