The Power of Love

Published by
Shubhra Ketu Foundation
and
The Mother's Institute of Research

This monograph is part of a series on Value-oriented Education centered on three values: *Illumination, Heroism and Harmony*. The research, preparation and publication of the monographs that form part of this series are the result of the work and cooperation of several research teams of the Sri Aurobindo International Institute of Educational Research (SAIIER) at Auroville.

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Cover design: Auroville Press Publishers
Auroville Press, 2013

New Delhi
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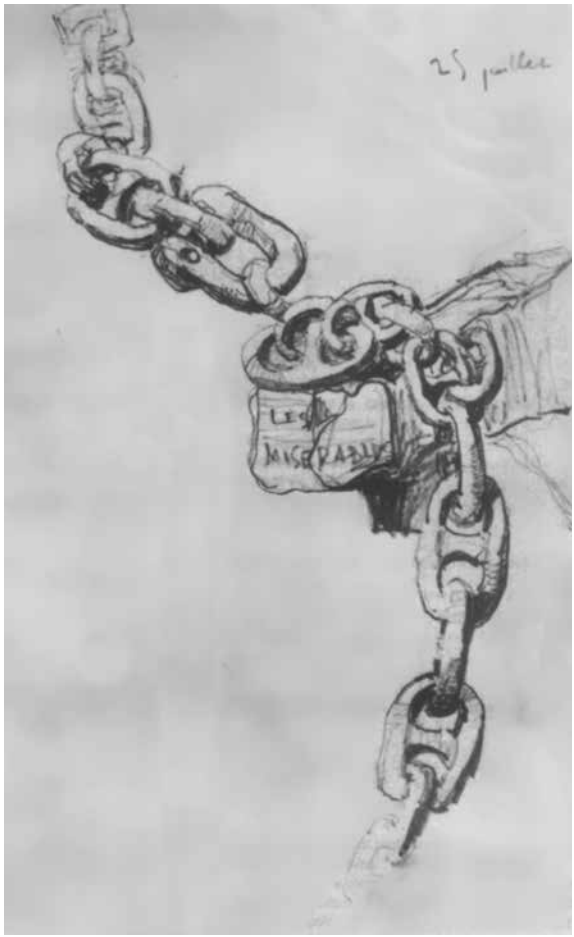
ISBN 978-81-89490-18-9

Illumination, Heroism and Harmony

The Power of Love

Episodes from "Les Misérables" by Victor Hugo

GENERAL EDITOR: KIREET JOSHI



The Chain : a drawing by Victor Hugo
for Les Misérables

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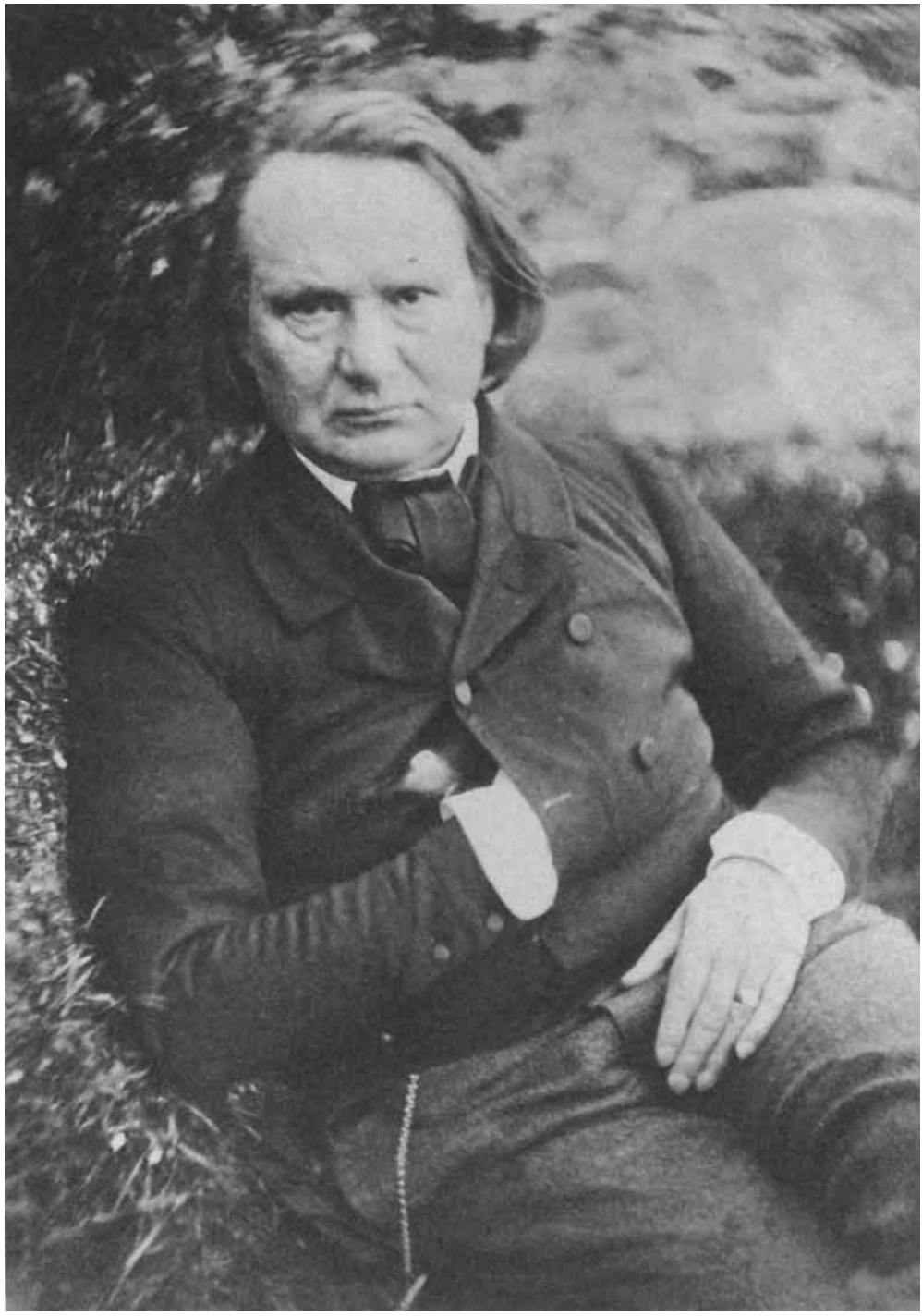

PREFACE

The task of preparing teaching-learning material for value-oriented education is enormous. There is, first, the idea that value-oriented education should be exploratory rather than prescriptive, and that the teaching-learning material should provide to the learners a growing experience of exploration.

Secondly, it is rightly contended that the proper inspiration to turn to value-orientation is provided by biographies, auto-biographical accounts, personal anecdotes, epistles, short poems, stories of humour, stories of human interest, brief passages filled with pregnant meanings, reflective short essays written in well-chiselled language, plays, powerful accounts of historical events, statements of personal experiences of values in actual situations of life, and similar other statements of scientific, philosophical, artistic and literary expression.

Thirdly, we may take into account the contemporary fact that the entire world is moving rapidly towards the synthesis of the East and the West, and in that context, it seems obvious that our teaching-learning material should foster the gradual familiarisation of students with global themes of universal significance as also those that underline the importance of diversity in unity. This implies that the material should bring the students nearer to their cultural heritage, but also to the highest that is available in

the cultural experiences of the world at large.

Fourthly, an attempt should be made to select from Indian and world history such examples that could illustrate the theme of the upward progress of humankind. The selected research material could be multi-sided, and it should be presented in such a way that teachers can make use of it in the manner and in the context that they need in specific situations that might obtain or that can be created in respect of the students.

The research teams at the Sri Aurobindo International Institute of Educational Research (SAIIER) have attempted the creation of the relevant teaching-learning material, and they have decided to present the same in the form of monographs.

It appears that there are three major powers that uplift life to higher and higher normative levels, and the value of these powers, if well illustrated, could be effectively conveyed to the learners for their upliftment. These powers are those of illumination, heroism and harmony.

It may be useful to explore the meanings of these terms — illumination, heroism and harmony — since the aim of these monographs is to provide material for a study of what is sought to be conveyed through these three terms. We offer here exploratory statements in regard to these three terms.

Illumination is that ignition of inner light in which meaning and value of substance and life-movement are seized, understood, comprehended, held, and possessed, stimulating and inspiring guided action and application and creativity culminating in joy, delight, even ecstasy. The width, depth and height of the light and vision determine the degrees of illumination, and when they reach the splendour and glory of synthesis and harmony, illumination ripens into wisdom. Wisdom, too, has varying degrees that can uncover powers of knowledge and action, which reveal unsuspected secrets and unimagined skills of art and craft of creativity and effectiveness.

Heroism is, essentially, inspired force and self-giving and sacrifice in the operations of will that is applied to the quest, realisation and triumph of meaning and value against the resistance of

limitations and obstacles by means of courage, battle and adventure. There are degrees and heights of heroism determined by the intensity, persistence and vastness of sacrifice. Heroism attains the highest states of greatness and refinement when it is guided by the highest wisdom and inspired by the sense of service to the ends of justice and harmony, as well as when tasks are executed with consummate skill.

Harmony is a progressive state and action of synthesis and equilibrium generated by the creative force of joy and beauty and delight that combines and unites knowledge and peace and stability with will and action and growth and development. Without harmony, there is no perfection, even though there could be maximisation of one or more elements of our nature. When illumination and heroism join and engender relations of mutuality and unity, each is perfected by the other and creativity is endless.

It is indeed difficult to think of better examples of illumination, heroism and harmony than those we can find in some of the best known episodes in *Les Misérables*. Victor Hugo's epic story is full of moments of intense human interest. There is the admirable behavior of Monseigneur Welcome which provides a deeply illuminating experience to Jean Valjean by the power of his love. Valjean then will himself become heroic when the moment comes of a life-changing choice. Later, he strives to create harmony around Cosette, the young girl that he saved from destitution and began to love so deeply as to be willing to sacrifice himself for her sake. Victor Hugo was keenly aware of the innumerable acts of injustice in the society and in his books, and particularly in *Les Misérables*, he wanted to open the eyes of his contemporaries and call them to a new level of consciousness. Indeed, we could truly say that all his life, Victor Hugo has been dreaming of illumination, heroism and harmony to be manifested in this world.

* * *

INTRODUCTION

Victor Hugo, one of the greatest French writers of all times, was a witness to nearly the whole of the 19th century, as he was born in 1802 and died in 1885. His range as an author is exceptional: poet, playwright, novelist, essayist. He produced masterpieces in all these fields. But he was also a visionary and precursor as may be seen in the following text, an address to a Peace Congress held in Paris, on August 21, 1849:

> A day will come when your arms will fall even from your hands! A day will come when war will seem as absurd and impossible between Paris and London, between Petersburg and Berlin, between Vienna and Turin, as it would be impossible and would seem absurd today between Rouen and Amiens, between Boston and Philadelphia. A day will come when you France, you Russia, you Italy, you England, you Germany, you all, nations of the continent, without losing your distinct qualities and your glorious individuality, will be merged closely within a superior unit and you will form the European brotherhood, just as Normandy, Brittany, Burgundy, Lorraine, Alsace, all our provinces are merged together in France. A day will come when the only fields of battle will be markets opening up to trade and minds opening up to ideas. A day will come when the bullets and the bombs will be replaced by

> votes, by the universal suffrage of the peoples, by the venerable arbitration of a great sovereign senate which will be to Europe what this parliament is to England, what this diet is to Germany, what this legislative assembly is to France. A day will come when we will display cannon in museums just as we display instruments of torture today, and are amazed that such things could ever have been possible.

Indeed, during most of his life, Victor Hugo fought for peace, for justice, for equality, for fraternity. His ideas were quite advanced for their time. He had a very profound understanding of human nature and of the effects of dire poverty. He felt deeply about all the manifestations of social injustice in the established order of society. He denounced in particular the way society, not only crushes for all sorts of good reasons those who have fallen, but also does not give them any real chance of redeeming themselves, even once their sentences have been completed. He saw very clearly that societies all over the world mostly fail in their duty to protect, uplift and educate those who are at the bottom of the social ladder. He wrote his most famous book, *Les Misérables*, at a time when the industrial revolution in Europe had created, particularly around big cities, an underworld of exploited workers living in abysmally bad conditions and working amazingly long hours (up to 14 hours per day!), including all too often women and young children.

He wrote a very intense letter to his Italian editor:

> You are right, sir, when you tell me that *Les Misérables* is written for all nations. I do not know whether it will be read by all, but I wrote it for all. It is addressed to England as well as to Spain, to Italy as well as to France, to Germany as well as to Ireland, to Republics which have slaves as well as to Empires which have serfs. Social problems overstep frontiers. The sores of the human race, those great sores which cover the globe, do not halt at the red or blue lines traced upon the map. In every place where man is ignorant and despairing, in every place where woman is sold

> for bread, wherever the child suffers for lack of the book which should instruct him and of the hearth which should warm him, the book of *Les Misérables* knocks at the door and says: "Open to me, I come for you."

In the same letter, he also wrote:

> At the hour of civilization through which we are now passing, and which is still so sombre, the misérable's name is Man; he is agonizing in all climes, and he is groaning in all languages.

Hugo was not surprised that *Les Misérables* should evoke strong reactions in some members of the public. Obviously not everyone may like to look at themselves in the mirror provided by Hugo:

> This book, *Les Misérables*, is no less your mirror than ours. Certain men, certain castes, rise in revolt against this book, — I understand that. Mirrors, those revealers of the truth, are hated; that does not prevent them from being of use. As for myself, I have written for all, with a profound love for my own country, but without being engrossed by France more than by any other nation. In proportion as I advance in life, I grow more simple, and I become more and more patriotic for humanity.

He concluded with a very Hugo-like flourish:

> Whether we be Italians or Frenchmen, misery concerns us all. Ever since history has been written, ever since philosophy has meditated, misery has been the garment of the human race; the moment has at length arrived for tearing off that rag, and for replacing, upon the naked limbs of the Man-People, the sinister fragment of the past with the grand purple robe of the dawn.

Les Misérables is a long story and is built in such a way that it seems to contain different novels inside the main one. The link

between these stories is the main character, a formidable and enigmatic man named Jean Valjean.

Jean Valjean was condemned to five years of forced labor as a young man. The reason for his arrest and conviction: he had stolen a loaf of bread! Moreover, if he stole the bread, it was not for himself, it was for his sister's many children who were famished in the midst of winter with nothing to eat. But the judicial system of these times was often merciless, particularly towards the poorest segment of society. One can feel underneath Hugo's indignation for this absurdly excessive condemnation. So Valjean was convicted and sentenced. Due to various circumstances, mostly repeated attempts to escape, the initial five years grew to nineteen years in total. Therefore, when, at long last, Valjean regained his freedom, he was no longer a young man.

But even then he quickly discovered that his so-called freedom was not real: as an ex-convict, he was given a "yellow" passport and had to report to the authorities wherever he went. He experienced rejection and injustice. A once promised salary was cut in half because his status of ex-convict had been discovered and "it is good enough for you".

Entering the city of Digne, despite repeated attempts he couldn't find a place for spending the night. Finally a benevolent old lady directed him to one house. There, despite immediately revealing his condition of ex-convict, he was received as a guest of honour by the master of the house that Valjean took for an old priest.

We had been told beforehand at great lengths about this priest, who was in fact the bishop of Digne, and was called Monsignor Welcome due to his saintly reputation. He lived with his sister and an old lady servant, who, despite their reservations and fears, were under the spell of the bishop's exceptional qualities. So there was quiet obedience when Monsignor Welcome received Valjean as if a lost brother.

Valjean was not able to resist temptation and sneaked out in the middle of the night with the silverware of the house. Arrested by the countryside police and brought back to the bishop's, he

was dumbfounded when Monsignor Welcome rescued him by claiming that the silverware was a gift. The bishop even gave him his two silver candlesticks as well, chiding him gently for leaving in such a hurry that he forgot those most valuable pieces.

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

This is the key sentence in *Les Misérables*. This is the moment when Valjean's life changes radically, even if he is not yet aware of it. That act of compassion and deep love coming as it was from someone he had betrayed would remain engraved in his heart for ever and would be his guiding light at all the crucial moments of his life.

Victor Hugo's depth of understanding is truly admirable. Monsignor Welcome's charity had to be so deep and delicate so as to go much beyond the normal reaction of any human being after having been betrayed and robbed by someone received as a friend. And this is what rescues Valjean from the utter bitterness of a revengeful ex-convict.

Soon after, Hugo had Valjean commit his last act of meanness when he robbed a young boy, Petit Gervais; immediately after, realizing what he had done, he tried desperately to repair his fault, alas without success. This episode is a masterly evocation of the travails of a struggling soul.

Quite a few years have passed. We are told of a M. Madeleine who has become the benefactor of the city of Montreuil-sur-Mer through the establishment of a successful business enterprise, providing jobs and many other benefits to the inhabitants. M. Madeleine has become so popular that he has been made the mayor of the city. We are made to understand that M. Madeleine is no one else than Jean Valjean.

Then comes another major inner crisis. M. Madeleine had been taking care of Fantine, a very sick girl who had become destitute after being unjustly fired from her job in one of Madeleine's fac-

tories (without his knowledge). Fantine's situation had been so desperate that she had to part with her daughter. While Valjean was trying to reunite Fantine with the little Cosette, fate brought him a terrible dilemma: a man had been arrested and was strongly suspected to be Jean Valjean. His trial was coming up very soon and, despite his desperate denials, it looked quite certain that he would be officially convicted as three ex-convicts had sworn that this man was indeed Valjean.

This acute soul crisis for Valjean-Madeleine is admirably developed by Hugo and once again, the poet shows his remarkable mastery of inner psychology while describing the kind of fierce inner exertions, through twists and turns, that a man faced with such a life and death decision may experience. It would have indeed been relatively easy for Valjean to justify inaction: so much was at stake, from Fantine's acute need of present support to the continuation of Montreuil inhabitants' new prosperity which he only could ensure. His social responsibility was huge: could he ignore it and throw everything away for the sake of some unknown miserable thief who had the bad luck of facing an error of identification? Moreover, the conviction of that man would mean that the continuing search for Valjean, the ex-convict, still accused of crimes like the robbing of Petit Gervais, would finally be called off and final tranquility obtained for ever.

But even as he resolved to stay put and even felt the need to destroy the last bits of evidence from his past as a convict, throwing them in a big chimney fire, he suddenly stared at the two silver candlesticks of Monsignor Welcome which he had preciously kept. That stopped him and brought back the dilemma in full force.

Finally, Madeleine decided to go to the far-away city where the trial was to take place. All the while during a very difficult journey full of unexpected problems, which could result in his failing to be in time through no fault of his, the inner churning continued. Madeleine wondered if these obstacles were not signs that a higher Providence wanted him to keep silent. This was the ultimate temptation. Yet some inner force pushed him ahead and

he managed to arrive at the courthouse in time to save the man falsely accused... and to destroy his own beautiful new life at the same time.

There is no doubt that it is relatively rare in life to be faced with a dilemma as terribly acute as Valjean's, but anyone with a little life experience can feel the accuracy of Hugo's depiction of the inner debate as well as the practical truth of the feverish interpretations of signs that come and go in the dense atmosphere brought by the crisis.

The story or, rather, the stories go on through many twists and turns: after Valjean revealed his identity in the court house, his old enemy, police inspector Javert, elated to be proven right in his suspicion about the mayor of Montreuil-sur-Mer, arrested him. Somehow, the following day, Valjean broke out of the jail long enough to hide a good part of his fortune. Then he was arrested and sent again to forced labour for life. While working aboard a ship, he managed to escape again. Keeping his promise to Fantine (who had died by now), after a long voyage he reached the village where the little Cosette was being ill-treated by an evil couple, the Thenardiers, with whom Fantine had trusted to take care of the child. On a dark Christmas night, Jean Valjean at last rescued the poor little girl and went off with her.

Then follow ten years of hiding in Paris, moving from place to place, always staying just ahead of Javert. Seven or eight happy years were spent in a convent where Valjean managed to narrowly escape a team of policemen led by Javert. He worked with the convent gardener, a man whom he saved from death a few years before and who had introduced Valjean to the sisters as his younger brother. Cosette attended a girls' school in the same convent.

Feeling that Cosette must have an opportunity to experience all of life, they left the convent when she was about 15. Valjean was nearly betrayed and recaptured due to the insidious deeds of the Thenardiers, now in Paris.

Since Valjean was continuously on the lookout for people who might guess his identity, he made their home always in out of the way places. With time passing, Cosette became aware of her

own feminity and beauty. She and Marius, a young student, were drawn to each other and fall in love.

The story of the love between Marius and Cosette is the final lengthy episode of *Les Misérables* in which we see Valjean obliged, despite his inner resistance, to yet again sacrifice himself for the sake of Cosette. Since Marius distrusted him, he was deprived of the young girl's visits which were the joy of his existence. He was about to die alone and forgotten when Cosette and Marius (who finally realised how unjust his own behaviour of rejection had been) came back to him. Finally, he was able to die peacefully in the joy of being reunited with Cosette.

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Victor Hugo's numerous novels are still very much read not only in contemporary France but all over the world. His literary production, novels, poems, dramas, essays, is astoundingly large, as may be seen in the list of his various writings which is given in Appendix IV. He had other talents, such as being a good painter and illustrator. A noted French painter even said once that if Victor Hugo had chosen to be a painter rather than a poet or a novelist, he would have become one of the greatest.

In this monograph we could only give a small sample of one of his best known novels, *Les Misérables*. We do hope that our readers will be as moved as we were while preparing this monograph by the intense human quality which permeates the episodes that we have selected.

A crucial scene (p.125) when Jean Valjean remembers the kindness of the bishop.

THE POWER OF LOVE

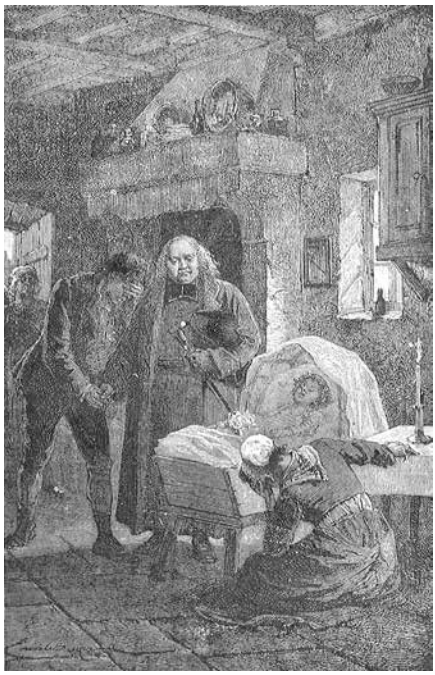
Episodes from Les Misérables

(Translated by Isabel F. Hapgood)

PREFACE

So long as there shall exist, by virtue of law and custom, decrees of damnation pronounced by society, artificially creating hells amid the civilization of earth, and adding the element of human fate to divine destiny; so long as the three great problems of the century — the degradation of man through pauperism, the corruption of woman through hunger, the crippling of children through lack of light — are unsolved; so long as social asphyxia is possible in any part of the world; — in other words, and with a still wider significance, so long as ignorance and poverty exist on earth, books of the nature of *Les Misérables* cannot fail to be of use.

Victor Hugo,
Hauteville House, 1862



The bishop in the hospital

FANTINE

The story opens in 1815 with a detailed description of Monseigneur Myriel, a widower become priest, living with his sister Mademoiselle Baptistine and their housekeeper, Madame Magloire. After being appointed as Bishop of Digne, he takes up residence in the spacious, ornate Bishop's palace, which adjoins an austere hospital.

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.

This is only the beginning of a pattern of generosity, which earns him the name of Monseigneur Bienvenu [Welcome]. He budgets his household in such a way that most of his income is given to charities. When given an additional sum as carriage expense, he finds a way to distribute that to needy causes as well.
In addition to being utterly selfless, the bishop has a deep understanding of human life, of people of all economic backgrounds and of the emotional as well as spiritual needs of the people of his parish. He also has a sense of humor and the ability to shame without antagonizing even the most aristocratic elements of society. He is indulgent toward women and children and the poor, saying that ignorance is not the fault of the ignorant but of the one who caused the darkness. The Bishop is devout and trusting in his private life as well as his public one. His hospital-become-home is austere and spare with no luxuries save a table service of silver with matching silver candlesticks that are brought out for company. He does not lock up his silver or even bolt the doors to his house, a matter that frustrates the women of his household. However, he defends his decisions by maintaining the philosophy that a man has more to fear from his own prejudices than from any robber.

In order to furnish an idea of the private establishment of the Bishop of Digne, 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.

"[…] 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.

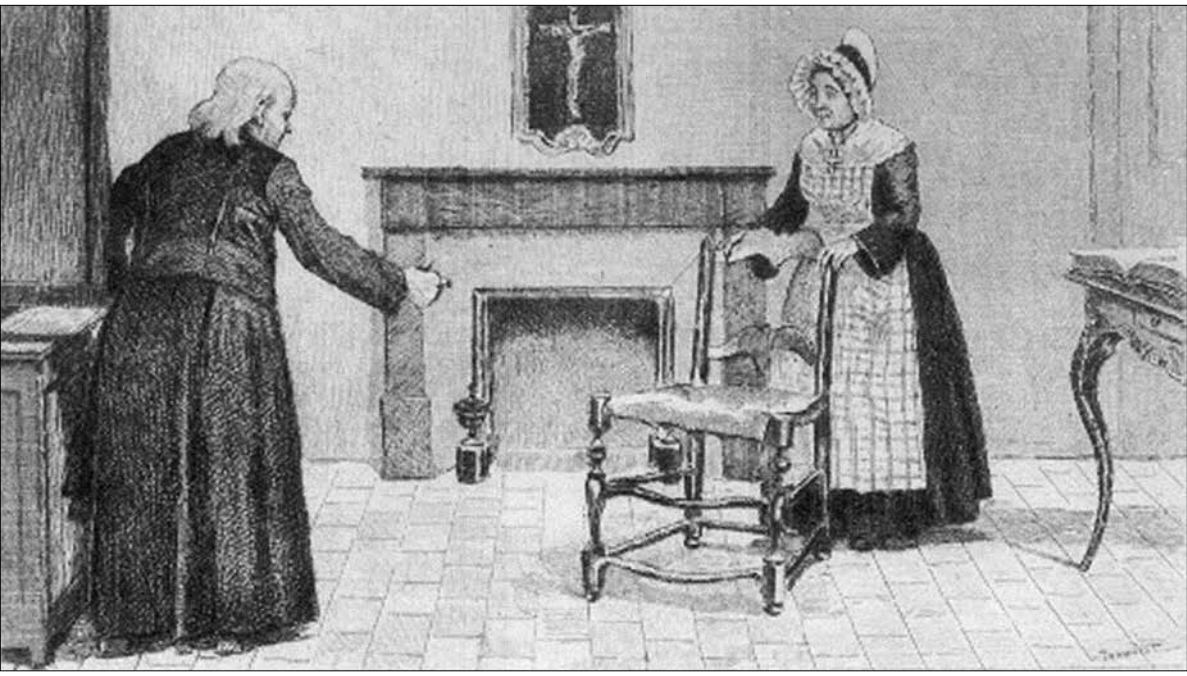
Last year he went quite alone into a country of robbers. He would not take us. He was absent for a fortnight. On his return nothing had happened to him; he was thought to be dead, but was perfectly well, and said, "This is the way I have been robbed!" And then he opened a trunk full of jewels, all the 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 Madame Magloire that she is not to oppose him. He risks himself as he sees fit. I carry off Madame 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 Madame 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.
> [...] 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

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 Digne, 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.



Monseigneur Bienvenu and Madame Magloire

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. […]

Jean Valjean enters the town of Digne after walking all day. He has just been discharged from prison where he served a lengthy term for stealing a loaf of bread for his sister's family. His identity seems to have arrived ahead of him, and although he is able to pay for his food and lodging, he is turned away from every door…

Early in the month of October, 1815, about an hour before sunset, a man who was travelling on foot entered the little town of Digne. 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 Digne 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 Digne 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 Digne 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. Digne 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. […]

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 Digne were closed. Digne, 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."

That evening, the Bishop of Digne, 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 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 diverse 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.

The door opened.

It opened wide with a rapid movement, as though someone 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! Everyone 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 curé, are you not? The curé 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 Curé; 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 abbé, 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 curé who rules over the other curés, 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 bedchamber, and placed them, lighted, on the table.

"Monsieur le Curé," 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 Curé," 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.

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 Curé 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 curé? Ah, if the good God were but just, you certainly ought to be a curé!'
'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-Comté 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 gaiety 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 anyone 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."

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'Abbé," 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, contemplating, 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.

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 voilà 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 anyone 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 22nd 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 Bonaparte, 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 near 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?

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 anyone 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 [Foodmarket] 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.

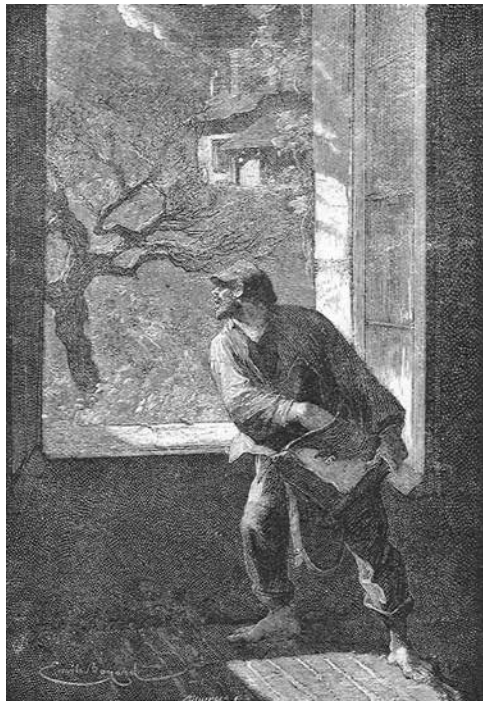
From year to year this soul had dried away slowly, but with fatal sureness. When the heart is dry, the eye is dry. On his departure

from the galleys it had been nineteen years since he had shed a tear. […]

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



The night was not very dark... (p. 67)

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 Digne.

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 slumber.

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 anyone 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 reverie, 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 chequered 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.

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

La Chute **(the Fall) "his left arm rose slowly towards his brow, and he took off his cap..." (p. 72)**

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.

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 gaily 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 curé?"

"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."

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 Digne. 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 anyone 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 someone.

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 Curé, 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 Curé, this is for your poor people. Monsieur le Curé, 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'Abbé, 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 Digne? 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 reverie 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 reverie 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 Digne 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.

The year 1817 is one of contradictions and chaos. Names of streets and familiar landmarks have been changed to reflect governing loyalties and partisanship. Unlikely people associate with each other and people receive prison sentences for being associated with a party their judge happens to oppose. To study in Paris, to swap opinions and speculations, however pointless, seems to be the intent of many young

men who call themselves students.
Four students are introduced: Tholomyes, Listolier, Fameuil and Blacheville, friends whose girlfriends — Zephine, Dahlia, Favourite and Fantine — are also friends with each other. Of the four girls, Fantine is the only one who has had no previous relationships. She is the youngest and least experienced in the ways of either the students or the streets. She is an orphan, abandoned at birth, who came to Paris at fifteen to seek her fortune. She falls in love with Tholomyes, although, for him, she is a mere dalliance.
The young men have spent about two years in Paris, accomplishing little, and have apparently been trying to avoid having to account for themselves to their parents, although Tholomyes himself is thirty years old. One day, he dreams up a scheme for "surprising" the girls who have been asking for a "surprise" for some time. The girls have gifts in mind, but the young men are pondering something frivolous and even cruel. They meet the girls at 5:00 a.m. one morning and go for breakfast, then spend the day wandering about Paris, eating, engaging in empty philosophical chat and visiting their favorite spots. Tholomyes delivers a lengthy lecture on the purpose of love and cautions against marriage. He describes for the girls what he perceives as each of their faults — although his only criticism of Fantine is that she is too beautiful, too innocent, too fragile.
After supper, Tholomyes announces that the moment for the surprise has come. The young men tell the girls to wait while they leave the inn on an errand. An hour later a porter delivers a letter which tells the girls that the men have left to return to their respective homes. This is their surprise. For three of the girls, it is just a cruel joke at the hands of men they didn't care much about anyway. For Fantine, it is disaster, for she not only loves Tholomyes but also she bears his child.
Now Fantine has been abandoned for nearly two years. She has sold all of her own finery, keeping only bare essentials in an attempt to care for her baby Cosette. She decides to return to her native town, called simply Montreuil sur Mer, but on the way she meets a Madame Thenardier sitting outside an inn with her own two children. The youngest child is the same age as Cosette and the children seem to play

Madame Thenardier, (Hugo's drawing)

well together. The Thenardiers agree to keep Cosette for a monthly fee — which would soon go up —, some additional expenses and her wardrobe. Fantine sends money faithfully, but as the child grows, the Thenardiers soon abuse and neglect Cosette, even to the point of using her as a slave. Fantine never knows her child's true condition.

It is not all in all sufficient to be wicked in order to prosper. The cook-shop was in a bad way.

Thanks to Fantine's fifty-seven francs, Thenardier had been able to avoid a protest and to honor his signature. On the following month they were again in need of money. The woman took Cosette's outfit to Paris, and pawned it at the pawnbroker's for sixty francs. As soon as that sum was spent, the Thenardiers grew accustomed to look on the little girl merely as a child whom they were caring for out of charity; and they treated her accordingly. As she had no longer any clothes, they dressed her in the cast-off

Cosette

petticoats and chemises of the Thenardier brats; that is to say, in rags. They fed her on what all the rest had left — a little better than the dog, a little worse than the cat. Moreover, the cat and the dog were her habitual table-companions; Cosette ate with them under the table, from a wooden bowl similar to theirs.

The mother, who had established herself, as we shall see later on, at Montreuil-sur-Mer, wrote, or, more correctly, caused to be written, a letter every month, that she might have news of her child. The Thenardiers replied invariably, "Cosette is doing wonderfully well."

At the expiration of the first six months the mother sent seven francs for the seventh month, and continued her remittances with tolerable regularity from month to month. The year was not completed when Thenardier said: "A fine favor she is doing us, in sooth! What does she expect us to do with her seven francs?" and he wrote to demand twelve francs. The mother, whom they had persuaded into the belief that her child was happy, "and was coming on well," submitted, and forwarded the twelve francs.

Certain natures cannot love on the one hand without hating on the other. Mother Thenardier loved her two daughters passionately, which caused her to hate the stranger.

It is sad to think that the love of a mother can possess villainous aspects. Little as was the space occupied by Cosette, it seemed to her as though it were taken from her own, and that that little child diminished the air which her daughters breathed. This woman, like many women of her sort, had a load of caresses and a burden of blows and injuries to dispense each day. If she had not had Cosette, it is certain that her daughters, idolized as they were, would have received the whole of it; but the stranger did them the service to divert the blows to herself. Her daughters received nothing but caresses. Cosette could not make a motion which did not draw down upon her head a heavy shower of violent blows and unmerited chastisement. The sweet, feeble being, who should not have understood anything of this world or of God, incessantly punished, scolded, ill-used, beaten, and seeing beside her two little creatures like herself, who lived in a ray of dawn!

Madame Thenardier was vicious with Cosette. Eponine and Azelma were vicious. Children at that age are only copies of their mother. The size is smaller; that is all.

A year passed; then another.

People in the village said:

"Those Thenardiers are good people. They are not rich, and yet they are bringing up a poor child who was abandoned on their hands!"

They thought that Cosette's mother had forgotten her.

In the meanwhile, Thenardier, having learned, it is impossible to say by what obscure means, that the child was probably a bastard, and that the mother could not acknowledge it, exacted fifteen francs a month, saying that "the creature" was growing and "eating," and threatening to send her away. "Let her not bother me," he exclaimed, "or I'll fire her brat right into the middle of her secrets. I must have an increase." The mother paid the fifteen francs.

From year to year the child grew, and so did her wretchedness.

As long as Cosette was little, she was the scapegoat of the two other children; as soon as she began to develop a little, that is to say, before she was even five years old, she became the servant of the household.

Five years old! the reader will say; that is not probable. Alas! it is true. Social suffering begins at all ages. Have we not recently seen the trial of a man named Dumollard, an orphan turned bandit, who, from the age of five, as the official documents state, being alone in the world, "worked for his living and stole"?

Cosette was made to run on errands, to sweep the rooms, the courtyard, the street, to wash the dishes, to even carry burdens. The Thenardiers considered themselves all the more authorized to behave in this manner, since the mother, who was still at Montreuil-sur-Mer, had become irregular in her payments. Some months she was in arrears.

If this mother had returned to Montfermeil at the end of these three years, she would not have recognized her child. Cosette, so pretty and rosy on her arrival in that house, was now thin and

pale. She had an indescribably uneasy look. "The sly creature," said the Thenardiers.

Injustice had made her peevish, and misery had made her ugly. Nothing remained to her except her beautiful eyes, which inspired pain, because, large as they were, it seemed as though one beheld in them a still larger amount of sadness.

It was a heart-breaking thing to see this poor child, not yet six years old, shivering in the winter in her old rags of linen, full of holes, sweeping the street before daylight, with an enormous broom in her tiny red hands, and a tear in her great eyes.

She was called the Lark in the neighborhood. The populace, who are fond of these figures of speech, had taken a fancy to bestow this name on this trembling, frightened, and shivering little creature, no bigger than a bird, who was awake every morning before any one else in the house or the village, and was always in the street or the fields before daybreak.

Only the little lark never sang.

Upon returning to Montreuil-sur-Mer, Fantine finds her town greatly changed. An unknown man has changed the method of manufacturing a popular glass trinket (known as jet work) and has turned it into a highly profitable industry with jobs for many. We understand that this man is Jean Valjean.

On the day he entered the town, a fire had broken out in one of the buildings. Valjean had rushed into the building and saved the lives of two daughters of a gendarme (French policeman). He is consequently dubbed "Father Madeleine."

As Madeleine, Valjean does so much for the town, including the building of two new factories and additions to the hospital, that he is offered several different promotions. He refuses them all, but eventually the title of Mayor is forced on him. Madeleine continues doing good deeds in secret and spends time teaching the poor how to do things to improve their lives.

Madeleine/Valjean receives word of the death of Monseigneur Bienvenu and is seen in mourning. Thus people begin to assume that

he was related to the Bishop somehow.
Javert, the police inspector of Montreuil-sur-Mer, is a man completely devoted to his duty under the law — or at least to his perception of his duty. He has no pity for anyone who breaks the law, no matter how slight the offense. In his youth he was stationed in the galleys at Toulon. He feels that he has already seen Monsieur Madeleine, but he can't place him.

One single man in the town, in the arrondissement, absolutely escaped this contagion, and, whatever Father Madeleine did, remained his opponent as though a sort of incorruptible and imperturbable instinct kept him on the alert and uneasy. It seems, in fact, as though there existed in certain men a veritable bestial instinct, though pure and upright, like all instincts, which creates antipathies and sympathies, which fatally separates one nature from another nature, which does not hesitate, which feels no disquiet, which does not hold its peace, and which never belies itself, clear in its obscurity, infallible, imperious, intractable, stubborn to all counsels of the intelligence and to all the dissolvents of reason, and which, in whatever manner destinies are arranged, secretly warns the man-dog of the presence of the man-cat, and the man-fox of the presence of the man-lion.

It frequently happened that when M. Madeleine was passing along a street, calm, affectionate, surrounded by the blessings of all, a man of lofty stature, clad in an iron-gray frock-coat, armed with a heavy cane, and wearing a battered hat, turned round abruptly behind him, and followed him with his eyes until he disappeared, with folded arms and a slow shake of the head, and his upper lip raised in company with his lower to his nose, a sort of significant grimace which might be translated by: "What is that man, after all? I certainly have seen him somewhere. In any case, I am not his dupe."

This person, grave with a gravity which was almost menacing, was one of those men who, even when only seen by a rapid glimpse, arrest the spectator's attention.

Javert

His name was Javert, and he belonged to the police.

At Montreuil sur Mer he exercised the unpleasant but useful functions of an inspector. He had not seen Madeleine's beginnings. Javert owed the post which he occupied to the protection of M. Chabouillet, the secretary of the Minister of State, Comte Angeles, then prefect of police at Paris. When Javert arrived at Montreuil sur Mer the fortune of the great manufacturer was already made, and Father Madeleine had become Monsieur Madeleine.

Certain police officers have a peculiar physiognomy, which is complicated with an air of baseness mingled with an air of authority. Javert possessed this physiognomy minus the baseness. […]

The human face of Javert consisted of a flat nose, with two deep nostrils, towards which enormous whiskers ascended on his cheeks. One felt ill at ease when he saw these two forests and these two caverns for the first time. When Javert laughed, — and his laugh was rare and terrible, — his thin lips parted and revealed to view not only his teeth, but his gums, and around his nose there formed a flattened and savage fold, as on the muzzle of a wild beast. Javert, serious, was a watchdog; when he laughed, he was a tiger. As for the rest, he had very little skull and a great deal of jaw; his hair concealed his forehead and fell over his eyebrows; between his eyes there was a permanent, central frown, like an imprint of wrath; his gaze was obscure; his mouth pursed up and terrible; his air that of ferocious command.

This man was composed of two very simple and two very good sentiments, comparatively; but he rendered them almost bad, by dint of exaggerating them, — respect for authority, hatred of rebellion; and in his eyes, murder, robbery, all crimes, are only forms of rebellion. He enveloped in a blind and profound faith

every one who had a function in the state, from the prime minister to the rural policeman. He covered with scorn, aversion, and disgust every one who had once crossed the legal threshold of evil. He was absolute, and admitted no exceptions. On the one hand, he said, "The functionary can make no mistake; the magistrate is never the wrong." On the other hand, he said, "These men are irremediably lost. Nothing good can come from them." He fully shared the opinion of those extreme minds which attribute to human law I know not what power of making, or, if the reader will have it so, of authenticating, demons, and who place a Styx at the base of society. He was stoical, serious, austere; a melancholy dreamer, humble and haughty, like fanatics. His glance was like a gimlet, cold and piercing. His whole life hung on these two words: watchfulness and supervision. He had introduced a straight line into what is the most crooked thing in the world; he possessed the conscience of his usefulness, the religion of his functions, and he was a spy as other men are priests. Woe to the man who fell into his hands! He would have arrested his own father, if the latter had escaped from the galleys, and would have denounced his mother, if she had broken her ban. And he would have done it with that sort of inward satisfaction which is conferred by virtue. And, withal, a life of privation, isolation, abnegation, chastity, with never a diversion. It was implacable duty; the police understood, as the Spartans understood Sparta, a pitiless lying in wait, a ferocious honesty, a marble informer, Brutus in Vidocq.

Javert's whole person was expressive of the man who spies and who withdraws himself from observation. The mystical school of Joseph de Maistre, which at that epoch seasoned with lofty cosmogony those things which were called the ultra newspapers, would not have failed to declare that Javert was a symbol. His brow was not visible; it disappeared beneath his hat: his eyes were not visible, since they were lost under his eyebrows: his chin was not visible, for it was plunged in his cravat: his hands were not visible; they were drawn up in his sleeves: and his cane was not visible; he carried it under his coat. But when the occasion presented itself, there was suddenly seen to emerge from all this shadow, as from an

Javert

ambuscade, a narrow and angular forehead, a baleful glance, a threatening chin, enormous hands, and a monstrous cudgel.

In his leisure moments, which were far from frequent, he read, although he hated books; this caused him to be not wholly illiterate. This could be recognized by some emphasis in his speech.

As we have said, he had no vices. When he was pleased with himself, he permitted himself a pinch of snuff. Therein lay his connection with humanity.

The reader will have no difficulty in understanding that Javert was the terror of that whole class which the annual statistics of the Ministry of Justice designates under the rubric, Vagrants. The name of Javert routed them by its mere utterance; the face of Javert petrified them at sight.

Such was this formidable man.

Javert was like an eye constantly fixed on M. Madeleine. An eye full of suspicion and conjecture. M. Madeleine had finally perceived the fact; but it seemed to be of no importance to him. He did not even put a question to Javert; he neither sought nor avoided him; he bore that embarrassing and almost oppressive gaze without appearing to notice it. He treated Javert with ease and courtesy, as he did all the rest of the world.

It was divined, from some words which escaped Javert, that he had secretly investigated, with that curiosity which belongs to the race, and into which there enters as much instinct as will, all the

anterior traces which Father Madeleine might have left elsewhere. He seemed to know, and he sometimes said in covert words, that someone had gleaned certain information in a certain district about a family which had disappeared. Once he chanced to say, as he was talking to himself, "I think I have him!" Then he remained pensive for three days, and uttered not a word. It seemed that the thread which he thought he held had broken.

Moreover, and this furnishes the necessary corrective for the too absolute sense which certain words might present, there can be nothing really infallible in a human creature, and the peculiarity of instinct is that it can become confused, thrown off the track, and defeated. Otherwise, it would be superior to intelligence, and the beast would be found to be provided with a better light than man.

Javert was evidently somewhat disconcerted by the perfect naturalness and tranquillity of M. Madeleine.

Madeleine takes the risk of giving away his true identity one day when he rescues an old man, Monsieur Fauchelevent who has fallen under his cart as it was sinking in the mud. When no one is available to lift the wagon, Madeleine crawls underneath and lifts the wagon on his back. Javert, who watches the episode, says that the only person he ever knew with the strength to lift such a wagon was a convict in the galleys. That convict was of course Valjean; but if Javert suspects that Madeleine is Valjean, he is unable to prove it. The entire town virtually worships Madeleine.

Some time afterwards, M. Madeleine was appointed mayor. The first time that Javert beheld M. Madeleine clothed in the scarf which gave him authority over the town, he felt the sort of shudder which a watch-dog might experience on smelling a wolf in his master's clothes. From that time forth he avoided him as much as he possibly could. When the requirements of the service imperatively demanded it, and he could not do otherwise

than meet the mayor, he addressed him with profound respect.

This prosperity created at Montreuil-sur-Mer by Father Madeleine had, besides the visible signs which we have mentioned, another symptom which was none the less significant for not being visible. This never deceives. When the population suffers, when work is lacking, when there is no commerce, the tax-payer resists imposts through penury, he exhausts and oversteps his respite, and the state expends a great deal of money in the charges for compelling and collection. When work is abundant, when the country is rich and happy, the taxes are paid easily and cost the state nothing. It may be said, that there is one infallible thermometer of the public misery and riches, — the cost of collecting the taxes. In the course of seven years the expense of collecting the taxes had diminished three-fourths in the arrondissement of Montreuil-sur-Mer, and this led to this arrondissement being frequently cited from all the rest by M. de Villèle, then Minister of Finance.

Fantine takes a job at the jet work factory. The job enables her to send money twice a month for Cosette. Her letters arouse the suspicion of her co-workers who soon discover where her letters are going.
Someone investigates the Thenardiers and discovers that Fantine has a child. The woman foreman, Madame Victurnien, fires her for lack of morals. Fantine takes a job mending shirts, living on nothing for herself, refusing even to light a fire for heat. When that is not enough, she sells her hair and teeth for money. Her situation is made more desperate by the Thenardiers demands for additional money on the pretext that Cosette is sick.
Finally Fantine gets arrested by Javert for attacking a dandy who threw a fistful of snow at her bare back — after several minutes of insulting and ridiculing her. Madeleine comes to the rescue and refuses to allow Javert to put her in prison. Fantine mocks Madeleine's generosity, blaming him for her condition in the first place. When Madeleine hears her story, he takes on the responsibility of providing her with sustenance and promises to bring her and Cosette back together.

Fantine stood aside from the door and stared at Javert in amazement as he went out.

Nevertheless, she also was the prey to a strange confusion. She had just seen herself a subject of dispute between two opposing powers. She had seen two men who held in their hands her liberty, her life, her soul, her child, in combat before her very eyes; one of these men was drawing her towards darkness, the other was leading her back towards the light. In this conflict, viewed through the exaggerations of terror, these two men had appeared to her like two giants; the one spoke like her demon, the other like her good angel. The angel had conquered the demon, and, strange to say, that which made her shudder from head to foot was the fact that this angel, this liberator, was the very man whom she abhorred, that mayor whom she had so long regarded as the author of all her woes, that Madeleine! And at the very moment when she had insulted him in so hideous a fashion, he had saved her! Had she, then, been mistaken? Must she change her whole soul? She did not know; she trembled. She listened in bewilderment, she looked on in affright, and at every word uttered by M. Madeleine she felt the frightful shades of hatred crumble and melt within her, and something warm and ineffable, indescribable, which was both joy, confidence and love, dawn in her heart.

When Javert had taken his departure, M. Madeleine turned to her and said to her in a deliberate voice, like a serious man who does not wish to weep and who finds some difficulty in speaking:

"I have heard you. I knew nothing about what you have mentioned. I believe that it is true, and I feel that it is true. I was even ignorant of the fact that you had left my shop. Why did you not apply to me? But here; I will pay your debts, I will send for your child, or you shall go to her. You shall live here, in Paris, or where you please. I undertake the care of your child and yourself. You shall not work any longer if you do not like. I will give all the money you require. You shall be honest and happy once more. And listen! I declare to you that if all is as you say, — and I do not doubt it, — you have never ceased to be virtuous and holy in the

sight of God. Oh! poor woman."

This was more than Fantine could bear. To have Cosette! To leave this life of infamy. To live free, rich, happy, respectable with Cosette; to see all these realities of paradise blossom of a sudden in the midst of her misery. She stared stupidly at this man who was talking to her, and could only give vent to two or three sobs, "Oh! Oh! Oh!"

Her limbs gave way beneath her, she knelt in front of M. Madeleine, and before he could prevent her he felt her grasp his hand and press her lips to it.

Then she fainted.

M. Madeleine had Fantine removed to that infirmary which he had established in his own house. He confided her to the sisters, who put her to bed. A burning fever had come on. She passed a part of the night in delirium and raving. At length, however, she fell asleep.

On the morrow, towards midday, Fantine awoke. She heard someone breathing close to her bed; she drew aside the curtain and saw M. Madeleine standing there and looking at something over her head. His gaze was full of pity, anguish, and supplication. She followed its direction, and saw that it was fixed on a crucifix which was nailed to the wall.

Thenceforth, M. Madeleine was transfigured in Fantine's eyes. He seemed to her to be clothed in light. He was absorbed in a sort of prayer. She gazed at him for a long time without daring to interrupt him. At last she said timidly:

"What are you doing?"

M. Madeleine had been there for an hour. He had been waiting for Fantine to awake. He took her hand, felt of her pulse, and replied:

"How do you feel?"

"Well, I have slept," she replied; "I think that I am better, it is nothing."

He answered, responding to the first question which she had put to him as though he had just heard it:

"I was praying to the martyr there on high."

And he added in his own mind, "For the martyr here below."

M. Madeleine had passed the night and the morning in making inquiries. He knew all now. He knew Fantine's history in all its heart-rending details. He went on:

"You have suffered much, poor mother. Oh! do not complain; you now have the dowry of the elect. It is thus that men are transformed into angels. It is not their fault they do not know how to go to work otherwise. You see this hell from which you have just emerged is the first form of heaven. It was necessary to begin there."

He sighed deeply. But she smiled on him with that sublime smile in which two teeth were lacking.

That same night, Javert wrote a letter. The next morning be posted it himself at the office of Montreuil-sur-Mer. It was addressed to Paris, and the superscription ran: To Monsieur Chabouillet, Secretary of Monsieur le Prefet of Police. As the affair in the station-house had been bruited about, the post-mistress and some other persons who saw the letter before it was sent off, and who recognized Javert's handwriting on the cover, thought that he was sending in his resignation.

M. Madeleine made haste to write to the Thenardiers. Fantine owed them one hundred and twenty francs. He sent them three hundred francs, telling them to pay themselves from that sum, and to fetch the child instantly to Montreuil-sur-Mer, where her sick mother required her presence.

This dazzled Thenardier. "The devil!" said the man to his wife; "don't let's allow the child to go. This lark is going to turn into a milch cow. I see through it. Some ninny has taken a fancy to the mother."

He replied with a very well drawn-up bill for five hundred and some odd francs. In this memorandum two indisputable items figured up over three hundred francs, — one for the doctor, the other for the apothecary who had attended and physicked Eponine and Azelma through two long illnesses. Cosette, as we have already said, had not been ill. It was only a question of a

trifling substitution of names. At the foot of the memorandum Thenardier wrote, Received on account, three hundred francs.

M. Madeleine immediately sent three hundred francs more, and wrote, "Make haste to bring Cosette."

"Christi!" said Thenardier, "let's not give up the child."

In the meantime, Fantine did not recover. She still remained in the infirmary.

The sisters had at first only received and nursed "that woman" with repugnance. … But in a few days Fantine disarmed them. She said all kinds of humble and gentle things, and the mother in her provoked tenderness. … "I shall feel the benediction of the good God when Cosette is here. I shall gaze at her; it will do me good to see that innocent creature. She knows nothing at all. She is an angel, you see, my sisters. At that age the wings have not fallen off."

M. Madeleine went to see her twice a day, and each time she asked him:

"Shall I see my Cosette soon?"

He answered:

"Tomorrow, perhaps. She may arrive at any moment. I am expecting her."

And the mother's pale face grew radiant.

"Oh!" she said, "how happy I am going to be!"

We have just said that she did not recover her health. On the contrary, her condition seemed to become more grave from week to week. That handful of snow applied to her bare skin between her shoulder-blades had brought about a sudden suppression of perspiration, as a consequence of which the malady which had been smouldering within her for many years was violently developed at last. At that time people were beginning to follow the Laennec's fine suggestions in the study and treatment of chest maladies. The doctor sounded Fantine's chest and shook his head.

M. Madeleine said to the doctor:

"Well?"

"Has she not a child which she desires to see?" said the doctor.

"Yes."

"Well! Make haste and get it here!"

M. Madeleine shuddered.

Fantine inquired:

"What did the doctor say?"

M. Madeleine forced himself to smile.

"He said that your child was to be brought speedily. That that would restore your health."

"Oh!" she rejoined, "he is right! But what do those Thenardiers mean by keeping my Cosette from me! Oh! she is coming. At last I behold happiness close beside me!"

In the meantime Thenardier did not "let go of the child," and gave a hundred insufficient reasons for it. Cosette was not quite well enough to take a journey in the winter. And then, there still remained some petty but pressing debts in the neighborhood, and they were collecting the bills for them, etc., etc.

"I shall send some one to fetch Cosette!" said Father Madeleine. "If necessary, I will go myself."

He wrote the following letter to Fantine's dictation, and made her sign it:

"MONSIEUR THÉNARDIER: — You will deliver Cosette to this person. You will be paid for all the little things. I have the honor to salute you with respect. "FANTINE."

In the meantime a serious incident occurred. Carve as we will the mysterious block of which our life is made, the black vein of destiny constantly reappears in it.

Javert comes to Madeleine's office and tries to resign as inspector of police after confessing that he had written to the Prefecture of Police at Paris to denounce Madeleine as Jean Valjean. He was wrong, says he, since another individual named Champmathieu has been arrested and identified by two other convicts as Jean Valjean. The trial is about to open. Madeleine refuses Javert's resignation.

M. Madeleine had turned to his desk again, and taken up his docket, and was turning over the leaves tranquilly, reading and writing by turns, like a busy man. He turned to Javert:

"That will do, Javert. In truth, all these details interest me but little. We are wasting our time, and we have pressing business on hand ... But I am giving you a great deal of work. Are you not to be absent? Did you not tell me that you were going to Arras on that matter in a week or ten days?"

"Sooner than that, Mr. Mayor."

"On what day, then?"

"Why, I thought that I had said to Monsieur le Maire that the case was to be tried to-morrow, and that I am to set out by diligence to-night."

M. Madeleine made an imperceptible movement.

"And how long will the case last?"

"One day, at the most. The judgment will be pronounced to-morrow evening at latest. But I shall not wait for the sentence, which is certain; I shall return here as soon as my deposition has been taken."

"That is well," said M. Madeleine.

And he dismissed Javert with a wave of the hand.

Javert did not withdraw.

"Excuse me, Mr. Mayor," said he.

"What is it now?" demanded M. Madeleine.

"Mr. Mayor, there is still something of which I must remind you."

"What is it?"

"That I must be dismissed."

M. Madeleine rose.

"Javert, you are a man of honor, and I esteem you. You exaggerate your fault. Moreover, this is an offence which concerns me. Javert, you deserve promotion instead of degradation. I wish you to retain your post."

Javert gazed at M. Madeleine with his candid eyes, in whose depths his not very enlightened but pure and rigid conscience

seemed visible, and said in a tranquil voice:

"Mr. Mayor, I cannot grant you that."

"I repeat," replied M. Madeleine, "that the matter concerns me."

But Javert, heeding his own thought only, continued:

"So far as exaggeration is concerned, I am not exaggerating. This is the way I reason: I have suspected you unjustly. That is nothing. It is our right to cherish suspicion, although suspicion directed above ourselves is an abuse. But without proofs, in a fit of rage, with the object of wreaking my vengeance, I have denounced you as a convict, you, a respectable man, a mayor, a magistrate! That is serious, very serious. I have insulted authority in your person, I, an agent of the authorities! If one of my subordinates had done what I have done, I should have declared him unworthy of the service, and have expelled him. Well? Stop, Mr. Mayor; one word more. I have often been severe in the course of my life towards others. That is just. I have done well. Now, if I were not severe towards myself, all the justice that I have done would become injustice. Ought I to spare myself more than others? No! What! I should be good for nothing but to chastise others, and not myself! Why, I should be a blackguard! Those who say, 'That blackguard of a Javert!' would be in the right. Mr. Mayor, I do not desire that you should treat me kindly; your kindness roused sufficient bad blood in me when it was directed to others. I want none of it for myself. The kindness which consists in upholding a woman of the town against a citizen, the police agent against the mayor, the man who is down against the man who is up in the world, is what I call false kindness. That is the sort of kindness which disorganizes society. Good God! it is very easy to be kind; the difficulty lies in being just. Come! if you had been what I thought you, I should not have been kind to you, not I! You would have seen! Mr. Mayor, I must treat myself as I would treat any other man. When I have subdued malefactors, when I have proceeded with vigor against rascals, I have often said to myself, 'If you flinch, if I ever catch you in fault, you may rest at your ease!' I have flinched, I have caught myself in a fault. So much the worse! Come, discharged,

cashiered, expelled! That is well. I have arms. I will till the soil; it makes no difference to me. Mr. Mayor, the good of the service demands an example. I simply require the discharge of Inspector Javert."

All this was uttered in a proud, humble, despairing, yet convinced tone, which lent indescribable grandeur to this singular, honest man.

"We shall see," said M. Madeleine.

And he offered him his hand.

Javert recoiled, and said in a wild voice:

"Excuse me, Mr. Mayor, but this must not be. A mayor does not offer his hand to a police spy."

He added between his teeth:

"A police spy, yes; from the moment when I have misused the police. I am no more than a police spy."

Then he bowed profoundly, and directed his steps towards the door.

There he wheeled round, and with eyes still downcast:

"Mr. Mayor," he said, "I shall continue to serve until I am superseded."

He withdrew. M. Madeleine remained thoughtfully listening to the firm, sure step, which died away on the pavement of the corridor.

The incidents the reader is about to peruse were not all known at Montreuil sur Mer. But the small portion of them which became known left such a memory in that town that a serious gap would exist in this book if we did not narrate them in their most minute details. Among these details the reader will encounter two or three improbable circumstances, which we preserve out of respect for the truth.

On the afternoon following the visit of Javert, M. Madeleine went to see Fantine according to his wont.

Before entering Fantine's room, he had Sister Simplice summoned. …

This pious woman had conceived an affection for Fantine,

probably feeling a latent virtue there, and she had devoted herself almost exclusively to her care.

M. Madeleine took Sister Simplice apart and recommended Fantine to her in a singular tone, which the sister recalled later on.

On leaving the sister, he approached Fantine.

Fantine awaited M. Madeleine's appearance every day as one awaits a ray of warmth and joy. She said to the sisters, "I only live when Monsieur le Maire is here."

She had a great deal of fever that day. As soon as she saw M. Madeleine she asked him:

"And Cosette?"

He replied with a smile:

"Soon."

M. Madeleine was the same as usual with Fantine. Only he remained an hour instead of half an hour, to Fantine's great delight. He urged every one repeatedly not to allow the invalid to want for anything. It was noticed that there was a moment when his countenance became very sombre. But this was explained when it became known that the doctor had bent down to his ear and said to him, "She is losing ground fast."

Then he returned to the town-hall, and the clerk observed him attentively examining a road map of France which hung in his study. He wrote a few figures on a bit of paper with a pencil.

Madeleine is torn between going to find Cosette and going to Arras to speak up for the man who has been identified as him. He agonizes over the dilemma[1] of revealing himself for the sake of a man whom he doesn't know or continuing to hide his identity for his own sake as well as for the good of the people he is serving as mayor.

1. a dilemna: a situation in which one has to choose between two or more difficult or even terrible actions, with no possibility of escape as even doing nothing will result in an outcome as difficult or repellent as any action.

Meanwhile, M. Madeleine had returned home. He had taken the longest way to return from Master Scaufflaire's, as though the parsonage door had been a temptation for him, and he had wished to avoid it. He ascended to his room, and there he shut himself up, which was a very simple act, since he liked to go to bed early. Nevertheless, the portress of the factory, who was, at the same time, M. Madeleine's only servant, noticed that the latter's light was extinguished at half-past eight, and she mentioned it to the cashier when he came home, adding:

"Is Monsieur le Maire ill? I thought he had a rather singular air."

This cashier occupied a room situated directly under M. Madeleine's chamber. He paid no heed to the portress's words, but went to bed and to sleep. Towards midnight he woke up with a start; in his sleep he had heard a noise above his head. He listened; it was a footstep pacing back and forth, as though some one were walking in the room above him. He listened more attentively, and recognized M. Madeleine's step. This struck him as strange; usually, there was no noise in M. Madeleine's chamber until he rose in the morning. A moment later the cashier heard a noise which resembled that of a cupboard being opened, and then shut again; then a piece of furniture was disarranged; then a pause ensued; then the step began again. The cashier sat up in bed, quite awake now, and staring; and through his window-panes he saw the reddish gleam of a lighted window reflected on the opposite wall; from the direction of the rays, it could only come from the window of M. Madeleine's chamber. The reflection wavered, as though it came rather from a fire which had been lighted than from a candle. The shadow of the window-frame was not shown, which indicated that the window was wide open. The fact that this window was open in such cold weather was surprising. The cashier fell asleep again. An hour or two later he waked again. The same step was still passing slowly and regularly back and forth overhead.

The reflection was still visible on the wall, but now it was pale and peaceful, like the reflection of a lamp or of a candle. The

window was still open.

This is what had taken place in M. Madeleine's room.

We have already gazed into the depths of this conscience; the moment has now come when we must take another look into it. We do so not without emotion and trepidation. There is nothing more terrible in existence than this sort of contemplation. The eye of the spirit can nowhere find more dazzling brilliance and more shadow than in man; it can fix itself on no other thing which is more formidable, more complicated, more mysterious, and more infinite. There is a spectacle more grand than the sea; it is heaven: there is a spectacle more grand than heaven; it is the inmost recesses of the soul.

To make the poem of the human conscience, were it only with reference to a single man, were it only in connection with the basest of men, would be to blend all epics into one superior and definitive epic. Conscience is the chaos of chimeras, of lusts, and of temptations; the furnace of dreams; the lair of ideas of which we are ashamed; it is the pandemonium of sophisms; it is the battlefield of the passions. Penetrate, at certain hours, past the livid face of a human being who is engaged in reflection, and look behind, gaze into that soul, gaze into that obscurity. There, beneath that external silence, battles of giants, like those recorded in Homer, are in progress; skirmishes of dragons and hydras and swarms of phantoms, as in Milton; visionary circles, as in Dante. What a solemn thing is this infinity which every man bears within him, and which he measures with despair against the caprices of his brain and the actions of his life!

… We have but little to add to what the reader already knows of what had happened to Jean Valjean after the adventure with Little Gervais. From that moment forth he was, as we have seen, a totally different man. What the Bishop had wished to make of him, that he carried out. It was more than a transformation; it was a transfiguration.

He succeeded in disappearing, sold the Bishop's silver, reserving only the candlesticks as a souvenir, crept from town to

town, traversed France, came to Montreuil-sur-Mer, conceived the idea which we have mentioned, accomplished what we have related, succeeded in rendering himself safe from seizure and inaccessible, and, thenceforth, established at Montreuil-sur-Mer, happy in feeling his conscience saddened by the past and the first half of his existence belied by the last, he lived in peace, reassured and hopeful, having henceforth only two thoughts, — to conceal his name and to sanctify his life; to escape men and to return to God.

These two thoughts were so closely intertwined in his mind that they formed but a single one there; both were equally absorbing and imperative and ruled his slightest actions. In general, they conspired to regulate the conduct of his life; they turned him towards the gloom; they rendered him kindly and simple; they counselled him to the same things. Sometimes, however, they conflicted. In that case, as the reader will remember, the man whom all the country of Montreuil-sur-Mer called M. Madeleine did not hesitate to sacrifice the first to the second — his security to his virtue. Thus, in spite of all his reserve and all his prudence, he had preserved the Bishop's candlesticks, worn mourning for him, summoned and interrogated all the little Savoyards who passed that way, collected information regarding the families at Faverolles, and saved old Fauchelevent's life, despite the disquieting insinuations of Javert. It seemed, as we have already remarked, as though he thought, following the example of all those who have been wise, holy, and just, that his first duty was not towards himself.

At the same time, it must be confessed, nothing just like this had yet presented itself.

Never had the two ideas which governed the unhappy man whose sufferings we are narrating, engaged in so serious a struggle. He understood this confusedly but profoundly at the very first words pronounced by Javert, when the latter entered his study. At the moment when that name, which he had buried beneath so many layers, was so strangely articulated, he was struck with stupor, and as though intoxicated with the sinister eccentricity of his destiny; and through this stupor he felt that shudder which

precedes great shocks. He bent like an oak at the approach of a storm, like a soldier at the approach of an assault. He felt shadows filled with thunders and lightnings descending upon his head. As he listened to Javert, the first thought which occurred to him was to go, to run and denounce himself, to take that Champmathieu out of prison and place himself there; this was as painful and as poignant as an incision in the living flesh. Then it passed away, and he said to himself, "We will see! We will see!" He repressed this first, generous instinct, and recoiled before heroism.

It would be beautiful, no doubt, after the Bishop's holy words, after so many years of repentance and abnegation, in the midst of a penitence admirably begun, if this man had not flinched for an instant, even in the presence of so terrible a conjecture, but had continued to walk with the same step towards this yawning precipice, at the bottom of which lay heaven; that would have been beautiful; but it was not thus. We must render an account of the things which went on in this soul, and we can only tell what there was there. He was carried away, at first, by the instinct of self-preservation; he rallied all his ideas in haste, stifled his emotions, took into consideration Javert's presence, that great danger, postponed all decision with the firmness of terror, shook off thought as to what he had to do, and resumed his calmness as a warrior picks up his buckler.

He remained in this state during the rest of the day, a whirlwind within, a profound tranquillity without. He took no "preservative measures," as they may be called. Everything was still confused, and jostling together in his brain. His trouble was so great that he could not perceive the form of a single idea distinctly, and he could have told nothing about himself, except that he had received a great blow.

He repaired to Fantine's bed of suffering, as usual, and prolonged his visit, through a kindly instinct, telling himself that he must behave thus, and recommend her well to the sisters, in case he should be obliged to be absent himself. He had a vague feeling that he might be obliged to go to Arras; and without having the least in the world made up his mind to this trip, he said to himself

that being, as he was, beyond the shadow of any suspicion, there could be nothing out of the way in being a witness to what was to take place, and he engaged the tilbury from Scaufflaire in order to be prepared in any event.

He dined with a good deal of appetite.

On returning to his room, he communed with himself.

He examined the situation, and found it unprecedented; so unprecedented that in the midst of his revery he rose from his chair, moved by some inexplicable impulse of anxiety, and bolted his door. He feared lest something more should enter. He was barricading himself against possibilities.

A moment later he extinguished his light; it embarrassed him.

lt seemed to him as though he might be seen.

By whom?

Alas! That on which he desired to close the door had already entered; that which he desired to blind was staring him in the face, — his conscience.

His conscience; that is to say, God.

Nevertheless, he deluded himself at first; he had a feeling of security and of solitude; the bolt once drawn, he thought himself impregnable; the candle extinguished, he felt himself invisible. Then he took possession of himself: he set his elbows on the table, leaned his head on his hand, and began to meditate in the dark.

"Where do I stand? Am not I dreaming? What have I heard? Is it really true that I have seen that Javert, and that he spoke to me in that manner? Who can that Champmathieu be? So he resembles me! Is it possible? When I reflect that yesterday I was so tranquil, and so far from suspecting anything! What was I doing yesterday at this hour? What is there in this incident? What will the end be? What is to be done?"

This was the torment in which he found himself. His brain had lost its power of retaining ideas; they passed like waves, and he clutched his brow in both hands to arrest them.

Nothing but anguish extricated itself from this tumult which overwhelmed his will and his reason, and from which he sought to draw proof and resolution.

His head was burning. He went to the window and threw it wide open. There were no stars in the sky. He returned and seated himself at the table.

The first hour passed in this manner.

Gradually, however, vague outlines began to take form and to fix themselves in his meditation, and he was able to catch a glimpse with precision of the reality, — not the whole situation, but some of the details. He began by recognizing the fact that, critical and extraordinary as was this situation, he was completely master of it.

This only caused an increase of his stupor.

Independently of the severe and religious aim which he had assigned to his actions, all that he had made up to that day had been nothing but a hole in which to bury his name. That which he had always feared most of all in his hours of self-communion, during his sleepless nights, was to ever hear that name pronounced; he had said to himself, that that would be the end of all things for him; that on the day when that name made its reappearance it would cause his new life to vanish from about him, and — who knows? — perhaps even his new soul within him, also. He shuddered at the very thought that this was possible. Assuredly, if any one had said to him at such moments that the hour would come when that name would ring in his ears, when the hideous words, Jean Valjean, would suddenly emerge from the darkness and rise in front of him, when that formidable light, capable of dissipating the mystery in which he had enveloped himself, would suddenly blaze forth above his head, and that that name would not menace him, that that light would but produce an obscurity more dense, that this rent veil would but increase the mystery, that this earthquake would solidify his edifice, that this prodigious incident would have no other result, so far as he was concerned, if so it seemed good to him, than that of rendering his existence at once clearer and more impenetrable, and that, out of his confrontation with the phantom of Jean Valjean, the good and worthy citizen Monsieur Madeleine would emerge more honored, more peaceful, and more respected than ever — if any one had told him that, he

would have tossed his head and regarded the words as those of a madman. Well, all this was precisely what had just come to pass; all that accumulation of impossibilities was a fact, and God had permitted these wild fancies to become real things!

His revery continued to grow clearer. He came more and more to an understanding of his position.

It seemed to him that he had but just waked up from some inexplicable dream, and that he found himself slipping down a declivity in the middle of the night, erect, shivering, holding back all in vain, on the very brink of the abyss. He distinctly perceived in the darkness a stranger, a man unknown to him, whom destiny had mistaken for him, and whom she was thrusting into the gulf in his stead; in order that the gulf might close once more, it was necessary that some one, himself or that other man, should fall into it: he had only let things take their course.

The light became complete, and he acknowledged this to himself: that his place was empty in the galleys; that do what he would, it was still awaiting him; that the theft from little Gervais had led him back to it; that this vacant place would await him, and draw him on until he filled it; that this was inevitable and fatal; and then he said to himself, "that, at this moment, he had a substitute; that it appeared that a certain Champmathieu had that ill luck, and that, as regards himself, being present in the galleys in the person of that Champmathieu, present in society under the name of M. Madeleine, he had nothing more to fear, provided that he did not prevent men from sealing over the head of that Champmathieu this stone of infamy which, like the stone of the sepulchre, falls once, never to rise again."

All this was so strange and so violent, that there suddenly took place in him that indescribable movement, which no man feels more than two or three times in the course of his life, a sort of convulsion of the conscience which stirs up all that there is doubtful in the heart, which is composed of irony, of joy, and of despair, and which may be called an outburst of inward laughter.

He hastily relighted his candle.

"Well, what then?" he said to himself; "what am I afraid of?

What is there in all that for me to think about? I am safe; all is over. I had but one partly open door through which my past might invade my life, and behold that door is walled up forever! That Javert, who has been annoying me so long; that terrible instinct which seemed to have divined me, which had divined me — good God! and which followed me everywhere; that frightful hunting-dog, always making a point at me, is thrown off the scent, engaged elsewhere, absolutely turned from the trail: henceforth he is satisfied; he will leave me in peace; he has his Jean Valjean. Who knows? it is even probable that he will wish to leave town! And all this has been brought about without any aid from me, and I count for nothing in it! Ah! but where is the misfortune in this? Upon my honor, people would think, to see me, that some catastrophe had happened to me! After all, if it does bring harm to some one, that is not my fault in the least: it is Providence which has done it all; it is because it wishes it so to be, evidently. Have I the right to disarrange what it has arranged? What do I ask now? Why should I meddle? It does not concern me; what! I am not satisfied: but what more do I want? The goal to which I have aspired for so many years, the dream of my nights, the object of my prayers to Heaven, — security, — I have now attained; it is God who wills it; I can do nothing against the will of God, and why does God will it? In order that I may continue what I have begun, that I may do good, that I may one day be a grand and encouraging example, that it may be said at last, that a little happiness has been attached to the penance which I have undergone, and to that virtue to which I have returned. Really, I do not understand why I was afraid, a little while ago, to enter the house of that good curé, and to ask his advice; this is evidently what he would have said to me: It is settled; let things take their course; let the good God do as he likes!"

Thus did he address himself in the depths of his own conscience, bending over what may be called his own abyss; he rose from his chair, and began to pace the room: "Come," said he, "let us think no more about it; my resolve is taken!" but he felt no joy.

Quite the reverse.

One can no more prevent thought from recurring to an idea than one can the sea from returning to the shore: the sailor calls it the tide; the guilty man calls it remorse; God upheaves the soul as he does the ocean.

After the expiration of a few moments, do what he would, he resumed the gloomy dialogue in which it was he who spoke and he who listened, saying that which he would have preferred to ignore, and listened to that which he would have preferred not to hear, yielding to that mysterious power which said to him: "Think!" as it said to another condemned man, two thousand years ago, "March on!"

Before proceeding further, and in order to make ourselves fully understood, let us insist upon one necessary observation.

It is certain that people do talk to themselves; there is no living being who has not done it. It may even be said that the word is never a more magnificent mystery than when it goes from thought to conscience within a man, and when it returns from conscience to thought; it is in this sense only that the words so often employed in this chapter, he said, he exclaimed, must be understood; one speaks to one's self, talks to one's self, exclaims to one's self without breaking the external silence; there is a great tumult; everything about us talks except the mouth. The realities of the soul are none the less realities because they are not visible and palpable.

So he asked himself where he stood. He interrogated himself upon that "settled resolve." He confessed to himself that all that he had just arranged in his mind was monstrous, that "to let things take their course, to let the good God do as he liked," was simply horrible; to allow this error of fate and of men to be carried out, not to hinder it, to lend himself to it through his silence, to do nothing, in short, was to do everything! that this was hypocritical baseness in the last degree! that it was a base, cowardly, sneaking, abject, hideous crime!

For the first time in eight years, the wretched man had just tasted the bitter savor of an evil thought and of an evil action.

He spit it out with disgust.

He continued to question himself. He asked himself severely what he had meant by this, "My object is attained!" He declared to himself that his life really had an object; but what object? To conceal his name? To deceive the police? Was it for so petty a thing that he had done all that he had done? Had he not another and a grand object, which was the true one — to save, not his person, but his soul; to become honest and good once more; to be a just man? Was it not that above all, that alone, which he had always desired, which the Bishop had enjoined upon him — to shut the door on his past? But he was not shutting it! great God! he was re-opening it by committing an infamous action! He was becoming a thief once more, and the most odious of thieves! He was robbing another of his existence, his life, his peace, his place in the sunshine. He was becoming an assassin. He was murdering, morally murdering, a wretched man. He was inflicting on him that frightful living death, that death beneath the open sky, which is called the galleys. On the other hand, to surrender himself to save that man, struck down with so melancholy an error, to resume his own name, to become once more, out of duty, the convict Jean Valjean, that was, in truth, to achieve his resurrection, and to close forever that hell whence he had just emerged; to fall back there in appearance was to escape from it in reality. This must be done! He had done nothing if he did not do all this; his whole life was useless; all his penitence was wasted. There was no longer any need of saying, "What is the use?" He felt that the Bishop was there, that the Bishop was present all the more because he was dead, that the Bishop was gazing fixedly at him, that henceforth Mayor Madeleine, with all his virtues, would be abominable to him, and that the convict Jean Valjean would be pure and admirable in his sight; that men beheld his mask, but that the Bishop saw his face; that men saw his life, but that the Bishop beheld his conscience. So he must go to Arras, deliver the false Jean Valjean, and denounce the real one. Alas! that was the greatest of sacrifices, the most poignant of victories, the last step to take; but it must be done. Sad fate! he would enter into sanctity only in the eyes of God when he returned to infamy in the eyes of men.

"Well", said he, "let us decide upon this; let us do our duty; let us save this man." He uttered these words aloud, without perceiving that he was speaking aloud.

He took his books, verified them, and put them in order. He flung in the fire a bundle of bills which he had against petty and embarrassed tradesmen. He wrote and sealed a letter, and on the envelope it might have been read, had there been any one in his chamber at the moment, To Monsieur Laffitte, Banker, Rue d'Artois, Paris. He drew from his secretary a pocket-book which contained several bank-notes and the passport of which he had made use that same year when he went to the elections.

Any one who had seen him during the execution of these various acts, into which there entered such grave thought, would have had no suspicion of what was going on within him. Only occasionally did his lips move; at other times he raised his head and fixed his gaze upon some point of the wall, as though there existed at that point something which he wished to elucidate or interrogate.

When he had finished the letter to M. Laffitte, he put it into his pocket, together with the pocket-book, and began his walk once more.

His revery had not swerved from its course. He continued to see his duty clearly, written in luminous letters, which flamed before his eyes and changed its place as he altered the direction of his glance:

"Go! Tell your name! Denounce yourself!"

In the same way he beheld, as though they had passed before him in visible forms, the two ideas which had, up to that time, formed the double rule of his soul, — the concealment of his name, the sanctification of his life. For the first time they appeared to him as absolutely distinct, and he perceived the distance which separated them. He recognized the fact that one of these ideas was, necessarily, good, while the other might become bad; that the first was self-devotion, and that the other was personality; that the one said, my neighbor, and that the other said, myself; that one emanated from the light, and the other from darkness.

They were antagonistic. He saw them in conflict. In proportion as he meditated, they grew before the eyes of his spirit. They had now attained colossal statures, and it seemed to him that he beheld within himself, in that infinity of which we were recently speaking, in the midst of the darkness and the lights, a goddess and a giant contending.

He was filled with terror; but it seemed to him that the good thought was getting the upper hand.

He felt that he was on the brink of the second decisive crisis of his conscience and of his destiny; that the Bishop had marked the first phase of his new life, and that Champmathieu marked the second. After the grand crisis, the grand test.

But the fever, allayed for an instant, gradually resumed possession of him. A thousand thoughts traversed his mind, but they continued to fortify him in his resolution.

One moment he said to himself that he was, perhaps, taking the matter too keenly; that, after all, this Champmathieu was not interesting, and that he had actually been guilty of theft.

He answered himself: "If this man has, indeed, stolen a few apples, that means a month in prison. It is a long way from that to the galleys. And who knows? Did he steal? Has it been proved? The name of Jean Valjean overwhelms him, and seems to dispense with proofs. Do not the attorneys for the Crown always proceed in this manner? He is supposed to be a thief because he is known to be a convict."

In another instant the thought had occurred to him that, when he denounced himself, the heroism of his deed might, perhaps, be taken into consideration, and his honest life for the last seven years, and what he had done for the district, and that they would have mercy on him.

But this supposition vanished very quickly, and he smiled bitterly as he remembered that the theft of the forty sous from little Gervais put him in the position of a man guilty of a second offence after conviction, that this affair would certainly come up, and, according to the precise terms of the law, would render him liable to penal servitude for life.

He turned aside from all illusions, detached himself more and more from earth, and sought strength and consolation elsewhere. He told himself that he must do his duty; that perhaps he should not be more unhappy after doing his duty than after having avoided it; that if he allowed things to take their own course, if he remained at Montreuil-sur-Mer, his consideration, his good name, his good works, the deference and veneration paid to him, his charity, his wealth, his popularity, his virtue, would be seasoned with a crime. And what would be the taste of all these holy things when bound up with this hideous thing? while, if he accomplished his sacrifice, a celestial idea would be mingled with the galleys, the post, the iron necklet, the green cap, unceasing toil, and pitiless shame.

At length he told himself that it must be so, that his destiny was thus allotted, that he had not authority to alter the arrangements made on high, that, in any case, he must make his choice: virtue without and abomination within, or holiness within and infamy without.

The stirring up of these lugubrious ideas did not cause his courage to fail, but his brain grow weary. He began to think of other things, of indifferent matters, in spite of himself.

The veins in his temples throbbed violently; he still paced to and fro; midnight sounded first from the parish church, then from the town-hall; he counted the twelve strokes of the two clocks, and compared the sounds of the two bells; he recalled in this connection the fact that, a few days previously, he had seen in an ironmonger's shop an ancient clock for sale, upon which was written the name, Antoine-Albin de Romainville.

He was cold; he lighted a small fire; it did not occur to him to close the window.

In the meantime he had relapsed into his stupor; he was obliged to make a tolerably vigorous effort to recall what had been the subject of his thoughts before midnight had struck; he finally succeeded in doing this.

"Ah! yes," he said to himself, "I had resolved to inform against myself."

And then, all of a sudden, he thought of Fantine.

"Hold!" said he, "and what about that poor woman?"

Here a fresh crisis declared itself.

Fantine, by appearing thus abruptly in his revery, produced the effect of an unexpected ray of light; it seemed to him as though everything about him were undergoing a change of aspect: he exclaimed:

"Ah! but I have hitherto considered no one but myself; it is proper for me to hold my tongue or to denounce myself, to conceal my person or to save my soul, to be a despicable and respected magistrate, or an infamous and venerable convict; it is I, it is always I and nothing but I: but, good God! all this is egotism; these are diverse forms of egotism, but it is egotism all the same. What if I were to think a little about others? The highest holiness is to think of others; come, let us examine the matter. The I excepted, the I effaced, the I forgotten, what would be the result of all this? What if I denounce myself? I am arrested; this Champmathieu is released; I am put back in the galleys; that is well — and what then? What is going on here? Ah! here is a country, a town, here are factories, an industry, workers, both men and women, aged grandsires, children, poor people! All this I have created; all these I provide with their living; everywhere where there is a smoking chimney, it is I who have placed the brand on the hearth and meat in the pot; I have created ease, circulation, credit; before me there was nothing; I have elevated, vivified, informed with life, fecundated, stimulated, enriched the whole country-side; lacking me, the soul is lacking; I take myself off, everything dies: and this woman, who has suffered so much, who possesses so many merits in spite of her fall; the cause of all whose misery I have unwittingly been! And that child whom I meant to go in search of, whom I have promised to her mother; do I not also owe something to this woman, in reparation for the evil which I have done her? If I disappear, what happens? The mother dies; the child becomes what it can; that is what will take place, if I denounce myself. If I do not denounce myself? come, let us see how it will be if I do not denounce myself."

After putting this question to himself, he paused; he seemed to undergo a momentary hesitation and trepidation; but it did not last long, and he answered himself calmly:

"Well, this man is going to the galleys; it is true, but what the deuce! he has stolen! There is no use in my saying that he has not been guilty of theft, for he has! I remain here; I go on: in ten years I shall have made ten millions; I scatter them over the country; I have nothing of my own; what is that to me? It is not for myself that I am doing it; the prosperity of all goes on augmenting; industries are aroused and animated; factories and shops are multiplied; families, a hundred families, a thousand families, are happy; the district becomes populated; villages spring up where there were only farms before; farms rise where there was nothing; wretchedness disappears, and with wretchedness debauchery, prostitution, theft, murder; all vices disappear, all crimes: and this poor mother rears her child; and behold a whole country rich and honest! Ah! I was a fool! I was absurd! what was that I was saying about denouncing myself? I really must pay attention and not be precipitate about anything. What! because it would have pleased me to play the grand and generous; this is melodrama, after all; because I should have thought of no one but myself, the idea! for the sake of saving from a punishment, a trifle exaggerated, perhaps, but just at bottom, no one knows whom, a thief, a good-for-nothing, evidently, a whole country-side must perish! a poor woman must die in the hospital! a poor little girl must die in the street! like dogs; ah, this is abominable! And without the mother even having seen her child once more, almost without the child's having known her mother; and all that for the sake of an old wretch of an apple-thief who, most assuredly, has deserved the galleys for something else, if not for that; fine scruples, indeed, which save a guilty man and sacrifice the innocent, which save an old vagabond who has only a few years to live at most, and who will not be more unhappy in the galleys than in his hovel, and which sacrifice a whole population, mothers, wives, children. This poor little Cosette who has no one in the world but me, and who is, no doubt, blue with cold at this moment in the den of those Thenardiers; those people

are rascals; and I was going to neglect my duty towards all these poor creatures; and I was going off to denounce myself; and I was about to commit that unspeakable folly! Let us put it at the worst: suppose that there is a wrong action on my part in this, and that my conscience will reproach me for it some day, to accept, for the good of others, these reproaches which weigh only on myself; this evil action which compromises my soul alone; in that lies self-sacrifice; in that alone there is virtue."

He rose and resumed his march; this time, he seemed to be content.

Diamonds are found only in the dark places of the earth; truths are found only in the depths of thought. It seemed to him, that, after having descended into these depths, after having long groped among the darkest of these shadows, he had at last found one of these diamonds, one of these truths, and that he now held it in his hand, and he was dazzled as he gazed upon it.

"Yes," he thought, "this is right; I am on the right road; I have the solution; I must end by holding fast to something; my resolve is taken; let things take their course; let us no longer vacillate; let us no longer hang back; this is for the interest of all, not for my own; I am Madeleine, and Madeleine I remain. Woe to the man who is Jean Valjean! I am no longer he; I do not know that man; I no longer know anything; it turns out that some one is Jean Valjean at the present moment; let him look out for himself; that does not concern me; it is a fatal name which was floating abroad in the night; if it halts and descends on a head, so much the worse for that head."

He looked into the little mirror which hung above his chimney-piece, and said:

"Hold! it has relieved me to come to a decision; I am quite another man now."

He proceeded a few paces further, then he stopped short.

"Come!" he said, "I must not flinch before any of the consequences of the resolution which I have once adopted; there are still threads which attach me to that Jean Valjean; they must be broken; in this very room there are objects which would betray

me, dumb things which would bear witness against me; it is settled; all these things must disappear."

He fumbled in his pocket, drew out his purse, opened it, and took out a small key; he inserted the key in a lock whose aperture could hardly be seen, so hidden was it in the most sombre tones of the design which covered the wall-paper; a secret receptacle opened, a sort of false cupboard constructed in the angle between the wall and the chimney-piece; in this hiding-place there were some rags — a blue linen blouse, an old pair of trousers, an old knapsack, and a huge thorn cudgel shod with iron at both ends. Those who had seen Jean Valjean at the epoch when he passed through Digne in October, 1815, could easily have recognized all the pieces of this miserable outfit.

He had preserved them as he had preserved the silver candlesticks, in order to remind himself continually of his starting-point, but he had concealed all that came from the galleys, and he had allowed the candlesticks which came from the Bishop to be seen.

He cast a furtive glance towards the door, as though he feared that it would open in spite of the bolt which fastened it; then, with a quick and abrupt movement, he took the whole in his arms at once, without bestowing so much as a glance on the things which he had so religiously and so perilously preserved for so many years, and flung them all, rags, cudgel, knapsack, into the fire.

He closed the false cupboard again, and with redoubled precautions, henceforth unnecessary, since it was now empty, he concealed the door behind a heavy piece of furniture, which he pushed in front of it.

After the lapse of a few seconds, the room and the opposite wall were lighted up with a fierce, red, tremulous glow. Everything was on fire; the thorn cudgel snapped and threw out sparks to the middle of the chamber.

As the knapsack was consumed, together with the hideous rags which it contained, it revealed something which sparkled in the ashes. By bending over, one could have readily recognized a coin, — no doubt the forty-sou piece stolen from the little Savoyard.

He did not look at the fire, but paced back and forth with the

"He seized the two candle-sticks..." (p. 125)

same step.

All at once his eye fell on the two silver candlesticks, which shone vaguely on the chimney-piece, through the glow.

"Hold!" he thought; "the whole of Jean Valjean is still in them. They must be destroyed also."

He seized the two candlesticks.

There was still fire enough to allow of their being put out of shape, and converted into a sort of unrecognizable bar of metal.

He bent over the hearth and warmed himself for a moment. He felt a sense of real comfort. "How good warmth is!" said he.

He stirred the live coals with one of the candlesticks.

A minute more, and they were both in the fire.

At that moment it seemed to him that he heard a voice within him shouting: "Jean Valjean! Jean Valjean!"

His hair rose upright: he became like a man who is listening to some terrible thing.

"Yes, that's it! finish!" said the voice. "Complete what you are about! Destroy these candlesticks! Annihilate this souvenir! Forget the Bishop! Forget everything! Destroy this Champmathieu, do! That is right! Applaud yourself! So it is settled, resolved, fixed, agreed: here is an old man who does not know what is wanted of him, who has, perhaps, done nothing, an innocent man, whose whole misfortune lies in your name, upon whom your name weighs like a crime, who is about to be taken for you, who will be condemned, who will finish his days in abjectness and horror. That is good! Be an honest man yourself; remain Monsieur le Maire; remain honorable and honored; enrich the town; nourish the indigent; rear the orphan; live happy, virtuous, and admired; and, during this time, while you are here in the midst of joy and light, there will be a man who will wear your red blouse, who will bear your name in ignominy, and who will drag your chain in the galleys. Yes, it is well arranged thus. Ah, wretch!"

The perspiration streamed from his brow. He fixed a haggard eye on the candlesticks. But that within him which had spoken had not finished. The voice continued:

"Jean Valjean, there will be around you many voices, which will

make a great noise, which will talk very loud, and which will bless you, and only one which no one will hear, and which will curse you in the dark. Well! listen, infamous man! All those benedictions will fall back before they reach heaven, and only the malediction will ascend to God."

This voice, feeble at first, and which had proceeded from the most obscure depths of his conscience, had gradually become startling and formidable, and he now heard it in his very ear. It seemed to him that it had detached itself from him, and that it was now speaking outside of him. He thought that he heard the last words so distinctly, that he glanced around the room in a sort of terror.

"Is there any one here?" he demanded aloud, in utter bewilderment.

Then he resumed, with a laugh which resembled that of an idiot:

"How stupid I am! There can be no one!"

There was some one; but the person who was there was of those whom the human eye cannot see.

He placed the candlesticks on the chimney-piece.

Then he resumed his monotonous and lugubrious tramp, which troubled the dreams of the sleeping man beneath him, and awoke him with a start.

This tramping to and fro soothed and at the same time intoxicated him. It sometimes seems, on supreme occasions, as though people moved about for the purpose of asking advice of everything that they may encounter by change of place. After the lapse of a few minutes he no longer knew his position.

He now recoiled in equal terror before both the resolutions at which he had arrived in turn. The two ideas which counselled him appeared to him equally fatal. What a fatality! What conjunction that that Champmathieu should have been taken for him; to be overwhelmed by precisely the means which Providence seemed to have employed, at first, to strengthen his position!

There was a moment when he reflected on the future. Denounce himself, great God! Deliver himself up! With immense despair he

faced all that he should be obliged to leave, all that he should be obliged to take up once more. He should have to bid farewell to that existence which was so good, so pure, so radiant, to the respect of all, to honor, to liberty. He should never more stroll in the fields; he should never more hear the birds sing in the month of May; he should never more bestow alms on the little children; he should never more experience the sweetness of having glances of gratitude and love fixed upon him; he should quit that house which he had built, that little chamber! Everything seemed charming to him at that moment. Never again should he read those books; never more should he write on that little table of white wood; his old portress, the only servant whom he kept, would never more bring him his coffee in the morning. Great God! instead of that, the convict gang, the iron necklet, the red waistcoat, the chain on his ankle, fatigue, the cell, the camp bed, all those horrors which he knew so well! At his age, after having been what he was! If he were only young again! but to be addressed in his old age as "thou" by any one who pleased; to be searched by the convict-guard; to receive the galley-sergeant's cudgellings; to wear iron-bound shoes on his bare feet; to have to stretch out his leg night and morning to the hammer of the roundsman who visits the gang; to submit to the curiosity of strangers, who would be told: "That man yonder is the famous Jean Valjean, who was mayor of Montreuil-sur-Mer"; and at night, dripping with perspiration, overwhelmed with lassitude, their green caps drawn over their eyes, to remount, two by two, the ladder staircase of the galleys beneath the sergeant's whip. Oh, what misery! Can destiny, then, be as malicious as an intelligent being, and become as monstrous as the human heart?

And do what he would, he always fell back upon the heart-rending dilemma which lay at the foundation of his revery: "Should he remain in paradise and become a demon? Should he return to hell and become an angel?"

What was to be done? Great God! what was to be done?

The torment from which he had escaped with so much difficulty was unchained afresh within him. His ideas began to

grow confused once more; they assumed a kind of stupefied and mechanical quality which is peculiar to despair. The name of Romainville recurred incessantly to his mind, with the two verses of a song which he had heard in the past. He thought that Romainville was a little grove near Paris, where young lovers go to pluck lilacs in the month of April.

He wavered outwardly as well as inwardly. He walked like a little child who is permitted to toddle alone.

At intervals, as he combated his lassitude, he made an effort to recover the mastery of his mind. He tried to put to himself, for the last time, and definitely, the problem over which he had, in a manner, fallen prostrate with fatigue: Ought he to denounce himself? Ought he to hold his peace? He could not manage to see anything distinctly. The vague aspects of all the courses of reasoning which had been sketched out by his meditations quivered and vanished, one after the other, into smoke. He only felt that, to whatever course of action he made up his mind, something in him must die, and that of necessity, and without his being able to escape the fact; that he was entering a sepulchre on the right hand as much as on the left; that he was passing through a death agony, — the agony of his happiness, or the agony of his virtue.

Alas! all his resolution had again taken possession of him. He was no further advanced than at the beginning.

Thus did this unhappy soul struggle in its anguish. Eighteen hundred years before this unfortunate man, the mysterious Being in whom are summed up all the sanctities and all the sufferings of humanity had also long thrust aside with his hand, while the olive-trees quivered in the wild wind of the infinite, the terrible cup which appeared to Him dripping with darkness and overflowing with shadows in the depths all studded with stars.

Three o'clock in the morning had just struck, and he had been walking thus for five hours, almost uninterruptedly, when he at length allowed himself to drop into his chair. …

He woke. He was icy cold. A wind which was chill like the breeze of dawn was rattling the leaves of the window, which had

been left open on their hinges. The fire was out. The candle was nearing its end. It was still black night.

He rose, he went to the window. There were no stars in the sky even yet.

From his window the yard of the house and the street were visible. A sharp, harsh noise, which made him drop his eyes, resounded from the earth.

Below him he perceived two red stars, whose rays lengthened and shortened in a singular manner through the darkness.

As his thoughts were still half immersed in the mists of sleep, "Hold!" said he, "there are no stars in the sky. They are on earth now."

But this confusion vanished; a second sound similar to the first roused him thoroughly; he looked and recognized the fact that these two stars were the lanterns of a carriage. By the light which they cast he was able to distinguish the form of this vehicle. It was a tilbury harnessed to a small white horse. The noise which he had heard was the trampling of the horse's hoofs on the pavement.

"What vehicle is this?" he said to himself. "Who is coming here so early in the morning?"

At that moment there came a light tap on the door of his chamber.

He shuddered from head to foot, and cried in a terrible voice:

"Who is there?"

Some one said:

"I, Monsieur le Maire."

He recognized the voice of the old woman who was his portress.

"Well!" he replied, "what is it?"

"Monsieur le Maire, it is just five o'clock in the morning."

"What is that to me?"

"The cabriolet is here, Monsieur le Maire."

"What cabriolet?"

"The tilbury."

"What tilbury?"

"Did not Monsieur le Maire order a tilbury?"

"No," said he.

"The coachman says that he has come for Monsieur le Maire."

"What coachman?"

"M. Scaufflaire's coachman."

"M. Scaufflaire?"

That name sent a shudder over him, as though a flash of lightning had passed in front of his face.

"Ah! yes," he resumed; "M. Scaufflaire!"

If the old woman could have seen him at that moment, she would have been frightened.

A tolerably long silence ensued. He examined the flame of the candle with a stupid air, and from around the wick he took some of the burning wax, which he rolled between his fingers. The old woman waited for him. She even ventured to uplift her voice once more:

"What am I to say, Monsieur le Maire?"

"Say that it is well, and that I am coming down."

The posting service from Arras to Montreuil-sur-Mer was still operated at this period by small mail-wagons of the time of the Empire. These mail-wagons were two-wheeled cabriolets, upholstered inside with fawn-colored leather, hung on springs, and having but two seats, one for the postboy, the other for the traveller. The wheels were armed with those long, offensive axles which keep other vehicles at a distance, and which may still be seen on the road in Germany. The despatch box, an immense oblong coffer, was placed behind the vehicle and formed a part of it. This coffer was painted black, and the cabriolet yellow.

These vehicles, which have no counterparts nowadays, had something distorted and hunchbacked about them; and when one saw them passing in the distance, and climbing up some road to the horizon, they resembled the insects which are called, I think, termites, and which, though with but little corselet, drag a great train behind them. But they travelled at a very rapid rate. The post-wagon which set out from Arras at one o'clock every night, after the mail from Paris had passed, arrived at Montreuil-sur-Mer

a little before five o'clock in the morning.

That night the wagon which was descending to Montreuil-sur-Mer by the Hesdin road, collided at the corner of a street, just as it was entering the town, with a little tilbury harnessed to a white horse, which was going in the opposite direction, and in which there was but one person, a man enveloped in a mantle. The wheel of the tilbury received quite a violent shock. The postman shouted to the man to stop, but the traveller paid no heed and pursued his road at full gallop.

"That man is in a devilish hurry!" said the postman.

The man thus hastening on was the one whom we have just seen struggling in convulsions which are certainly deserving of pity.

Whither was he going? He could not have told. Why was he hastening? He did not know. He was driving at random, straight ahead. Whither? To Arras, no doubt; but he might have been going elsewhere as well. At times he was conscious of it, and he shuddered. He plunged into the night as into a gulf. Something urged him forward; something drew him on. No one could have told what was taking place within him; every one will understand it. What man is there who has not entered, at least once in his life, into that obscure cavern of the unknown?

However, he had resolved on nothing, decided nothing, formed no plan, done nothing. None of the actions of his conscience had been decisive. He was, more than ever, as he had been at the first moment.

Why was he going to Arras?

He repeated what he had already said to himself when he had hired Scaufflaire's cabriolet: that, whatever the result was to be, there was no reason why he should not see with his own eyes, and judge of matters for himself; that this was even prudent; that he must know what took place; that no decision could be arrived at without having observed and scrutinized; that one made mountains out of everything from a distance; that, at any rate, when he should have seen that Champmathieu, some wretch, his conscience would probably be greatly relieved to allow him to

go to the galleys in his stead; that Javert would indeed be there; and that Brevet, that Chenildieu, that Cochepaille, old convicts who had known him; but they certainly would not recognize him; — bah! what an idea! that Javert was a hundred leagues from suspecting the truth; that all conjectures and all suppositions were fixed on Champmathieu, and that there is nothing so headstrong as suppositions and conjectures; that accordingly there was no danger.

That it was, no doubt, a dark moment, but that he should emerge from it; that, after all, he held his destiny, however bad it might be, in his own hand; that he was master of it. He clung to this thought.

At bottom, to tell the whole truth, he would have preferred not to go to Arras.

Nevertheless, he was going thither.

As he meditated, he whipped up his horse, which was proceeding at that fine, regular, and even trot which accomplishes two leagues and a half an hour.

In proportion as the cabriolet advanced, he felt something within him draw back.

At daybreak he was in the open country; the town of Montreuil-sur-Mer lay far behind him. He watched the horizon grow white; he stared at all the chilly figures of a winter's dawn as they passed before his eyes, but without seeing them. The morning has its spectres as well as the evening. He did not see them; but without his being aware of it, and by means of a sort of penetration which was almost physical, these black silhouettes of trees and of hills added some gloomy and sinister quality to the violent state of his soul.

Each time that he passed one of those isolated dwellings which sometimes border on the highway, he said to himself, "And yet there are people there within who are sleeping!"

The trot of the horse, the bells on the harness, the wheels on the road, produced a gentle, monotonous noise. These things are charming when one is joyous, and lugubrious when one is sad.

It was broad daylight when he arrived at Hesdin. He halted in

front of the inn, to allow the horse a breathing spell, and to have him given some oats.

The horse belonged, as Scaufflaire had said, to that small race of the Boulonnais, which has too much head, too much belly, and not enough neck and shoulders, but which has a broad chest, a large crupper, thin, fine legs, and solid hoofs — a homely, but a robust and healthy race. The excellent beast had travelled five leagues in two hours, and had not a drop of sweat on his loins.

He did not get out of the tilbury. The stableman who brought the oats suddenly bent down and examined the left wheel.

"Are you going far in this condition?" said the man.

He replied, with an air of not having roused himself from his revery:

"Why?"

"Have you come from a great distance?" went on the man.

"Five leagues."

"Ah!"

"Why do you say, 'Ah?' "

The man bent down once more, was silent for a moment, with his eyes fixed on the wheel; then he rose erect and said:

"Because, though this wheel has travelled five leagues, it certainly will not travel another quarter of a league."

He sprang out of the tilbury.

"What is that you say, my friend?"

"I say that it is a miracle that you should have travelled five leagues without you and your horse rolling into some ditch on the highway. Just see here!"

The wheel really had suffered serious damage. The shock administered by the mail-wagon had split two spokes and strained the hub, so that the nut no longer held firm.

"My friend," he said to the stableman, "is there a wheelwright here?"

"Certainly, sir."

"Do me the service to go and fetch him."

"He is only a step from here. Hey! Master Bourgaillard!"

Master Bourgaillard, the wheelwright, was standing on his own

threshold. He came, examined the wheel and made a grimace like a surgeon when the latter thinks a limb is broken.

"Can you repair this wheel immediately?"

"Yes, sir."

"When can I set out again?"

"Tomorrow."

"Tomorrow!"

"There is a long day's work on it. Are you in a hurry, sir?"

"In a very great hurry. I must set out again in an hour at the latest."

"Impossible, sir."

"I will pay whatever you ask."

"Impossible."

"Well, in two hours, then."

"Impossible today. Two new spokes and a hub must be made. Monsieur will not be able to start before tomorrow morning."

"The matter cannot wait until tomorrow. What if you were to replace this wheel instead of repairing it?"

"How so?"

"You are a wheelwright?"

"Certainly, sir."

"Have you not a wheel that you can sell me? Then I could start again at once."

"A spare wheel?"

"Yes."

"I have no wheel on hand that would fit your cabriolet. Two wheels make a pair. Two wheels cannot be put together haphazard."

"In that case, sell me a pair of wheels."

"Not all wheels fit all axles, sir."

"Try, nevertheless."

"It is useless, sir. I have nothing to sell but cartwheels. We are but a poor country here."

"Have you a cabriolet that you can let me have?"

The wheelwright had seen at the first glance that the tilbury was a hired vehicle. He shrugged his shoulders.

"You treat the cabriolets that people let you so well! If I had one, I would not let it to you!"

"Well, sell it to me, then."

"I have none."

"What! not even a spring-cart? I am not hard to please, as you see."

"We live in a poor country. There is, in truth," added the wheelwright, "an old calash under the shed yonder, which belongs to a bourgeois of the town, who gave it to me to take care of, and who only uses it on the thirty-sixth of the month — never, that is to say. I might let that to you, for what matters it to me? But the bourgeois must not see it pass — and then, it is a calash; it would require two horses."

"I will take two post-horses."

"Where is Monsieur going?"

"To Arras."

"And Monsieur wishes to reach there today?"

"Yes, of course."

"By taking two post-horses?"

"Why not?"

"Does it make any difference whether Monsieur arrives at four o'clock tomorrow morning?"

"Certainly not."

"There is one thing to be said about that, you see, by taking post-horses — Monsieur has his passport?"

"Yes."

"Well, by taking post-horses, Monsieur cannot reach Arras before tomorrow. We are on a cross-road. The relays are badly served, the horses are in the fields. The season for ploughing is just beginning; heavy teams are required, and horses are seized upon everywhere, from the post as well as elsewhere. Monsieur will have to wait three or four hours at the least at every relay. And, then, they drive at a walk. There are many hills to ascend."

"Come then, I will go on horseback. Unharness the cabriolet. Some one can surely sell me a saddle in the neighborhood."

"Without doubt. But will this horse bear the saddle?"

"That is true; you remind me of that; he will not bear it."

"Then — "

"But I can surely hire a horse in the village?"

"A horse to travel to Arras at one stretch?"

"Yes."

"That would require such a horse as does not exist in these parts. You would have to buy it to begin with, because no one knows you. But you will not find one for sale nor to let, for five hundred francs, or for a thousand."

"What am I to do?"

"The best thing is to let me repair the wheel like an honest man, and set out on your journey tomorrow."

"Tomorrow will be too late."

"The deuce!"

"Is there not a mail-wagon which runs to Arras? When will it pass?"

"Tonight. Both the posts pass at night; the one going as well as the one coming."

"What! It will take you a day to mend this wheel?"

"A day, and a good long one."

"If you set two men to work?"

"If I set ten men to work."

"What if the spokes were to be tied together with ropes?"

"That could be done with the spokes, not with the hub; and the felly is in a bad state, too."

"Is there any one in this village who lets out teams?"

"No."

"Is there another wheelwright?"

The stableman and the wheelwright replied in concert, with a toss of the head

"No."

He felt an immense joy.

It was evident that Providence was intervening. That it was it who had broken the wheel of the tilbury and who was stopping him on the road. He had not yielded to this sort of first summons; he had just made every possible effort to continue the journey; he

had loyally and scrupulously exhausted all means; he had been deterred neither by the season, nor fatigue, nor by the expense; he had nothing with which to reproach himself. If he went no further, that was no fault of his. It did not concern him further. It was no longer his fault. It was not the act of his own conscience, but the act of Providence.

He breathed again. He breathed freely and to the full extent of his lungs for the first time since Javert's visit. It seemed to him that the hand of iron which had held his heart in its grasp for the last twenty hours had just released him.

It seemed to him that God was for him now, and was manifesting Himself.

He said himself that he had done all he could, and that now he had nothing to do but retrace his steps quietly.

If his conversation with the wheelwright had taken place in a chamber of the inn, it would have had no witnesses, no one would have heard him, things would have rested there, and it is probable that we should not have had to relate any of the occurrences which the reader is about to peruse; but this conversation had taken place in the street. Any colloquy in the street inevitably attracts a crowd. There are always people who ask nothing better than to become spectators. While he was questioning the wheelwright, some people who were passing back and forth halted around them. After listening for a few minutes, a young lad, to whom no one had paid any heed, detached himself from the group and ran off.

At the moment when the traveller, after the inward deliberation which we have just described, resolved to retrace his steps, this child returned. He was accompanied by an old woman.

"Monsieur," said the woman, "my boy tells me that you wish to hire a cabriolet."

These simple words uttered by an old woman led by a child made the perspiration trickle down his limbs. He thought that he beheld the hand which had relaxed its grasp reappear in the darkness behind him, ready to seize him once more.

He answered:

"Yes, my good woman; I am in search of a cabriolet which I can hire."

And he hastened to add:

"But there is none in the place."

"Certainly there is," said the old woman.

"Where?" interpolated the wheelwright.

"At my house," replied the old woman.

He shuddered. The fatal hand had grasped him again.

The old woman really had in her shed a sort of basket spring-cart. The wheelwright and the stable-man, in despair at the prospect of the traveller escaping their clutches, interfered.

"It was a frightful old trap; it rests flat on the axle; it is an actual fact that the seats were suspended inside it by leather thongs; the rain came into it; the wheels were rusted and eaten with moisture; it would not go much further than the tilbury; a regular ramshackle old stage-wagon; the gentleman would make a great mistake if he trusted himself to it," etc., etc.

All this was true; but this trap, this ramshackle old vehicle, this thing, whatever it was, ran on its two wheels and could go to Arras.

He paid what was asked, left the tilbury with the wheelwright to be repaired, intending to reclaim it on his return, had the white horse put to the cart, climbed into it, and resumed the road which he had been travelling since morning.

At the moment when the cart moved off, he admitted that he had felt, a moment previously, a certain joy in the thought that he should not go whither he was now proceeding. He examined this joy with a sort of wrath, and found it absurd. Why should he feel joy at turning back? After all, he was taking this trip of his own free will. No one was forcing him to it.

And assuredly nothing would happen except what he should choose.

As he left Hesdin, he heard a voice shouting to him: "Stop! Stop!" He halted the cart with a vigorous movement which contained a feverish and convulsive element resembling hope.

It was the old woman's little boy.

"Monsieur," said the latter, "it was I who got the cart for you."

"Well?"

"You have not given me anything."

He who gave to all so readily thought this demand exorbitant and almost odious.

"Ah! it's you, you scamp?" said he; "you shall have nothing."

He whipped up his horse and set off at full speed.

He had lost a great deal of time at Hesdin. He wanted to make it good. The little horse was courageous, and pulled for two; but it was the month of February, there had been rain; the roads were bad. And then, it was no longer the tilbury. The cart was very heavy, and in addition, there were many ascents.

He took nearly four hours to go from Hesdin to Saint-Pol; four hours for five leagues.

At Saint-Pol he had the horse unharnessed at the first inn he came to and led to the stable; as he had promised Scaufflaire, he stood beside the manger while the horse was eating; he thought of sad and confusing things.

The inn-keeper's wife came to the stable.

"Does not Monsieur wish to breakfast?"

"Come, that is true; I even have a good appetite."

He followed the woman, who had a rosy, cheerful face; she led him to the public room where there were tables covered with waxed cloth.

"Make haste!" said he; "I must start again; I am in a hurry."

A big Flemish servant-maid placed his knife and fork in all haste; he looked at the girl with a sensation of comfort.

"That is what ailed me," he thought; "I had not breakfasted."

His breakfast was served; he seized the bread, took a mouthful, and then slowly replaced it on the table, and did not touch it again.

A carter was eating at another table; he said to this man:

"Why is their bread so bitter here?"

The carter was a German and did not understand him.

He returned to the stable and remained near the horse.

An hour later he had quitted Saint-Pol and was directing his course towards Tinques, which is only five leagues from Arras.

What did he do during this journey? Of what was he thinking? As in the morning, he watched the trees, the thatched roofs, the tilled fields pass by, and the way in which the landscape, broken at every turn of the road, vanished; this is a sort of contemplation which sometimes suffices to the soul, and almost relieves it from thought. What is more melancholy and more profound than to see a thousand objects for the first and the last time? To travel is to be born and to die at every instant; perhaps, in the vaguest region of his mind, he did make comparisons between the shifting horizon and our human existence: all the things of life are perpetually fleeing before us; the dark and bright intervals are intermingled; after a dazzling moment, an eclipse; we look, we hasten, we stretch out our hands to grasp what is passing; each event is a turn in the road, and, all at once, we are old; we feel a shock; all is black; we distinguish an obscure door; the gloomy horse of life, which has been drawing us halts, and we see a veiled and unknown person unharnessing amid the shadows.

Twilight was falling when the children who were coming out of school beheld this traveller enter Tinques; it is true that the days were still short; he did not halt at Tinques; as he emerged from the village, a laborer, who was mending the road with stones, raised his head and said to him:

"That horse is very much fatigued."

The poor beast was, in fact, going at a walk.

"Are you going to Arras?" added the road-mender.

"Yes."

"If you go on at that rate you will not arrive very early."

He stopped his horse, and asked the laborer:

"How far is it from here to Arras?"

"Nearly seven good leagues."

"How is that? the posting guide only says five leagues and a quarter."

"Ah!" returned the road-mender, "so you don't know that the road is under repair? You will find it barred a quarter of an hour

further on; there is no way to proceed further."

"Really?"

"You will take the road on the left, leading to Carency; you will cross the river; when you reach Camblin, you will turn to the right; that is the road to Mont-Saint-Eloy which leads to Arras."

"But it is night, and I shall lose my way."

"You do not belong in these parts?"

"No."

"And, besides, it is all cross-roads; stop! sir," resumed the road-mender; "shall I give you a piece of advice? your horse is tired; return to Tinques; there is a good inn there; sleep there; you can reach Arras tomorrow."

"I must be there this evening."

"That is different; but go to the inn all the same, and get an extra horse; the stable-boy will guide you through the cross-roads."

He followed the road-mender's advice, retraced his steps, and, half an hour later, he passed the same spot again, but this time at full speed, with a good horse to aid; a stable-boy, who called himself a postilion, was seated on the shaft of the cariole.

Still, he felt that he had lost time.

Night had fully come.

They turned into the cross-road; the way became frightfully bad; the cart lurched from one rut to the other; he said to the postilion:

"Keep at a trot, and you shall have a double fee."

In one of the jolts, the whiffle-tree broke.

"There's the whiffle-tree broken, sir," said the postilion; "I don't know how to harness my horse now; this road is very bad at night; if you wish to return and sleep at Tinques, we could be in Arras early to-morrow morning."

He replied, "Have you a bit of rope and a knife?"

"Yes, sir."

He cut a branch from a tree and made a whiffle-tree of it.

This caused another loss of twenty minutes; but they set out again at a gallop.

The plain was gloomy; low-hanging, black, crisp fogs crept

over the hills and wrenched themselves away like smoke: there were whitish gleams in the clouds; a strong breeze which blew in from the sea produced a sound in all quarters of the horizon, as of some one moving furniture; everything that could be seen assumed attitudes of terror. How many things shiver beneath these vast breaths of the night!

He was stiff with cold; he had eaten nothing since the night before; he vaguely recalled his other nocturnal trip in the vast plain in the neighborhood of Digne, eight years previously, and it seemed but yesterday.

The hour struck from a distant tower; he asked the boy:

"What time is it?"

"Seven o'clock, sir; we shall reach Arras at eight; we have but three leagues still to go."

At that moment, he for the first time indulged in this reflection, thinking it odd the while that it had not occurred to him sooner: that all this trouble which he was taking was, perhaps, useless; that he did not know so much as the hour of the trial; that he should, at least, have informed himself of that; that he was foolish to go thus straight ahead without knowing whether he would be of any service or not; then he sketched out some calculations in his mind: that, ordinarily, the sittings of the Court of Assizes began at nine o'clock in the morning; that it could not be a long affair; that the theft of the apples would be very brief; that there would then remain only a question of identity, four or five depositions, and very little for the lawyers to say; that he should arrive after all was over.

The postilion whipped up the horses; they had crossed the river and left Mont-Saint-Eloy behind them.

The night grew more profound.

But at that moment Fantine was joyous.

She had passed a very bad night; her cough was frightful; her fever had doubled in intensity; she had had dreams: in the morning, when the doctor paid his visit, she was delirious; he assumed an alarmed look, and ordered that he should be informed as soon as

M. Madeleine arrived.

All the morning she was melancholy, said but little, and laid plaits in her sheets, murmuring the while, in a low voice, calculations which seemed to be calculations of distances. Her eyes were hollow and staring. They seemed almost extinguished at intervals, then lighted up again and shone like stars. It seems as though, at the approach of a certain dark hour, the light of heaven fills those who are quitting the light of earth.

Each time that Sister Simplice asked her how she felt, she replied invariably, "Well. I should like to see M. Madeleine."

Some months before this, at the moment when Fantine had just lost her last modesty, her last shame, and her last joy, she was the shadow of herself; now she was the spectre of herself. Physical suffering had completed the work of moral suffering. This creature of five and twenty had a wrinkled brow, flabby cheeks, pinched nostrils, teeth from which the gums had receded, a leaden complexion, a bony neck, prominent shoulder-blades, frail limbs, a clayey skin, and her golden hair was growing out sprinkled with gray. Alas! how illness improvises old-age!

At mid-day the physician returned, gave some directions, inquired whether the mayor had made his appearance at the infirmary, and shook his head.

M. Madeleine usually came to see the invalid at three o'clock. As exactness is kindness, he was exact.

About half-past two, Fantine began to be restless. In the course of twenty minutes, she asked the nun more than ten times, "What time is it, sister?"

Three o'clock struck. At the third stroke, Fantine sat up in bed; she who could, in general, hardly turn over, joined her yellow, fleshless hands in a sort of convulsive clasp, and the nun heard her utter one of those profound sighs which seem to throw off dejection. Then Fantine turned and looked at the door.

No one entered; the door did not open.

She remained thus for a quarter of an hour, her eyes riveted on the door, motionless and apparently holding her breath. The sister dared not speak to her. The clock struck a quarter past three.

Fantine fell back on her pillow.

She said nothing, but began to plait the sheets once more.

Half an hour passed, then an hour, no one came; every time the clock struck, Fantine started up and looked towards the door, then fell back again.

Her thought was clearly perceptible, but she uttered no name, she made no complaint, she blamed no one. But she coughed in a melancholy way. One would have said that something dark was descending upon her. She was livid and her lips were blue. She smiled now and then.

Five o'clock struck. Then the sister heard her say, very low and gently, "He is wrong not to come to-day, since I am going away tomorrow."

Sister Simplice herself was surprised at M. Madeleine's delay.

In the meantime, Fantine was staring at the tester of her bed. She seemed to be endeavoring to recall something. All at once she began to sing in a voice as feeble as a breath. The nun listened. This is what Fantine was singing:

"Lovely things we will buy As we stroll the faubourgs through. Roses are pink, corn-flowers are blue, I love my love, corn-flowers are blue.

"Yestere'en the Virgin Mary came near my stove, in a broidered mantle clad, and said to me, 'Here, hide 'neath my veil the child whom you one day begged from me. Haste to the city, buy linen, buy a needle, buy thread.'

"Lovely things we will buy As we stroll the faubourgs through.

"Dear Holy Virgin, beside my stove I have set a cradle with ribbons decked. God may give me his loveliest star; I prefer the child thou hast granted me. 'Madame, what shall I do with this linen fine?' — 'Make of it clothes for thy new-born babe.'

"Roses are pink and corn-flowers are blue, I love my love, and corn-flowers are blue.

" 'Wash this linen.' — 'Where?' — 'In the stream. Make of it, soiling not, spoiling not, a petticoat fair with its bodice fine, which I will embroider and fill with flowers.' — 'Madame, the child is no

longer here; what is to be done?' — 'Then make of it a winding-sheet in which to bury me.'

"Lovely things we will buy As we stroll the faubourgs through, Roses are pink, corn-flowers are blue, I love my love, corn-flowers are blue."

This song was an old cradle romance with which she had, in former days, lulled her little Cosette to sleep, and which had never recurred to her mind in all the five years during which she had been parted from her child. She sang it in so sad a voice, and to so sweet an air, that it was enough to make any one, even a nun, weep. The sister, accustomed as she was to austerities, felt a tear spring to her eyes.

The clock struck six. Fantine did not seem to hear it. She no longer seemed to pay attention to anything about her.

Sister Simplice sent a serving-maid to inquire of the portress of the factory, whether the mayor had returned, and if he would not come to the infirmary soon. The girl returned in a few minutes.

Fantine was still motionless and seemed absorbed in her own thoughts.

The servant informed Sister Simplice in a very low tone, that the mayor had set out that morning before six o'clock, in a little tilbury harnessed to a white horse, cold as the weather was; that he had gone alone, without even a driver; that no one knew what road he had taken; that people said he had been seen to turn into the road to Arras; that others asserted that they had met him on the road to Paris. That when he went away he had been very gentle, as usual, and that he had merely told the portress not to expect him that night.

While the two women were whispering together, with their backs turned to Fantine's bed, the sister interrogating, the servant conjecturing, Fantine, with the feverish vivacity of certain organic maladies, which unite the free movements of health with the frightful emaciation of death, had raised herself to her knees in bed, with her shrivelled hands resting on the bolster, and her head thrust through the opening of the curtains, and was listening. All at once she cried:

"You are speaking of M. Madeleine! Why are you talking so low? What is he doing? Why does he not come?"

Her voice was so abrupt and hoarse that the two women thought they heard the voice of a man; they wheeled round in affright.

"Answer me!" cried Fantine.

The servant stammered:

"The portress told me that he could not come to-day."

"Be calm, my child," said the sister; "lie down again."

Fantine, without changing her attitude, continued in a loud voice, and with an accent that was both imperious and heart-rending:

"He cannot come? Why not? You know the reason. You are whispering it to each other there. I want to know it."

The servant-maid hastened to say in the nun's ear, "Say that he is busy with the city council."

Sister Simplice blushed faintly, for it was a lie that the maid had proposed to her.

On the other hand, it seemed to her that the mere communication of the truth to the invalid would, without doubt, deal her a terrible blow, and that this was a serious matter in Fantine's present state. Her flush did not last long; the sister raised her calm, sad eyes to Fantine, and said, "Monsieur le Maire has gone away."

Fantine raised herself and crouched on her heels in the bed: her eyes sparkled; indescribable joy beamed from that melancholy face.

"Gone!" she cried; "he has gone to get Cosette."

Then she raised her arms to heaven, and her white face became ineffable; her lips moved; she was praying in a low voice.

When her prayer was finished, "Sister," she said, "I am willing to lie down again; I will do anything you wish; I was naughty just now; I beg your pardon for having spoken so loud; it is very wrong to talk loudly; I know that well, my good sister, but, you see, I am very happy: the good God is good; M. Madeleine is good; just think! he has gone to Montfermeil to get my little Cosette."

She lay down again, with the nun's assistance, helped the nun to arrange her pillow, and kissed the little silver cross which she wore on her neck, and which Sister Simplice had given her.

"My child," said the sister, "try to rest now, and do not talk any more."

Fantine took the sister's hand in her moist hands, and the latter was pained to feel that perspiration.

"He set out this morning for Paris; in fact, he need not even go through Paris; Montfermeil is a little to the left as you come thence. Do you remember how he said to me yesterday, when I spoke to him of Cosette, Soon, soon? He wants to give me a surprise, you know! he made me sign a letter so that she could be taken from the Thenardiers; they cannot say anything, can they? they will give back Cosette, for they have been paid; the authorities will not allow them to keep the child since they have received their pay. Do not make signs to me that I must not talk, sister! I am extremely happy; I am doing well; I am not ill at all any more; I am going to see Cosette again; I am even quite hungry; it is nearly five years since I saw her last; you cannot imagine how much attached one gets to children, and then, she will be so pretty; you will see! If you only knew what pretty little rosy fingers she had! In the first place, she will have very beautiful hands; she had ridiculous hands when she was only a year old; like this! she must be a big girl now; she is seven years old; she is quite a young lady; I call her Cosette, but her name is really Euphrasie. Stop! this morning I was looking at the dust on the chimney-piece, and I had a sort of idea come across me, like that, that I should see Cosette again soon. Mon Dieu! how wrong it is not to see one's children for years! One ought to reflect that life is not eternal. Oh, how good M. le Maire is to go! it is very cold! it is true; he had on his cloak, at least? he will be here to-morrow, will he not? to-morrow will be a festival day; to-morrow morning, sister, you must remind me to put on my little cap that has lace on it. What a place that Montfermeil is! I took that journey on foot once; it was very long for me, but the diligences go very quickly! he will be here to-morrow with Cosette: how far is it from here to

Montfermeil?"

The sister, who had no idea of distances, replied, "Oh, I think that he will be here to-morrow."

"Tomorrow! tomorrow!" said Fantine, "I shall see Cosette tomorrow! you see, good sister of the good God, that I am no longer ill; I am mad; I could dance if any one wished it."

A person who had seen her a quarter of an hour previously would not have understood the change; she was all rosy now; she spoke in a lively and natural voice; her whole face was one smile; now and then she talked, she laughed softly; the joy of a mother is almost infantile.

"Well," resumed the nun, "now that you are happy, mind me, and do not talk any more."

Fantine laid her head on her pillow and said in a low voice: "Yes, lie down again; be good, for you are going to have your child; Sister Simplice is right; every one here is right."

And then, without stirring, without even moving her head, she began to stare all about her with wide-open eyes and a joyous air, and she said nothing more.

The sister drew the curtains together again, hoping that she would fall into a doze. Between seven and eight o'clock the doctor came; not hearing any sound, he thought Fantine was asleep, entered softly, and approached the bed on tiptoe; he opened the curtains a little, and, by the light of the taper, he saw Fantine's big eyes gazing at him.

She said to him, "She will be allowed to sleep beside me in a little bed, will she not, sir?"

The doctor thought that she was delirious. She added:

"See! there is just room."

The doctor took Sister Simplice aside, and she explained matters to him; that M. Madeleine was absent for a day or two, and that in their doubt they had not thought it well to undeceive the invalid, who believed that the mayor had gone to Montfermeil; that it was possible, after all, that her guess was correct: the doctor approved.

He returned to Fantine's bed, and she went on:

"You see, when she wakes up in the morning, I shall be able to say good morning to her, poor kitten, and when I cannot sleep at night, I can hear her asleep; her little gentle breathing will do me good."

"Give me your hand," said the doctor.

She stretched out her arm, and exclaimed with a laugh:

"Ah, hold! in truth, you did not know it; I am cured; Cosette will arrive to-morrow."

The doctor was surprised; she was better; the pressure on her chest had decreased; her pulse had regained its strength; a sort of life had suddenly supervened and reanimated this poor, worn-out creature.

"Doctor," she went on, "did the sister tell you that M. le Maire has gone to get that mite of a child?"

The doctor recommended silence, and that all painful emotions should be avoided; he prescribed an infusion of pure chinchona, and, in case the fever should increase again during the night, a calming potion. As he took his departure, he said to the sister:

"She is doing better; if good luck willed that the mayor should actually arrive to-morrow with the child, who knows? there are crises so astounding; great joy has been known to arrest maladies; I know well that this is an organic disease, and in an advanced state, but all those things are such mysteries: we may be able to save her."

It was nearly eight o'clock in the evening when the cart, which we left on the road, entered the porte-cochere of the Hotel de la Poste in Arras; the man whom we have been following up to this moment alighted from it, responded with an abstracted air to the attentions of the people of the inn, sent back the extra horse, and with his own hands led the little white horse to the stable; then he opened the door of a billiard-room which was situated on the ground floor, sat down there, and leaned his elbows on a table; he had taken fourteen hours for the journey which he had counted on making in six; he did himself the justice to acknowledge that it was not his fault, but at bottom, he was not sorry.

The landlady of the hotel entered.

"Does Monsieur wish a bed? Does Monsieur require supper?"

He made a sign of the head in the negative.

"The stableman says that Monsieur's horse is extremely fatigued."

Here he broke his silence.

"Will not the horse be in a condition to set out again tomorrow morning?"

"Oh, Monsieur! he must rest for two days at least."

He inquired:

"Is not the posting-station located here?"

"Yes, sir."

The hostess conducted him to the office; he showed his passport, and inquired whether there was any way of returning that same night to Montreuil-sur-Mer by the mail-wagon; the seat beside the post-boy chanced to be vacant; he engaged it and paid for it. "Monsieur," said the clerk, "do not fail to be here ready to start at precisely one o'clock in the morning."

This done, he left the hotel and began to wander about the town.

He was not acquainted with Arras; the streets were dark, and he walked on at random; but he seemed bent upon not asking the way of the passers-by. He crossed the little river Crinchon, and found himself in a labyrinth of narrow alleys where he lost his way. A citizen was passing along with a lantern. After some hesitation, he decided to apply to this man, not without having first glanced behind and in front of him, as though he feared lest some one should hear the question which he was about to put.

"Monsieur," said he, "where is the court-house, if you please."

"You do not belong in town, sir?" replied the bourgeois, who was an oldish man; "well, follow me. I happen to be going in the direction of the court-house, that is to say, in the direction of the hotel of the prefecture; for the court-house is undergoing repairs just at this moment, and the courts are holding their sittings provisionally in the prefecture."

"Is it there that the Assizes are held?" he asked.

"Certainly, sir; you see, the prefecture of to-day was the bishop's palace before the Revolution. M. de Conzie, who was bishop in '82, built a grand hall there. It is in this grand hall that the court is held."

On the way, the bourgeois said to him:

"If Monsieur desires to witness a case, it is rather late. The sittings generally close at six o'clock."

When they arrived on the grand square, however, the man pointed out to him four long windows all lighted up, in the front of a vast and gloomy building.

"Upon my word, sir, you are in luck; you have arrived in season. Do you see those four windows? That is the Court of Assizes. There is light there, so they are not through. The matter must have been greatly protracted, and they are holding an evening session. Do you take an interest in this affair? Is it a criminal case? Are you a witness?"

He replied:

"I have not come on any business; I only wish to speak to one of the lawyers."

"That is different," said the bourgeois. "Stop, sir; here is the door where the sentry stands. You have only to ascend the grand staircase."

He conformed to the bourgeois's directions, and a few minutes later he was in a hall containing many people, and where groups, intermingled with lawyers in their gowns, were whispering together here and there.

It is always a heart-breaking thing to see these congregations of men robed in black, murmuring together in low voices, on the threshold of the halls of justice. It is rare that charity and pity are the outcome of these words. Condemnations pronounced in advance are more likely to be the result. All these groups seem to the passing and thoughtful observer so many sombre hives where buzzing spirits construct in concert all sorts of dark edifices.

This spacious hall, illuminated by a single lamp, was the old hall of the episcopal palace, and served as the large hall of the palace of justice. A double-leaved door, which was closed at that

moment, separated it from the large apartment where the court was sitting.

The obscurity was such that he did not fear to accost the first lawyer whom he met.

"What stage have they reached, sir?" he asked.

"It is finished," said the lawyer.

"Finished!"

This word was repeated in such accents that the lawyer turned round.

"Excuse me sir; perhaps you are a relative?"

"No; I know no one here. Has judgment been pronounced?"

"Of course. Nothing else was possible."

"To penal servitude?"

"For life."

He continued, in a voice so weak that it was barely audible:

"Then his identity was established?"

"What identity?" replied the lawyer. "There was no identity to be established. The matter was very simple. The woman had murdered her child; the infanticide was proved; the jury threw out the question of premeditation, and she was condemned for life."

"So it was a woman?" said he.

"Why, certainly. The Limosin woman. Of what are you speaking?"

"Nothing. But since it is all over, how comes it that the hall is still lighted?"

"For another case, which was begun about two hours ago.

"What other case?"

"Oh! this one is a clear case also. It is about a sort of blackguard; a man arrested for a second offence; a convict who has been guilty of theft. I don't know his name exactly. There's a bandit's phiz for you! I'd send him to the galleys on the strength of his face alone."

"Is there any way of getting into the court-room, sir?" said he.

"I really think that there is not. There is a great crowd. However, the hearing has been suspended. Some people have gone out, and

when the hearing is resumed, you might make an effort."

"Where is the entrance?"

"Through yonder large door."

The lawyer left him. In the course of a few moments he had experienced, almost simultaneously, almost intermingled with each other, all possible emotions. The words of this indifferent spectator had, in turn, pierced his heart like needles of ice and like blades of fire. When he saw that nothing was settled, he breathed freely once more; but he could not have told whether what he felt was pain or pleasure.

He drew near to many groups and listened to what they were saying. The docket of the session was very heavy; the president had appointed for the same day two short and simple cases. They had begun with the infanticide, and now they had reached the convict, the old offender, the "return horse." This man had stolen apples, but that did not appear to be entirely proved; what had been proved was, that he had already been in the galleys at Toulon. It was that which lent a bad aspect to his case. However, the man's examination and the depositions of the witnesses had been completed, but the lawyer's plea, and the speech of the public prosecutor were still to come; it could not be finished before midnight. The man would probably be condemned; the attorney-general was very clever, and never missed his culprits; he was a brilliant fellow who wrote verses.

An usher stood at the door communicating with the hall of the Assizes. He inquired of this usher:

"Will the door be opened soon, sir?"

"It will not be opened at all," replied the usher.

"What! It will not be opened when the hearing is resumed? Is not the hearing suspended?"

"The hearing has just been begun again," replied the usher, "but the door will not be opened again."

"Why?"

"Because the hall is full."

"What! There is not room for one more?"

"Not another one. The door is closed. No one can enter now."

The usher added after a pause: "There are, to tell the truth, two or three extra places behind Monsieur le President, but Monsieur le President only admits public functionaries to them."

So saying, the usher turned his back.

He retired with bowed head, traversed the antechamber, and slowly descended the stairs, as though hesitating at every step. It is probable that he was holding counsel with himself. The violent conflict which had been going on within him since the preceding evening was not yet ended; and every moment he encountered some new phase of it. On reaching the landing-place, he leaned his back against the balusters and folded his arms. All at once he opened his coat, drew out his pocket-book, took from it a pencil, tore out a leaf, and upon that leaf he wrote rapidly, by the light of the street lantern, this line: M. Madeleine, Mayor of Montreuil-sur-Mer; then he ascended the stairs once more with great strides, made his way through the crowd, walked straight up to the usher, handed him the paper, and said in an authoritative manner:

"Take this to Monsieur le President."

The usher took the paper, cast a glance upon it, and obeyed.

Although he did not suspect the fact, the mayor of Montreuil-sur-Mer enjoyed a sort of celebrity. For the space of seven years his reputation for virtue had filled the whole of Bas Boulonnais; it had eventually passed the confines of a small district and had been spread abroad through two or three neighboring departments. Besides the service which he had rendered to the chief town by resuscitating the black jet industry, there was not one out of the hundred and forty communes of the arrondissement of Montreuil-sur-Mer which was not indebted to him for some benefit. He had even at need contrived to aid and multiply the industries of other arrondissements. It was thus that he had, when occasion offered, supported with his credit and his funds the linen factory at Boulogne, the flax-spinning industry at Frevent, and the hydraulic manufacture of cloth at Boubers-sur-Canche. Everywhere the name of M. Madeleine was pronounced with veneration. Arras and Douai envied the happy little town of

Montreuil-sur-Mer its mayor.

The Councillor of the Royal Court of Douai, who was presiding over this session of the Assizes at Arras, was acquainted, in common with the rest of the world, with this name which was so profoundly and universally honored. When the usher, discreetly opening the door which connected the council-chamber with the court-room, bent over the back of the President's arm-chair and handed him the paper on which was inscribed the line which we have just perused, adding: "The gentleman desires to be present at the trial," the President, with a quick and deferential movement, seized a pen and wrote a few words at the bottom of the paper and returned it to the usher, saying, "Admit him."

The unhappy man whose history we are relating had remained near the door of the hall, in the same place and the same attitude in which the usher had left him. In the midst of his revery he heard some one saying to him, "Will Monsieur do me the honor to follow me?" It was the same usher who had turned his back upon him but a moment previously, and who was now bowing to the earth before him. At the same time, the usher handed him the paper.

He unfolded it, and as he chanced to be near the light, he could read it.

"The President of the Court of Assizes presents his respects to M. Madeleine."

He crushed the paper in his hand as though those words contained for him a strange and bitter aftertaste.

He followed the usher.

A few minutes later he found himself alone in a sort of wainscoted cabinet of severe aspect, lighted by two wax candles, placed upon a table with a green cloth. The last words of the usher who had just quitted him still rang in his ears: "Monsieur, you are now in the council-chamber; you have only to turn the copper handle of yonder door, and you will find yourself in the court-room, behind the President's chair." These words were mingled in his thoughts with a vague memory of narrow corridors and dark staircases which he had recently traversed.

The usher had left him alone. The supreme moment had arrived. He sought to collect his faculties, but could not. It is chiefly at the moment when there is the greatest need for attaching them to the painful realities of life, that the threads of thought snap within the brain. He was in the very place where the judges deliberated and condemned. With stupid tranquillity he surveyed this peaceful and terrible apartment, where so many lives had been broken, which was soon to ring with his name, and which his fate was at that moment traversing. He stared at the wall, then he looked at himself, wondering that it should be that chamber and that it should be he.

He had eaten nothing for four and twenty hours; he was worn out by the jolts of the cart, but he was not conscious of it. It seemed to him that he felt nothing.

He approached a black frame which was suspended on the wall, and which contained, under glass, an ancient autograph letter of Jean Nicolas Pache, mayor of Paris and minister, and dated, through an error, no doubt, the 9th of June, of the year II., and in which Pache forwarded to the commune the list of ministers and deputies held in arrest by them. Any spectator who had chanced to see him at that moment, and who had watched him, would have imagined, doubtless, that this letter struck him as very curious, for he did not take his eyes from it, and he read it two or three times. He read it without paying any attention to it, and unconsciously. He was thinking of Fantine and Cosette.

As he dreamed, he turned round, and his eyes fell upon the brass knob of the door which separated him from the Court of Assizes. He had almost forgotten that door. His glance, calm at first, paused there, remained fixed on that brass handle, then grew terrified, and little by little became impregnated with fear. Beads of perspiration burst forth among his hair and trickled down upon his temples.

At a certain moment he made that indescribable gesture of a sort of authority mingled with rebellion, which is intended to convey, and which does so well convey, "Pardieu! who compels me to this?" Then he wheeled briskly round, caught sight of the

door through which he had entered in front of him, went to it, opened it, and passed out. He was no longer in that chamber; he was outside in a corridor, a long, narrow corridor, broken by steps and gratings, making all sorts of angles, lighted here and there by lanterns similar to the night taper of invalids, the corridor through which he had approached. He breathed, he listened; not a sound in front, not a sound behind him, and he fled as though pursued.

When he had turned many angles in this corridor, he still listened. The same silence reigned, and there was the same darkness around him. He was out of breath; he staggered; he leaned against the wall. The stone was cold; the perspiration lay ice-cold on his brow; he straightened himself up with a shiver.

Then, there alone in the darkness, trembling with cold and with something else, too, perchance, he meditated.

He had meditated all night long; he had meditated all the day: he heard within him but one voice, which said, "Alas!"

A quarter of an hour passed thus. At length he bowed his head, sighed with agony, dropped his arms, and retraced his steps. He walked slowly, and as though crushed. It seemed as though some one had overtaken him in his flight and was leading him back.

He re-entered the council-chamber. The first thing he caught sight of was the knob of the door. This knob, which was round and of polished brass, shone like a terrible star for him. He gazed at it as a lamb might gaze into the eye of a tiger.

He could not take his eyes from it. From time to time he advanced a step and approached the door.

Had he listened, he would have heard the sound of the adjoining hall like a sort of confused murmur; but he did not listen, and he did not hear.

Suddenly, without himself knowing how it happened, he found himself near the door; he grasped the knob convulsively; the door opened.

He was in the court-room.

He advanced a pace, closed the door mechanically behind him, and remained standing, contemplating what he saw.

It was a vast and badly lighted apartment, now full of uproar, now full of silence, where all the apparatus of a criminal case, with its petty and mournful gravity in the midst of the throng, was in process of development.

At the one end of the hall, the one where he was, were judges, with abstracted air, in threadbare robes, who were gnawing their nails or closing their eyelids; at the other end, a ragged crowd; lawyers in all sorts of attitudes; soldiers with hard but honest faces; ancient, spotted woodwork, a dirty ceiling, tables covered with serge that was yellow rather than green; doors blackened by handmarks; tap-room lamps which emitted more smoke than light, suspended from nails in the wainscot; on the tables candles in brass candlesticks; darkness, ugliness, sadness; and from all this there was disengaged an austere and august impression, for one there felt that grand human thing which is called the law, and that grand divine thing which is called justice.

No one in all that throng paid any attention to him; all glances were directed towards a single point, a wooden bench placed against a small door, in the stretch of wall on the President's left; on this bench, illuminated by several candles, sat a man between two gendarmes.

This man was the man.

He did not seek him; he saw him; his eyes went thither naturally, as though they had known beforehand where that figure was.

He thought he was looking at himself, grown old; not absolutely the same in face, of course, but exactly similar in attitude and aspect, with his bristling hair, with that wild and uneasy eye, with that blouse, just as it was on the day when he entered Digne, full of hatred, concealing his soul in that hideous mass of frightful thoughts which he had spent nineteen years in collecting on the floor of the prison.

He said to himself with a shudder, "Good God! shall I become like that again?"

This creature seemed to be at least sixty; there was something indescribably coarse, stupid, and frightened about him.

At the sound made by the opening door, people had drawn aside to make way for him; the President had turned his head, and, understanding that the personage who had just entered was the mayor of Montreuil-sur-Mer, he had bowed to him; the attorney-general, who had seen M. Madeleine at Montreuil-sur-Mer, whither the duties of his office had called him more than once, recognized him and saluted him also: he had hardly perceived it; he was the victim of a sort of hallucination; he was watching.

Judges, clerks, gendarmes, a throng of cruelly curious heads, all these he had already beheld once, in days gone by, twenty-seven years before; he had encountered those fatal things once more; there they were; they moved; they existed; it was no longer an effort of his memory, a mirage of his thought; they were real gendarmes and real judges, a real crowd, and real men of flesh and blood: it was all over; he beheld the monstrous aspects of his past reappear and live once more around him, with all that there is formidable in reality.

All this was yawning before him.

He was horrified by it; he shut his eyes, and exclaimed in the deepest recesses of his soul, "Never!"

And by a tragic play of destiny which made all his ideas tremble, and rendered him nearly mad, it was another self of his that was there! all called that man who was being tried Jean Valjean.

Under his very eyes, unheard-of vision, he had a sort of representation of the most horrible moment of his life, enacted by his spectre.

Everything was there; the apparatus was the same, the hour of the night, the faces of the judges, of soldiers, and of spectators; all were the same, only above the President's head there hung a crucifix, something which the courts had lacked at the time of his condemnation: God had been absent when he had been judged.

There was a chair behind him; he dropped into it, terrified at the thought that he might be seen; when he was seated, he took advantage of a pile of cardboard boxes, which stood on the judge's desk, to conceal his face from the whole room; he could now see without being seen; he had fully regained consciousness

Champmathieu

of the reality of things; gradually he recovered; he attained that phase of composure where it is possible to listen.

Details of the evidence against Champmathieu are given at length. But the accused continues to deny that he is Jean Valjean. The district attorney then makes a request to the President of the tribunal.

"Monsieur le President, in view of the confused but exceedingly clever denials of the prisoner, who would like to pass himself off as an idiot, but who will not succeed in so doing, — we shall attend to that, — we demand that it shall please you and that it shall please the court to summon once more into this place the convicts Brevet, Cochepaille, and Chenildieu, and Police-Inspector Javert, and question them for the last time as to the identity of the prisoner with the convict Jean Valjean."

"I would remind the district-attorney," said the President, "that Police-Inspector Javert, recalled by his duties to the capital of a neighboring arrondissement, left the court-room and the town as soon as he had made his deposition; we have accorded him permission, with the consent of the district-attorney and of the counsel for the prisoner."

"That is true, Mr. President," responded the district-attorney. "In the absence of sieur Javert, I think it my duty to remind the gentlemen of the jury of what he said here a few hours ago. Javert is an estimable man, who does honor by his rigorous and strict probity to inferior but important functions. These are the terms

of his deposition: 'I do not even stand in need of circumstantial proofs and moral presumptions to give the lie to the prisoner's denial. I recognize him perfectly. The name of this man is not Champmathieu; he is an ex-convict named Jean Valjean, and is very vicious and much to be feared. It is only with extreme regret that he was released at the expiration of his term. He underwent nineteen years of penal servitude for theft. He made five or six attempts to escape. Besides the theft from Little Gervais, and from the Pierron orchard, I suspect him of a theft committed in the house of His Grace the late Bishop of Digne. I often saw him at the time when I was adjutant of the galley-guard at the prison in Toulon. I repeat that I recognize him perfectly.' "

This extremely precise statement appeared to produce a vivid impression on the public and on the jury. The district-attorney concluded by insisting, that in default of Javert, the three witnesses Brevet, Chenildieu, and Cochepaille should be heard once more and solemnly interrogated.

The President transmitted the order to an usher, and, a moment later, the door of the witnesses' room opened. The usher, accompanied by a gendarme ready to lend him armed assistance, introduced the convict Brevet. The audience was in suspense; and all breasts heaved as though they had contained but one soul.

The ex-convict Brevet wore the black and gray waistcoat of the central prisons. Brevet was a person sixty years of age, who had a sort of businessman's face, and the air of a rascal. The two sometimes go together. In prison, whither fresh misdeeds had led him, he had become something in the nature of a turnkey. He was a man of whom his superiors said, "He tries to make himself of use." The chaplains bore good testimony as to his religious habits. It must not be forgotten that this passed under the Restoration.

"Brevet," said the President, "you have undergone an ignominious sentence, and you cannot take an oath."

Brevet dropped his eyes.

"Nevertheless," continued the President, "even in the man whom the law has degraded, there may remain, when the divine mercy permits it, a sentiment of honor and of equity. It is to this

sentiment that I appeal at this decisive hour. If it still exists in you, — and I hope it does, — reflect before replying to me: consider on the one hand, this man, whom a word from you may ruin; on the other hand, justice, which a word from you may enlighten. The instant is solemn; there is still time to retract if you think you have been mistaken. Rise, prisoner. Brevet, take a good look at the accused, recall your souvenirs, and tell us on your soul and conscience, if you persist in recognizing this man as your former companion in the galleys, Jean Valjean?"

Brevet looked at the prisoner, then turned towards the court.

"Yes, Mr. President, I was the first to recognize him, and I stick to it; that man is Jean Valjean, who entered at Toulon in 1796, and left in 1815. I left a year later. He has the air of a brute now; but it must be because age has brutalized him; he was sly at the galleys: I recognize him positively."

"Take your seat," said the President. "Prisoner, remain standing."

Chenildieu was brought in, a prisoner for life, as was indicated by his red cassock and his green cap. He was serving out his sentence at the galleys of Toulon, whence he had been brought for this case. He was a small man of about fifty, brisk, wrinkled, frail, yellow, brazen-faced, feverish, who had a sort of sickly feebleness about all his limbs and his whole person, and an immense force in his glance. His companions in the galleys had nicknamed him I-deny-God (Je-nie Dieu, Chenildieu).

The President addressed him in nearly the same words which he had used to Brevet. At the moment when he reminded him of his infamy which deprived him of the right to take an oath, Chenildieu raised his head and looked the crowd in the face. The President invited him to reflection, and asked him as he had asked Brevet, if he persisted in recognition of the prisoner.

Chenildieu burst out laughing.

"Pardieu, as if I didn't recognize him! We were attached to the same chain for five years. So you are sulking, old fellow?"

"Go take your seat," said the President.

The usher brought in Cochepaille. He was another convict for

life, who had come from the galleys, and was dressed in red, like Chenildieu, was a peasant from Lourdes, and a half-bear of the Pyrenees. He had guarded the flocks among the mountains, and from a shepherd he had slipped into a brigand. Cochepaille was no less savage and seemed even more stupid than the prisoner. He was one of those wretched men whom nature has sketched out for wild beasts, and on whom society puts the finishing touches as convicts in the galleys.

The President tried to touch him with some grave and pathetic words, and asked him, as he had asked the other two, if he persisted, without hesitation or trouble, in recognizing the man who was standing before him.

"He is Jean Valjean," said Cochepaille. "He was even called Jean-the-Screw, because he was so strong."

Each of these affirmations from these three men, evidently sincere and in good faith, had raised in the audience a murmur of bad augury for the prisoner, — a murmur which increased and lasted longer each time that a fresh declaration was added to the proceeding.

The prisoner had listened to them, with that astounded face which was, according to the accusation, his principal means of defence; at the first, the gendarmes, his neighbors, had heard him mutter between his teeth: "Ah, well, he's a nice one!" after the second, he said, a little louder, with an air that was almost that of satisfaction, "Good!" at the third, he cried, "Famous!"

The President addressed him:

"Have you heard, prisoner? What have you to say?"

He replied:

"I say, 'Famous!'"

An uproar broke out among the audience, and was communicated to the jury; it was evident that the man was lost.

"Ushers," said the President, "enforce silence! I am going to sum up the arguments."

At that moment there was a movement just beside the President; a voice was heard crying:

"Brevet! Chenildieu! Cochepaille! look here!"

All who heard that voice were chilled, so lamentable and terrible was it; all eyes were turned to the point whence it had proceeded. A man, placed among the privileged spectators who were seated behind the court, had just risen, had pushed open the half-door which separated the tribunal from the audience, and was standing in the middle of the hall; the President, the district-attorney, M. Bamatabois, twenty persons, recognized him, and exclaimed in concert:

"M. Madeleine!"

It was he, in fact. The clerk's lamp illumined his countenance. He held his hat in his hand; there was no disorder in his clothing; his coat was carefully buttoned; he was very pale, and he trembled slightly; his hair, which had still been gray on his arrival in Arras, was now entirely white: it had turned white during the hour he had sat there.

All heads were raised: the sensation was indescribable; there was a momentary hesitation in the audience, the voice had been so heart-rending; the man who stood there appeared so calm that they did not understand at first. They asked themselves whether he had indeed uttered that cry; they could not believe that that tranquil man had been the one to give that terrible outcry.

This indecision only lasted a few seconds. Even before the President and the district-attorney could utter a word, before the ushers and the gendarmes could make a gesture, the man whom all still called, at that moment, M. Madeleine, had advanced towards the witnesses Cochepaille, Brevet, and Chenildieu.

"Do you not recognize me?" said he.

All three remained speechless, and indicated by a sign of the head that they did not know him. Cochepaille, who was intimidated, made a military salute. M. Madeleine turned towards the jury and the court, and said in a gentle voice:

"Gentlemen of the jury, order the prisoner to be released! Mr. President, have me arrested. He is not the man whom you are in search of; it is I: I am Jean Valjean."

Not a mouth breathed; the first commotion of astonishment

had been followed by a silence like that of the grave; those within the hall experienced that sort of religious terror which seizes the masses when something grand has been done.

In the meantime, the face of the President was stamped with sympathy and sadness; he had exchanged a rapid sign with the district-attorney and a few low-toned words with the assistant judges; he addressed the public, and asked in accents which all understood:

"Is there a physician present?"

The district-attorney took the word:

"Gentlemen of the jury, the very strange and unexpected incident which disturbs the audience inspires us, like yourselves, only with a sentiment which it is unnecessary for us to express. You all know, by reputation at least, the honorable M. Madeleine, mayor of Montreuil-sur-Mer; if there is a physician in the audience, we join the President in requesting him to attend to M. Madeleine, and to conduct him to his home."

M. Madeleine did not allow the district-attorney to finish; he interrupted him in accents full of suavity and authority. These are the words which he uttered; here they are literally, as they were written down, immediately after the trial by one of the witnesses to this scene, and as they now ring in the ears of those who heard them nearly forty years ago:

"I thank you, Mr. District-Attorney, but I am not mad; you shall see; you were on the point of committing a great error; release this man! I am fulfilling a duty; I am that miserable criminal. I am the only one here who sees the matter clearly, and I am telling you the truth. God, who is on high, looks down on what I am doing at this moment, and that suffices. You can take me, for here I am: but I have done my best; I concealed myself under another name; I have become rich; I have become a mayor; I have tried to re-enter the ranks of the honest. It seems that that is not to be done. In short, there are many things which I cannot tell. I will not narrate the story of my life to you; you will hear it one of these days. I robbed Monseigneur the Bishop, it is true; it is true that I robbed Little Gervais; they were right in telling

you that Jean Valjean was a very vicious wretch. Perhaps it was not altogether his fault. Listen, honorable judges! a man who has been so greatly humbled as I have has neither any remonstrances to make to Providence, nor any advice to give to society; but, you see, the infamy from which I have tried to escape is an injurious thing; the galleys make the convict what he is; reflect upon that, if you please. Before going to the galleys, I was a poor peasant, with very little intelligence, a sort of idiot; the galleys wrought a change in me. I was stupid; I became vicious: I was a block of wood; I became a firebrand. Later on, indulgence and kindness saved me, as severity had ruined me. But, pardon me, you cannot understand what I am saying. You will find at my house, among the ashes in the fireplace, the forty-sou piece which I stole, seven years ago, from little Gervais. I have nothing farther to add; take me. Good God! the district-attorney shakes his head; you say, 'M. Madeleine has gone mad!' you do not believe me! that is distressing. Do not, at least, condemn this man! What! these men do not recognize me! I wish Javert were here; he would recognize me."

Nothing can reproduce the sombre and kindly melancholy of tone which accompanied these words.

He turned to the three convicts, and said:

"Well, I recognize you; do you remember, Brevet?"

He paused, hesitated for an instant, and said:

"Do you remember the knitted suspenders with a checked pattern which you wore in the galleys?"

Brevet gave a start of surprise, and surveyed him from head to foot with a frightened air. He continued:

"Chenildieu, you who conferred on yourself the name of 'Jenie-Dieu,' your whole right shoulder bears a deep burn, because you one day laid your shoulder against the chafing-dish full of coals, in order to efface the three letters T. F. P., which are still visible, nevertheless; answer, is this true?"

"It is true," said Chenildieu.

He addressed himself to Cochepaille:

"Cochepaille, you have, near the bend in your left arm, a date

stamped in blue letters with burnt powder; the date is that of the landing of the Emperor at Cannes, March 1, 1815; pull up your sleeve!"

Cochepaille pushed up his sleeve; all eyes were focused on him and on his bare arm.

A gendarme held a light close to it; there was the date.

The unhappy man turned to the spectators and the judges with a smile which still rends the hearts of all who saw it whenever they think of it. It was a smile of triumph; it was also a smile of despair.

"You see plainly," he said, "that I am Jean Valjean."

In that chamber there were no longer either judges, accusers, nor gendarmes; there was nothing but staring eyes and sympathizing hearts. No one recalled any longer the part that each might be called upon to play; the district-attorney forgot he was there for the purpose of prosecuting, the President that he was there to preside, the counsel for the defence that he was there to defend. It was a striking circumstance that no question was put, that no authority intervened. The peculiarity of sublime spectacles is, that they capture all souls and turn witnesses into spectators. No one, probably, could have explained what he felt; no one, probably, said to himself that he was witnessing the splendid outburst of a grand light: all felt themselves inwardly dazzled.

It was evident that they had Jean Valjean before their eyes. That was clear. The appearance of this man had sufficed to suffuse with light that matter which had been so obscure but a moment previously, without any further explanation: the whole crowd, as by a sort of electric revelation, understood instantly and at a single glance the simple and magnificent history of a man who was delivering himself up so that another man might not be condemned in his stead. The details, the hesitations, little possible oppositions, were swallowed up in that vast and luminous fact.

It was an impression which vanished speedily, but which was irresistible at the moment.

"I do not wish to disturb the court further," resumed Jean Valjean. "I shall withdraw, since you do not arrest me. I have many

things to do. The district-attorney knows who I am; he knows whither I am going; he can have me arrested when he likes."

He directed his steps towards the door. Not a voice was raised, not an arm extended to hinder him. All stood aside. At that moment there was about him that divine something which causes multitudes to stand aside and make way for a man. He traversed the crowd slowly. It was never known who opened the door, but it is certain that he found the door open when he reached it. On arriving there he turned round and said:

"I am at your command, Mr. District-Attorney."

Then he addressed the audience:

"All of you, all who are present — consider me worthy of pity, do you not? Good God! When I think of what I was on the point of doing, I consider that I am to be envied. Nevertheless, I should have preferred not to have had this occur."

He withdrew, and the door closed behind him as it had opened, for those who do certain sovereign things are always sure of being served by some one in the crowd.

Less than an hour after this, the verdict of the jury freed the said Champmathieu from all accusations; and Champmathieu, being at once released, went off in a state of stupefaction, thinking that all men were fools, and comprehending nothing of this vision.

The day had begun to dawn. Fantine had passed a sleepless and feverish night, filled with happy visions; at daybreak she fell asleep. Sister Simplice, who had been watching with her, availed herself of this slumber to go and prepare a new potion of chinchona. The worthy sister had been in the laboratory of the infirmary but a few moments, bending over her drugs and phials, and scrutinizing things very closely, on account of the dimness which the half-light of dawn spreads over all objects. Suddenly she raised her head and uttered a faint shriek. M. Madeleine stood before her; he had just entered silently.

"Is it you, Mr. Mayor?" she exclaimed.

He replied in a low voice:

"How is that poor woman?"

"Not so bad just now; but we have been very uneasy."

She explained to him what had passed: that Fantine had been very ill the day before, and that she was better now, because she thought that the mayor had gone to Montfermeil to get her child. The sister dared not question the mayor; but she perceived plainly from his air that he had not come from there.

"All that is good," said he; "you were right not to undeceive her."

"Yes," responded the sister; "but now, Mr. Mayor, she will see you and will not see her child. What shall we say to her?"

He reflected for a moment.

"God will inspire us," said he.

"But we cannot tell a lie," murmured the sister, half aloud.

It was broad daylight in the room. The light fell full on M. Madeleine's face. The sister chanced to raise her eyes to it.

"Good God, sir!" she exclaimed; "what has happened to you? Your hair is perfectly white!"

"White!" said he.

Sister Simplice had no mirror. She rummaged in a drawer, and pulled out the little glass which the doctor of the infirmary used to see whether a patient was dead and whether he no longer breathed. M. Madeleine took the mirror, looked at his hair, and said:

"Well!"

He uttered the word indifferently, and as though his mind were on something else.

The sister felt chilled by something strange of which she caught a glimpse in all this.

He inquired:

"Can I see her?"

"Is not Monsieur le Maire going to have her child brought back to her?" said the sister, hardly venturing to put the question.

"Of course; but it will take two or three days at least."

"If she were not to see Monsieur le Maire until that time," went on the sister, timidly, "she would not know that Monsieur le Maire had returned, and it would be easy to inspire her with patience; and when the child arrived, she would naturally think

Monsieur le Maire had just come with the child. We should not have to enact a lie."

M. Madeleine seemed to reflect for a few moments; then he said with his calm gravity:

"No, sister, I must see her. I may, perhaps, be in haste."

The nun did not appear to notice this word "perhaps," which communicated an obscure and singular sense to the words of the mayor's speech. She replied, lowering her eyes and her voice respectfully:

"In that case, she is asleep; but Monsieur le Maire may enter."

He made some remarks about a door which shut badly, and the noise of which might awaken the sick woman; then he entered Fantine's chamber, approached the bed and drew aside the curtains. She was asleep. Her breath issued from her breast with that tragic sound which is peculiar to those maladies, and which breaks the hearts of mothers when they are watching through the night beside their sleeping child who is condemned to death. But this painful respiration hardly troubled a sort of ineffable serenity which overspread her countenance, and which transfigured her in her sleep. Her pallor had become whiteness; her cheeks were crimson; her long golden lashes, the only beauty of her youth and her virginity which remained to her, palpitated, though they remained closed and drooping. Her whole person was trembling with an indescribable unfolding of wings, all ready to open wide and bear her away, which could be felt as they rustled, though they could not be seen. To see her thus, one would never have dreamed that she was an invalid whose life was almost despaired of. She resembled rather something on the point of soaring away than something on the point of dying.

The branch trembles when a hand approaches it to pluck a flower, and seems to both withdraw and to offer itself at one and the same time. The human body has something of this tremor when the instant arrives in which the mysterious fingers of Death are about to pluck the soul.

M. Madeleine remained for some time motionless beside that bed, gazing in turn upon the sick woman and the crucifix, as he

had done two months before, on the day when he had come for the first time to see her in that asylum. They were both still there in the same attitude — she sleeping, he praying; only now, after the lapse of two months, her hair was gray and his was white.

The sister had not entered with him. He stood beside the bed, with his finger on his lips, as though there were some one in the chamber whom he must enjoin to silence.

She opened her eyes, saw him, and said quietly, with a smile:

"And Cosette?"

She made no movement of either surprise or of joy; she was joy itself. That simple question, "And Cosette?" was put with so profound a faith, with so much certainty, with such a complete absence of disquiet and of doubt, that he found not a word of reply. She continued:

"I knew that you were there. I was asleep, but I saw you. I have seen you for a long, long time. I have been following you with my eyes all night long. You were in a glory, and you had around you all sorts of celestial forms."

He raised his glance to the crucifix.

"But," she resumed, "tell me where Cosette is. Why did not you place her on my bed against the moment of my waking?"

He made some mechanical reply which he was never afterwards able to recall.

Fortunately, the doctor had been warned, and he now made his appearance. He came to the aid of M. Madeleine.

"Calm yourself, my child," said the doctor; "your child is here."

Fantine's eyes beamed and filled her whole face with light. She clasped her hands with an expression which contained all that is possible to prayer in the way of violence and tenderness.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, "bring her to me!"

Touching illusion of a mother! Cosette was, for her, still the little child who is carried.

"Not yet," said the doctor, "not just now. You still have some fever. The sight of your child would agitate you and do you harm.

You must be cured first."

She interrupted him impetuously:

"But I am cured! Oh, I tell you that I am cured! What an ass that doctor is! The idea! I want to see my child!"

"You see," said the doctor, "how excited you become. So long as you are in this state I shall oppose your having your child. It is not enough to see her; it is necessary that you should live for her. When you are reasonable, I will bring her to you myself."

The poor mother bowed her head.

"I beg your pardon, doctor, I really beg your pardon. Formerly I should never have spoken as I have just done; so many misfortunes have happened to me, that I sometimes do not know what I am saying. I understand you; you fear the emotion. I will wait as long as you like, but I swear to you that it would not have harmed me to see my daughter. I have been seeing her; I have not taken my eyes from her since yesterday evening. Do you know? If she were brought to me now, I should talk to her very gently. That is all. Is it not quite natural that I should desire to see my daughter, who has been brought to me expressly from Montfermeil? I am not angry. I know well that I am about to be happy. All night long I have seen white things, and persons who smiled at me. When Monsieur le Docteur pleases, he shall bring me Cosette. I have no longer any fever; I am well. I am perfectly conscious that there is nothing the matter with me any more; but I am going to behave as though I were ill, and not stir, to please these ladies here. When it is seen that I am very calm, they will say, 'She must have her child.'"

M. Madeleine was sitting on a chair beside the bed. She turned towards him; she was making a visible effort to be calm and "very good," as she expressed it in the feebleness of illness which resembles infancy, in order that, seeing her so peaceable, they might make no difficulty about bringing Cosette to her. But while she controlled herself she could not refrain from questioning M. Madeleine.

"Did you have a pleasant trip, Monsieur le Maire? Oh! how good you were to go and get her for me! Only tell me how she is.

Did she stand the journey well? Alas! she will not recognize me. She must have forgotten me by this time, poor darling! Children have no memories. They are like birds. A child sees one thing to-day and another thing to-morrow, and thinks of nothing any longer. And did she have white linen? Did those Thenardiers keep her clean? How have they fed her? Oh! if you only knew how I have suffered, putting such questions as that to myself during all the time of my wretchedness. Now, it is all past. I am happy. Oh, how I should like to see her! Do you think her pretty, Monsieur le Maire? Is not my daughter beautiful? You must have been very cold in that diligence! Could she not be brought for just one little instant? She might be taken away directly afterwards. Tell me; you are the master; it could be so if you chose!"

He took her hand. "Cosette is beautiful," he said, "Cosette is well. You shall see her soon; but calm yourself; you are talking with too much vivacity, and you are throwing your arms out from under the clothes, and that makes you cough."

In fact, fits of coughing interrupted Fantine at nearly every word.

Fantine did not murmur; she feared that she had injured by her too passionate lamentations the confidence which she was desirous of inspiring, and she began to talk of indifferent things.

"Montfermeil is quite pretty, is it not? People go there on pleasure parties in summer. Are the Thenardiers prosperous? There are not many travellers in their parts. That inn of theirs is a sort of a cook-shop."

M. Madeleine was still holding her hand, and gazing at her with anxiety; it was evident that he had come to tell her things before which his mind now hesitated. The doctor, having finished his visit, retired. Sister Simplice remained alone with them.

But in the midst of this pause Fantine exclaimed:

"I hear her! mon Dieu, I hear her!"

She stretched out her arm to enjoin silence about her, held her breath, and began to listen with rapture.

There was a child playing in the yard — the child of the portress or of some work-woman. It was one of those accidents which are

always occurring, and which seem to form a part of the mysterious stage-setting of mournful scenes. The child — a little girl — was going and coming, running to warm herself, laughing, singing at the top of her voice. Alas! in what are the plays of children not intermingled. It was this little girl whom Fantine heard singing.

"Oh!" she resumed, "it is my Cosette! I recognize her voice."

The child retreated as it had come; the voice died away. Fantine listened for a while longer, then her face clouded over, and M. Madeleine heard her say, in a low voice: "How wicked that doctor is not to allow me to see my daughter! That man has an evil countenance, that he has."

But the smiling background of her thoughts came to the front again. She continued to talk to herself, with her head resting on the pillow: "How happy we are going to be! We shall have a little garden the very first thing; M. Madeleine has promised it to me. My daughter will play in the garden. She must know her letters by this time. I will make her spell. She will run over the grass after butterflies. I will watch her. Then she will take her first communion. Ah! when will she take her first communion?"

She began to reckon on her fingers.

"One, two, three, four — she is seven years old. In five years she will have a white veil, and openwork stockings; she will look like a little woman. O my good sister, you do not know how foolish I become when I think of my daughter's first communion!"

She began to laugh.

He had released Fantine's hand. He listened to her words as one listens to the sighing of the breeze, with his eyes on the ground, his mind absorbed in reflection which had no bottom. All at once she ceased speaking, and this caused him to raise his head mechanically. Fantine had become terrible.

She no longer spoke, she no longer breathed; she had raised herself to a sitting posture, her thin shoulder emerged from her chemise; her face, which had been radiant but a moment before, was ghastly, and she seemed to have fixed her eyes, rendered large with terror, on something alarming at the other extremity of the room.

"Good God!" he exclaimed; "what ails you, Fantine?"

She made no reply; she did not remove her eyes from the object which she seemed to see. She removed one hand from his arm, and with the other made him a sign to look behind him.

He turned, and beheld Javert.

This is what had taken place.

The half-hour after midnight had just struck when M. Madeleine quitted the Hall of Assizes in Arras. He regained his inn just in time to set out again by the mail-wagon, in which he had engaged his place. A little before six o'clock in the morning he had arrived at Montreuil-sur-Mer, and his first care had been to post a letter to M. Laffitte, then to enter the infirmary and see Fantine.

However, he had hardly quitted the audience hall of the Court of Assizes, when the district-attorney, recovering from his first shock, had taken the word to deplore the mad deed of the honorable mayor of Montreuil-sur-Mer, to declare that his convictions had not been in the least modified by that curious incident, which would be explained thereafter, and to demand, in the meantime, the condemnation of that Champmathieu, who was evidently the real Jean Valjean. The district-attorney's persistence was visibly at variance with the sentiments of every one, of the public, of the court, and of the jury. The counsel for the defence had some difficulty in refuting this harangue and in establishing that, in consequence of the revelations of M. Madeleine, that is to say, of the real Jean Valjean, the aspect of the matter had been thoroughly altered, and that the jury had before their eyes now only an innocent man. Thence the lawyer had drawn some epiphonemas, not very fresh, unfortunately, upon judicial errors, etc., etc.; the President, in his summing up, had joined the counsel for the defence, and in a few minutes the jury had thrown Champmathieu out of the case.

Nevertheless, the district-attorney was bent on having a Jean Valjean; and as he had no longer Champmathieu, he took Madeleine.

Immediately after Champmathieu had been set at liberty, the

district-attorney shut himself up with the President. They conferred "as to the necessity of seizing the person of M. le Maire of Montreuil-sur-Mer" This phrase, in which there was a great deal of of, is the district-attorney's, written with his own hand, on the minutes of his report to the attorney-general. His first emotion having passed off, the President did not offer many objections. Justice must, after all, take its course. And then, when all was said, although the President was a kindly and a tolerably intelligent man, he was, at the same time, a devoted and almost an ardent royalist, and he had been shocked to hear the Mayor of Montreuil-sur-Mer say the Emperor, and not Bonaparte, when alluding to the landing at Cannes.

The order for his arrest was accordingly despatched. The district-attorney forwarded it to Montreuil-sur-Mer by a special messenger, at full speed, and entrusted its execution to Police Inspector Javert.

The reader knows that Javert had returned to Montreuil-sur-Mer immediately after having given his deposition.

Javert was just getting out of bed when the messenger handed him the order of arrest and the command to produce the prisoner.

The messenger himself was a very clever member of the police, who, in two words, informed Javert of what had taken place at Arras. The order of arrest, signed by the district-attorney, was couched in these words: "Inspector Javert will apprehend the body of the Sieur Madeleine, mayor of Montreuil-sur-Mer, who, in this day's session of the court, was recognized as the liberated convict, Jean Valjean."

Any one who did not know Javert, and who had chanced to see him at the moment when he penetrated the antechamber of the infirmary, could have divined nothing of what had taken place, and would have thought his air the most ordinary in the world. He was cool, calm, grave, his gray hair was perfectly smooth upon his temples, and he had just mounted the stairs with his habitual deliberation. Any one who was thoroughly acquainted with him, and who had examined him attentively at the moment, would

have shuddered. The buckle of his leather stock was under his left ear instead of at the nape of his neck. This betrayed unwonted agitation.

Javert was a complete character, who never had a wrinkle in his duty or in his uniform; methodical with malefactors, rigid with the buttons of his coat.

That he should have set the buckle of his stock awry, it was indispensable that there should have taken place in him one of those emotions which may be designated as internal earthquakes.

He had come in a simple way, had made a requisition on the neighboring post for a corporal and four soldiers, had left the soldiers in the courtyard, had had Fantine's room pointed out to him by the portress, who was utterly unsuspicious, accustomed as she was to seeing armed men inquiring for the mayor.

On arriving at Fantine's chamber, Javert turned the handle, pushed the door open with the gentleness of a sick-nurse or a police spy, and entered.

Properly speaking, he did not enter. He stood erect in the half-open door, his hat on his head and his left hand thrust into his coat, which was buttoned up to the chin. In the bend of his elbow the leaden head of his enormous cane, which was hidden behind him, could be seen.

Thus he remained for nearly a minute, without his presence being perceived. All at once Fantine raised her eyes, saw him, and made M. Madeleine turn round.

The instant that Madeleine's glance encountered Javert's glance, Javert, without stirring, without moving from his post, without approaching him, became terrible. No human sentiment can be as terrible as joy.

It was the visage of a demon who has just found his damned soul.

The satisfaction of at last getting hold of Jean Valjean caused all that was in his soul to appear in his countenance. The depths having been stirred up, mounted to the surface. The humiliation of having, in some slight degree, lost the scent, and of having indulged, for a few moments, in an error with regard to Champmathieu, was

effaced by pride at having so well and accurately divined in the first place, and of having for so long cherished a just instinct. Javert's content shone forth in his sovereign attitude. The deformity of triumph overspread that narrow brow. All the demonstrations of horror which a satisfied face can afford were there.

Javert was in heaven at that moment. Without putting the thing clearly to himself, but with a confused intuition of the necessity of his presence and of his success, he, Javert, personified justice, light, and truth in their celestial function of crushing out evil. Behind him and around him, at an infinite distance, he had authority, reason, the case judged, the legal conscience, the public prosecution, all the stars; he was protecting order, he was causing the law to yield up its thunders, he was avenging society, he was lending a helping hand to the absolute, he was standing erect in the midst of a glory. There existed in his victory a remnant of defiance and of combat. Erect, haughty, brilliant, he flaunted abroad in open day the superhuman bestiality of a ferocious archangel. The terrible shadow of the action which he was accomplishing caused the vague flash of the social sword to be visible in his clenched fist; happy and indignant, he held his heel upon crime, vice, rebellion, perdition, hell; he was radiant, he exterminated, he smiled, and there was an incontestable grandeur in this monstrous Saint Michael.

Javert, though frightful, had nothing ignoble about him.

Probity, sincerity, candor, conviction, the sense of duty, are things which may become hideous when wrongly directed; but which, even when hideous, remain grand: their majesty, the majesty peculiar to the human conscience, clings to them in the midst of horror; they are virtues which have one vice, — error. The honest, pitiless joy of a fanatic in the full flood of his atrocity preserves a certain lugubriously venerable radiance. Without himself suspecting the fact, Javert in his formidable happiness was to be pitied, as is every ignorant man who triumphs. Nothing could be so poignant and so terrible as this face, wherein was displayed all that may be designated as the evil of the good.

Fantine had not seen Javert since the day on which the mayor had torn her from the man. Her ailing brain comprehended nothing, but the only thing which she did not doubt was that he had come to get her. She could not endure that terrible face; she felt her life quitting her; she hid her face in both hands, and shrieked in her anguish:

"Monsieur Madeleine, save me!"

Jean Valjean — we shall henceforth not speak of him otherwise — had risen. He said to Fantine in the gentlest and calmest of voices:

"Be at ease; it is not for you that he is come."

Then he addressed Javert, and said:

"I know what you want."

Javert replied:

"Be quick about it!"

There lay in the inflection of voice which accompanied these words something indescribably fierce and frenzied. Javert did not say, "Be quick about it!" he said "Bequiabouit."

No orthography can do justice to the accent with which it was uttered: it was no longer a human word: it was a roar.

He did not proceed according to his custom, he did not enter into the matter, he exhibited no warrant of arrest. In his eyes, Jean Valjean was a sort of mysterious combatant, who was not to be laid hands upon, a wrestler in the dark whom he had had in his grasp for the last five years, without being able to throw him. This arrest was not a beginning, but an end. He confined himself to saying, "Be quick about it!"

As he spoke thus, he did not advance a single step; he hurled at Jean Valjean a glance which he threw out like a grappling-hook, and with which he was accustomed to draw wretches violently to him.

It was this glance which Fantine had felt penetrating to the very marrow of her bones two months previously.

At Javert's exclamation, Fantine opened her eyes once more. But the mayor was there; what had she to fear?

Javert advanced to the middle of the room, and cried:

"See here now! Art thou coming?"

The unhappy woman glanced about her. No one was present excepting the nun and the mayor. To whom could that abject use of "thou" be addressed? To her only. She shuddered.

Then she beheld a most unprecedented thing, a thing so unprecedented that nothing equal to it had appeared to her even in the blackest deliriums of fever.

She beheld Javert, the police spy, seize the mayor by the collar; she saw the mayor bow his head. It seemed to her that the world was coming to an end.

Javert had, in fact, grasped Jean Valjean by the collar.

"Monsieur le Maire!" shrieked Fantine.

Javert burst out laughing with that frightful laugh which displayed all his gums.

"There is no longer any Monsieur le Maire here!"

Jean Valjean made no attempt to disengage the hand which grasped the collar of his coat. He said:

"Javert — "

Javert interrupted him: "Call me Mr. Inspector."

"Monsieur," said Jean Valjean, "I should like to say a word to you in private."

"Aloud! Say it aloud!" replied Javert; "people are in the habit of talking aloud to me."

Jean Valjean went on in a lower tone:

"I have a request to make of you —

"I tell you to speak loud."

"But you alone should hear it —

"What difference does that make to me? I shall not listen."

Jean Valjean turned towards him and said very rapidly and in a very low voice:

"Grant me three days' grace! three days in which to go and fetch the child of this unhappy woman. I will pay whatever is necessary. You shall accompany me if you choose."

"You are making sport of me!" cried Javert. "Come now, I did not think you such a fool! You ask me to give you three days in which to run away! You say that it is for the purpose of fetching

that creature's child! Ah! Ah! That's good! That's really capital!"

Fantine was seized with a fit of trembling.

"My child!" she cried, "to go and fetch my child! She is not here, then! Answer me, sister; where is Cosette? I want my child! Monsieur Madeleine! Monsieur le Maire!"

Javert stamped his foot.

"And now there's the other one! Will you hold your tongue, you hussy? It's a pretty sort of a place where convicts are magistrates, and where women of the town are cared for like countesses! Ah! But we are going to change all that; it is high time!"

He stared intently at Fantine, and added, once more taking into his grasp Jean Valjean's cravat, shirt and collar:

"I tell you that there is no Monsieur Madeleine and that there is no Monsieur le Maire. There is a thief, a brigand, a convict named Jean Valjean! And I have him in my grasp! That's what there is!"

Fantine raised herself in bed with a bound, supporting herself on her stiffened arms and on both hands: she gazed at Jean Valjean, she gazed at Javert, she gazed at the nun, she opened her mouth as though to speak; a rattle proceeded from the depths of her throat, her teeth chattered; she stretched out her arms in her agony, opening her hands convulsively, and fumbling about her like a drowning person; then suddenly fell back on her pillow.

Her head struck the head-board of the bed and fell forwards on her breast, with gaping mouth and staring, sightless eyes.

She was dead.

Jean Valjean laid his hand upon the detaining hand of Javert, and opened it as he would have opened the hand of a baby; then he said to Javert:

"You have murdered that woman."

"Let's have an end of this!" shouted Javert, in a fury; "I am not here to listen to argument. Let us economize all that; the guard is below; march on instantly, or you'll get the thumb-screws!"

In the corner of the room stood an old iron bedstead, which was in a decidedly decrepit state, and which served the sisters as a camp-bed when they were watching with the sick. Jean Valjean stepped up to this bed, in a twinkling wrenched off the head-piece,

which was already in a dilapidated condition, an easy matter to muscles like his, grasped the principal rod like a bludgeon, and glanced at Javert. Javert retreated towards the door. Jean Valjean, armed with his bar of iron, walked slowly up to Fantine's couch. When he arrived there he turned and said to Javert, in a voice that was barely audible:

"She was dead."

"I advise you not to disturb me at this moment."

One thing is certain, and that is, that Javert trembled.

It did occur to him to summon the guard, but Jean Valjean might avail himself of that moment to effect his escape; so he remained, grasped his cane by the small end, and leaned against the door-post, without removing his eyes from Jean Valjean.

Jean Valjean rested his elbow on the knob at the head of the bed, and his brow on his hand, and began to contemplate the motionless body of Fantine, which lay extended there. He remained thus, mute, absorbed, evidently with no further thought of anything connected with this life. Upon his face and in his attitude there was nothing but inexpressible pity. After a few moments of this meditation he bent towards Fantine, and spoke to her in a low voice.

What did he say to her? What could this man, who was reproved, say to that woman, who was dead? What words were those? No one on earth heard them. Did the dead woman hear them? There are some touching illusions which are, perhaps, sublime realities. The point as to which there exists no doubt is, that Sister Simplice, the sole witness of the incident, often said that at the moment that Jean Valjean whispered in Fantine's ear, she distinctly beheld an ineffable smile dawn on those pale lips, and in those dim eyes, filled with the amazement of the tomb.

Jean Valjean took Fantine's head in both his hands, and arranged it on the pillow as a mother might have done for her child; then he tied the string of her chemise, and smoothed her hair back under

her cap. That done, he closed her eyes.

Fantine's face seemed strangely illuminated at that moment.

Death, that signifies entrance into the great light.

Fantine's hand was hanging over the side of the bed. Jean Valjean knelt down before that hand, lifted it gently, and kissed it.

Then he rose, and turned to Javert.

"Now," said he, "I am at your disposal."

Javert deposited Jean Valjean in the city prison.

The arrest of M. Madeleine occasioned a sensation, or rather, an extraordinary commotion in Montreuil-sur-Mer. We are sorry that we cannot conceal the fact, that at the single word, "He was a convict," nearly every one deserted him. In less than two hours all the good that he had done had been forgotten, and he was nothing but a "convict from the galleys." It is just to add that the details of what had taken place at Arras were not yet known. All day long conversations like the following were to be heard in all quarters of the town:

"You don't know? He was a liberated convict!" "Who?" "The mayor." "Bah! M. Madeleine?" "Yes." "Really?" "His name was not Madeleine at all; he had a frightful name, Bejean, Bojean, Boujean." "Ah! Good God!" "He has been arrested." "Arrested!" "In prison, in the city prison, while waiting to be transferred." "Until he is transferred!" "He is to be transferred!" "Where is he to be taken?" "He will be tried at the Assizes for a highway robbery which he committed long ago." "Well! I suspected as much. That man was too good, too perfect, too affected. He refused the cross; he bestowed sous on all the little scamps he came across. I always thought there was some evil history back of all that."

The "drawing-rooms" particularly abounded in remarks of this nature.

One old lady, a subscriber to the Drapeau Blanc, made the following remark, the depth of which it is impossible to fathom:

"I am not sorry. It will be a lesson to the Bonapartists!"

It was thus that the phantom which had been called M.

Madeleine vanished from Montreuil-sur-Mer. Only three or four persons in all the town remained faithful to his memory. The old portress who had served him was among the number.

On the evening of that day the worthy old woman was sitting in her lodge, still in a thorough fright, and absorbed in sad reflections. The factory had been closed all day, the carriage gate was bolted, the street was deserted. There was no one in the house but the two nuns, Sister Perpetue and Sister Simplice, who were watching beside the body of Fantine.

Towards the hour when M. Madeleine was accustomed to return home, the good portress rose mechanically, took from a drawer the key of M. Madeleine's chamber, and the flat candlestick which he used every evening to go up to his quarters; then she hung the key on the nail whence he was accustomed to take it, and set the candlestick on one side, as though she was expecting him. Then she sat down again on her chair, and became absorbed in thought once more. The poor, good old woman had done all this without being conscious of it.

It was only at the expiration of two hours that she roused herself from her revery, and exclaimed, "Hold! My good God Jesus! And I hung his key on the nail!"

At that moment the small window in the lodge opened, a hand passed through, seized the key and the candlestick, and lighted the taper at the candle which was burning there.

The portress raised her eyes, and stood there with gaping mouth, and a shriek which she confined to her throat.

She knew that hand, that arm, the sleeve of that coat.

It was M. Madeleine.

It was several seconds before she could speak; she had a seizure, as she said herself, when she related the adventure afterwards.

"Good God, Monsieur le Maire," she cried at last, "I thought you were — "

She stopped; the conclusion of her sentence would have been lacking in respect towards the beginning. Jean Valjean was still Monsieur le Maire to her.

He finished her thought.

"In prison," said he. "I was there; I broke a bar of one of the windows; I let myself drop from the top of a roof, and here I am. I am going up to my room; go and find Sister Simplice for me. She is with that poor woman, no doubt."

The old woman obeyed in all haste.

He gave her no orders; he was quite sure that she would guard him better than he should guard himself.

No one ever found out how he had managed to get into the courtyard without opening the big gates. He had, and always carried about him, a pass-key which opened a little side-door; but he must have been searched, and his latch-key must have been taken from him. This point was never explained.

He ascended the staircase leading to his chamber. On arriving at the top, he left his candle on the top step of his stairs, opened his door with very little noise, went and closed his window and his shutters by feeling, then returned for his candle and re-entered his room.

It was a useful precaution; it will be recollected that his window could be seen from the street.

He cast a glance about him, at his table, at his chair, at his bed which had not been disturbed for three days. No trace of the disorder of the night before last remained. The portress had "done up" his room; only she had picked out of the ashes and placed neatly on the table the two iron ends of the cudgel and the forty-sou piece which had been blackened by the fire.

He took a sheet of paper, on which he wrote: "These are the two tips of my iron-shod cudgel and the forty-sou piece stolen from Little Gervais, which I mentioned at the Court of Assizes," and he arranged this piece of paper, the bits of iron, and the coin in such a way that they were the first things to be seen on entering the room. From a cupboard he pulled out one of his old shirts, which he tore in pieces. In the strips of linen thus prepared he wrapped the two silver candlesticks. He betrayed neither haste nor agitation; and while he was wrapping up the Bishop's candlesticks, he nibbled at a piece of black bread. It was probably the prison-bread which he had carried with him in his flight.

This was proved by the crumbs which were found on the floor of the room when the authorities made an examination later on.

There came two taps at the door.

"Come in," said he.

It was Sister Simplice.

She was pale; her eyes were red; the candle which she carried trembled in her hand. The peculiar feature of the violences of destiny is, that however polished or cool we may be, they wring human nature from our very bowels, and force it to reappear on the surface. The emotions of that day had turned the nun into a woman once more. She had wept, and she was trembling.

Jean Valjean had just finished writing a few lines on a paper, which he handed to the nun, saying, "Sister, you will give this to Monsieur le Curé."

The paper was not folded. She cast a glance upon it.

"You can read it," said he.

She read:

"I beg Monsieur le Cure to keep an eye on all that I leave behind me. He will be so good as to pay out of it the expenses of my trial, and of the funeral of the woman who died yesterday. The rest is for the poor."

The sister tried to speak, but she only managed to stammer a few inarticulate sounds. She succeeded in saying, however:

"Does not Monsieur le Maire desire to take a last look at that poor, unhappy woman?"

"No," said he; "I am pursued; it would only end in their arresting me in that room, and that would disturb her."

He had hardly finished when a loud noise became audible on the staircase. They heard a tumult of ascending footsteps, and the old portress saying in her loudest and most piercing tones: —

"My good sir, I swear to you by the good God, that not a soul has entered this house all day, nor all the evening, and that I have not even left the door."

A man responded: —

"But there is a light in that room, nevertheless."

They recognized Javert's voice.

The chamber was so arranged that the door in opening masked the corner of the wall on the right. Jean Valjean blew out the light and placed himself in this angle. Sister Simplice fell on her knees near the table.

The door opened.

Javert entered.

The whispers of many men and the protestations of the portress were audible in the corridor.

The nun did not raise her eyes. She was praying.

The candle was on the chimney-piece, and gave but very little light.

Javert caught sight of the nun and halted in amazement.

It will be remembered that the fundamental point in Javert, his element, the very air he breathed, was veneration for all authority. This was impregnable, and admitted of neither objection nor restriction. In his eyes, of course, the ecclesiastical authority was the chief of all; he was religious, superficial and correct on this point as on all others. In his eyes, a priest was a mind, who never makes a mistake; a nun was a creature who never sins; they were souls walled in from this world, with a single door which never opened except to allow the truth to pass through.

On perceiving the sister, his first movement was to retire.

But there was also another duty which bound him and impelled him imperiously in the opposite direction. His second movement was to remain and to venture on at least one question.

This was Sister Simplice, who had never told a lie in her life. Javert knew it, and held her in special veneration in consequence.

"Sister," said he, "are you alone in this room?"

A terrible moment ensued, during which the poor portress felt as though she should faint.

The sister raised her eyes and answered:

"Yes."

"Then," resumed Javert, "you will excuse me if I persist; it is my duty; you have not seen a certain person — a man — this evening? He has escaped; we are in search of him — that Jean Valjean; you have not seen him?"

The sister replied:

"No."

She lied. She had lied twice in succession, one after the other, without hesitation, promptly, as a person does when sacrificing herself.

"Pardon me," said Javert, and he retired with a deep bow.

O sainted maid! you left this world many years ago; you have rejoined your sisters, the virgins, and your brothers, the angels, in the light; may this lie be counted to your credit in paradise!

The sister's affirmation was for Javert so decisive a thing that he did not even observe the singularity of that candle which had but just been extinguished, and which was still smoking on the table.

An hour later, a man, marching amid trees and mists, was rapidly departing from Montreuil-sur-Mer in the direction of Paris. That man was Jean Valjean. It has been established by the testimony of two or three carters who met him, that he was carrying a bundle; that he was dressed in a blouse. Where had he obtained that blouse? No one ever found out. But an aged workman had died in the infirmary of the factory a few days before, leaving behind him nothing but his blouse. Perhaps that was the one.

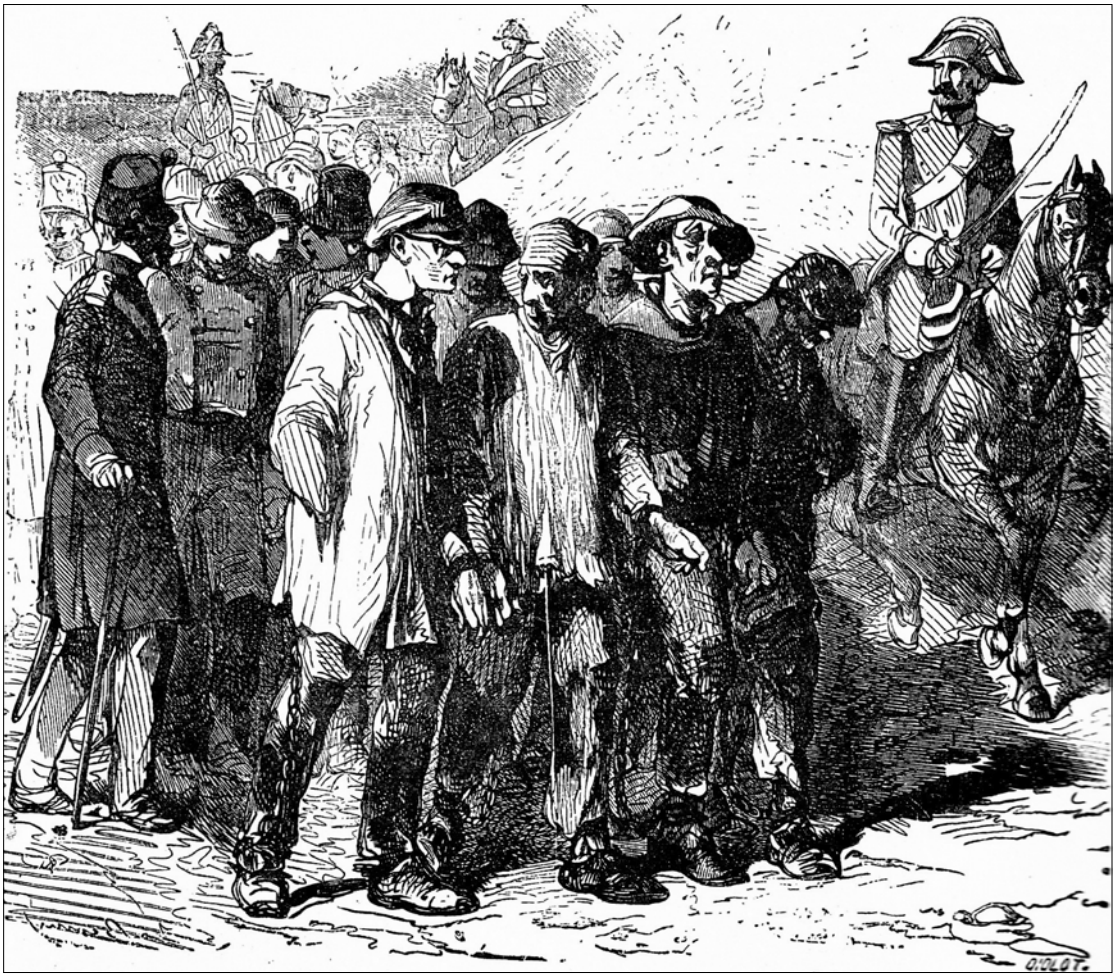
One last word about Fantine.

...

The curé thought that he was doing right, and perhaps he really was, in reserving as much money as possible from what Jean Valjean had left for the poor. Who was concerned, after all? A convict and a woman of the town. That is why he had a very simple funeral for Fantine, and reduced it to that strictly necessary form known as the pauper's grave.

So Fantine was buried in the free corner of the cemetery which belongs to anybody and everybody, and where the poor are lost. Fortunately, God knows where to find the soul again. Fantine was laid in the shade, among the first bones that came to hand; she was subjected to the promiscuousness of ashes. She was thrown into the public grave. Her grave resembled her bed.

* * *



The departure of the prisoners sentenced to hard labour

The fall from the ship Orion

COSETTE

Jean Valjean was caught again. Accused of being one of a band of armed robbers from the south he had been condemned to death, but the King commuted the sentence to hard labor. The city of Montreuil-sur-Mer along with the business Valjean had built up suffers economic collapse.

Before being reimprisoned, Valjean hides the profit he made from the factories; he buries the money in the ground in a secret spot in the woods.

1823 is the time of the Spanish War. Valjean has been working on board the ship Orion which has been put into port for repairs. During the work, one of the sailors falls from the upper rigging and dangles above the sea by a rope. Valjean gets permission to rescue him, breaks

the chain from his ankle with one blow of the hammer, and rescues the seaman. Immediately after, he appears to fall overboard himself and is presumed drowned.

Jean Valjean was not dead.

When he fell into the sea, or rather, when he threw himself into it, he was not ironed, as we have seen. He swam under water until he reached a vessel at anchor, to which a boat was moored. He found means of hiding himself in this boat until night. At night he swam off again, and reached the shore a little way from Cape Brun. There, as he did not lack money, he procured clothing. A small country-house in the neighborhood of Balaguier was at that time the dressing-room of escaped convicts,— a lucrative specialty. Then Jean Valjean, like all the sorry fugitives who are seeking to evade the vigilance of the law and social fatality, pursued an obscure and undulating itinerary. He found his first refuge at Pradeaux, near Beausset. Then he directed his course towards Grand-Villard, near Briançon, in the Hautes-Alpes. It was a fumbling and uneasy flight,— a mole's track, whose branchings are untraceable. Later on, some trace of his passage into Ain, in the territory of Civrieux, was discovered; in the Pyrenees, at Accons; at the spot called Grange-de-Doumec, near the market of Chavailles, and in the environs of Perigueux at Brunies, canton of La Chapelle-Gonaguet. He reached Paris. …

His first care on arriving in Paris had been to buy mourning clothes for a little girl of from seven to eight years of age; then to procure a lodging. That done, he had betaken himself to Montfermeil. It will be remembered that already, during his preceding escape, he had made a mysterious trip thither, or somewhere in that neighborhood, of which the law had gathered an inkling.

However, he was thought to be dead, and this still further increased the obscurity which had gathered about him. At Paris, one of the journals which chronicled the fact fell into his hands. He felt reassured and almost at peace, as though he had really been dead.

Montfermeil — at the Inn of the Thenardiers. It is Christmas eve. The Thenardiers are entertaining several men in their tavern. The three year-old boy is crying in another room. Cosette sits on the crosspiece of the kitchen table knitting wool socks for the Thenardier children. As for her, she is clad in rags and wears wooden shoes.
M. Thenardier is the boss at home even though his wife outweighs him and gives the appearance of having control. His primary goal is to get rich. One of the guests complains that his horse hasn't been given water. Cosette is forced to go out into the night to fetch water — a task requiring her to enter the woods carrying a heavy bucket. The Thenardiers gives Cosette a 15 sous coin, telling her to get a loaf of bread at the baker's on the way back. Terrified of the darkness, but even more terrified of her mistress, Cosette goes after the water. She stops for a moment to admire a doll in one of the shopping booths then hurries on.
In the woods, Cosette reaches the spring and fills the bucket, but unknowingly drops the money into the spring.
She is struggling to carry the heavy bucket back to town when a mysterious stranger lifts it away and carries it for her.
The stranger is Valjean who accompanies her to the inn and soon realizes her identity. He watches her all evening, defending her against the Thenardiers, replacing the missing coin that had slipped out of Cosette's pocket, and even going out to the Christmas booth to buy the doll Cosette had admired. He wanders about the tavern, finding Cosette in a tattered bed under the stairs. The Thenardier two daughters' shoes have been put by the fireplace in anticipation of Christmas gifts, and Mme Thenardier places a new 10 sous coin in both pairs of shoes. Valjean drops a gold louis in Cosette's shoe. In the morning, after paying an outrageous sum for his room, Valjean gives Thenardier another 1500 francs for Cosette and takes her away.

Valjean looking at Cosette sleeping with her doll under the stairs

On the evening of the day when Jean Valjean rescued Cosette from the claws of the Thenardiers, he returned to Paris. He re-entered it at nightfall, with the child, by way of the Barrier Monceaux. There he entered a cabriolet, which took him to the esplanade of the Observatoire. There he got out, paid the coachman, took Cosette by the hand, and together they directed their steps through the darkness, — through the deserted streets which adjoin the Ourcine and the Glaciere, towards the Boulevard de l'Hopital.

The day had been strange and filled with emotions for Cosette. They had eaten some bread and cheese purchased in isolated taverns, behind hedges; they had changed carriages frequently; they had travelled short distances on foot. She made no complaint, but she was weary, and Jean Valjean perceived it by the way she dragged more and more on his hand as she walked. He took her on his back. Cosette, without letting go of Catherine, laid her head on Jean Valjean's shoulder, and there fell asleep.

It was in front of the Gorbeau house that Jean Valjean halted. Like wild birds, he had chosen this desert place to construct his nest.

He fumbled in his waistcoat pocket, drew out a sort of a pass-key, opened the door, entered, closed it again carefully, and ascended the staircase, still carrying Cosette.

At the top of the stairs he drew from his pocket another key, with which he opened another door. The chamber which he entered, and which

The Gorbeau house

he closed again instantly, was a kind of moderately spacious attic, furnished with a mattress laid on the floor, a table, and several chairs; a stove in which a fire was burning, and whose embers were visible, stood in one corner. A lantern on the boulevard cast a vague light into this poor room. At the extreme end there was a dressing-room with a folding bed; Jean Valjean carried the child to this bed and laid her down there without waking her.

He struck a match and lighted a candle. All this was prepared beforehand on the table, and, as he had done on the previous evening, he began to scrutinize Cosette's face with a gaze full of ecstasy, in which the expression of kindness and tenderness almost amounted to aberration. The little girl, with that tranquil confidence which belongs only to extreme strength and extreme weakness, had fallen asleep without knowing with whom she was, and continued to sleep without knowing where she was.

Jean Valjean bent down and kissed that child's hand.

Nine months before he had kissed the hand of the mother, who had also just fallen asleep.

The same sad, piercing, religious sentiment filled his heart.

He knelt beside Cosette's bed.

lt was broad daylight, and the child still slept. A wan ray of the December sun penetrated the window of the attic and lay upon the ceiling in long threads of light and shade. All at once a heavily laden carrier's cart, which was passing along the boulevard, shook the frail bed, like a clap of thunder, and made it quiver from top to bottom.

"Yes, madame!" cried Cosette, waking with a start, "here I am! here I am!"

And she sprang out of bed, her eyes still half shut with the heaviness of sleep, extending her arms towards the corner of the wall.

"Ah! mon Dieu, my broom!" said she.

She opened her eyes wide now, and beheld the smiling countenance of Jean Valjean.

"Ah! so it is true!" said the child. "Good morning, Monsieur."

Children accept joy and happiness instantly and familiarly,

being themselves by nature joy and happiness.

Cosette caught sight of Catherine at the foot of her bed, and took possession of her, and, as she played, she put a hundred questions to Jean Valjean. Where was she? Was Paris very large? Was Madame Thenardier very far away? Was she to go back? etc., etc. All at once she exclaimed, "How pretty it is here!"

It was a frightful hole, but she felt free.

"Must I sweep?" she resumed at last.

"Play!" said Jean Valjean.

The day passed thus. Cosette, without troubling herself to understand anything, was inexpressibly happy with that doll and that kind man.

On the following morning, at daybreak, Jean Valjean was still by Cosette's bedside; he watched there motionless, waiting for her to wake.

Some new thing had come into his soul.

Jean Valjean had never loved anything; for twenty-five years he had been alone in the world. He had never been father, lover, husband, friend. In the prison he had been vicious, gloomy, chaste, ignorant, and shy. The heart of that ex-convict was full of virginity. His sister and his sister's children had left him only a vague and far-off memory which had finally almost completely vanished; he had made every effort to find them, and not having been able to find them, he had forgotten them. Human nature is made thus; the other tender emotions of his youth, if he had ever had any, had fallen into an abyss.

When he saw Cosette, when he had taken possession of her, carried her off, and delivered her, he felt his heart moved within him.

All the passion and affection within him awoke, and rushed towards that child. He approached the bed, where she lay sleeping, and trembled with joy. He suffered all the pangs of a mother, and he knew not what it meant; for that great and singular movement of a heart which begins to love is a very obscure and a very sweet thing.

Poor old man, with a perfectly new heart!

Only, as he was five and fifty, and Cosette eight years of age, all that might have been love in the whole course of his life flowed together into a sort of ineffable light.

It was the second white apparition which he had encountered. The Bishop had caused the dawn of virtue to rise on his horizon; Cosette caused the dawn of love to rise.

The early days passed in this dazzled state.

Cosette, on her side, had also, unknown to herself, become another being, poor little thing! She was so little when her mother left her, that she no longer remembered her. Like all children, who resemble young shoots of the vine, which cling to everything, she had tried to love; she had not succeeded. All had repulsed her, — the Thenardiers, their children, other children. She had loved the dog, and he had died, after which nothing and nobody would have anything to do with her. It is a sad thing to say, and we have already intimated it, that, at eight years of age, her heart was cold. It was not her fault; it was not the faculty of loving that she lacked; alas! it was the possibility. Thus, from the very first day, all her sentient and thinking powers loved this kind man. She felt that which she had never felt before — a sensation of expansion.

The man no longer produced on her the effect of being old or poor; she thought Jean Valjean handsome, just as she thought the hovel pretty.

These are the effects of the dawn, of childhood, of joy. The novelty of the earth and of life counts for something here. Nothing is so charming as the coloring reflection of happiness on a garret. We all have in our past a delightful garret.

Nature, a difference of fifty years, had set a profound gulf between Jean Valjean and Cosette; destiny filled in this gulf. Destiny suddenly united and wedded with its irresistible power these two uprooted existences, differing in age, alike in sorrow. One, in fact, completed the other. Cosette's instinct sought a father, as Jean Valjean's instinct sought a child. To meet was to find each other. At the mysterious moment when their hands touched, they were welded together. When these two souls perceived each

other, they recognized each other as necessary to each other, and embraced each other closely.

Taking the words in their most comprehensive and absolute sense, we may say that, separated from every one by the walls of the tomb, Jean Valjean was the widower, and Cosette was the orphan: this situation caused Jean Valjean to become Cosette's father after a celestial fashion.

And in truth, the mysterious impression produced on Cosette in the depths of the forest of Chelles by the hand of Jean Valjean grasping hers in the dark was not an illusion, but a reality. The entrance of that man into the destiny of that child had been the advent of God.

Moreover, Jean Valjean had chosen his refuge well. There he seemed perfectly secure.

The chamber with a dressing-room, which he occupied with Cosette, was the one whose window opened on the boulevard. This being the only window in the house, no neighbors' glances were to be feared from across the way or at the side.

The ground-floor of Number 50-52, a sort of dilapidated penthouse, served as a wagon-house for market-gardeners, and no communication existed between it and the first story. It was separated by the flooring, which had neither traps nor stairs, and which formed the diaphragm of the building, as it were. The first story contained, as we have said, numerous chambers and several attics, only one of which was occupied by the old woman who took charge of Jean Valjean's housekeeping; all the rest was uninhabited.

It was this old woman, ornamented with the name of the principal lodger, and in reality intrusted with the functions of portress, who had let him the lodging on Christmas eve. He had represented himself to her as a gentleman of means who had been ruined by Spanish bonds, who was coming there to live with his little daughter. He had paid her six months in advance, and had commissioned the old woman to furnish the chamber and dressing-room, as we have seen. It was this good woman who had lighted the fire in the stove, and prepared everything on the

Valjean and Cosette, painting by Gustave Brion

evening of their arrival.

Week followed week; these two beings led a happy life in that hovel.

Cosette laughed, chattered, and sang from daybreak. Children have their morning song as well as birds.

It sometimes happened that Jean Valjean clasped her tiny red hand, all cracked with chilblains, and kissed it. The poor child, who was used to being beaten, did not know the meaning of this, and ran away in confusion.

At times she became serious and stared at her little black gown.

Cosette was no longer in rags; she was in mourning. She had emerged from misery, and she was entering into life.

Jean Valjean had undertaken to teach her to read. Sometimes, as he made the child spell, he remembered that it was with the idea of doing evil that he had learned to read in prison. This idea had ended in teaching a child to read. Then the ex-convict smiled with the pensive smile of the angels.

He felt in it a premeditation from on high, the will of someone who was not man, and he became absorbed in revery. Good thoughts have their abysses as well as evil ones.

To teach Cosette to read, and to let her play, this constituted nearly the whole of Jean Valjean's existence. And then he talked of her mother, and he made her pray.

She called him father, and knew no other name for him.

He passed hours in watching her dressing and undressing her doll, and in listening to her prattle. Life, henceforth, appeared to him to be full of interest; men seemed to him good and just; he no longer reproached any one in thought; he saw no reason why he should not live to be a very old man, now that this child loved him. He saw a whole future stretching out before him, illuminated by Cosette as by a charming light. The best of us are not exempt from egotistical thoughts. At times, he reflected with a sort of joy that she would be ugly.

This is only a personal opinion; but, to utter our whole thought, at the point where Jean Valjean had arrived when he began to love Cosette, it is by no means clear to us that he did not need this encouragement in order that he might persevere in well-doing. He had just viewed the malice of men and the misery of society under a new aspect — incomplete aspects, which unfortunately only exhibited one side of the truth, the fate of woman as summed up in Fantine, and public authority as personified in Javert. He had returned to prison, this time for having done right; he had quaffed fresh bitterness; disgust and lassitude were overpowering him; even the memory of the Bishop probably suffered a temporary eclipse, though sure to reappear later on luminous and triumphant; but, after all, that sacred memory was growing dim. Who

knows whether Jean Valjean had not been on the eve of growing discouraged and of falling once more? He loved and grew strong again. Alas! He walked with no less indecision than Cosette. He protected her, and she strengthened him. Thanks to him, she could walk through life; thanks to her, he could continue in virtue. He was that child's stay, and she was his prop. Oh, unfathomable and divine mystery of the balances of destiny!

Then begin ten years of hiding, moving from place to place, always staying just ahead of Javert. Seven or eight happy years are spent in a convent where Valjean works with the gardener and Cosette attends a girls' school.

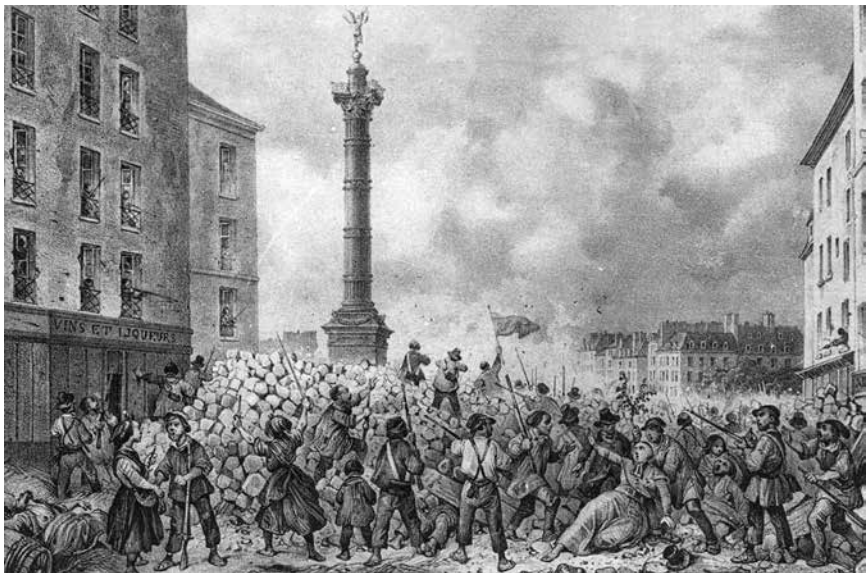
Feeling that Cosette must have the opportunity to experience all of life, they leave the convent when she is about fifteen. Valjean is nearly betrayed and recaptured due to the insidious if somewhat unwitting deeds of the Thenardiers.

Valjean is continuously on the lookout for people who might have guessed his identity and he makes their home always in out of the way places. Cosette becomes aware of her own feminity and beauty. She and Marius become aware of each other and fall in love.

Marius is a college student who has been raised by his grandfather after the old man had disowned his son-in-law for supporting Napoleon. Marius discovers the truth about his father shortly after his death and enmity develops between himself and his grandfather. With little income, Marius is unable to marry Cosette, and his grandfather refuses to give consent for a marriage to someone he assumes is beneath him.

In Paris, politics, work issues, and various unsatisfactory conditions are gradually bringing a faction of workers and students to the point of revolt. An insurrection takes place; Marius joins in hoping to die since he is not able to have Cosette. Valjean joins the insurrection because he believes he is losing Cosette's love and because, although Marius hates him bitterly, he intends to try to protect Marius for Cosette.

When the barricades are finally overtaken by the government, Valjean rescues Marius and escapes through the city sewers. Marius is



Barricades during a rebellion in Paris (1848)

unconscious and does not know who rescued him. When his health returns, he insists once again on marrying Cosette, and this time the grandfather relents. Old wounds are at least partially healed.

As Javert is also dead, it would seem that Cosette, Valjean, Marius and his grandfather could all form one happy family. Cosette and Marius marry. But just after Cosette's marriage to Marius, Valjean feels compelled to reveal to Marius that he is an ex-convict and therefore cannot be part of the family circle with the risk of his real personality being found out one day. Afterwards, Marius even begins to have suspicions that Valjean had stolen the large sum of money he gave as a dowry for Cosette. He also suspects that Valjean killed Javert in revenge. He therefore endeavours to bring Valjean's visits to Cosette to an end.

The Thenardiers are a continuous nuisance to Valjean and occasionally a real threat to his freedom. One day, Thenardier, hoping to gain a reward, goes to see Marius, now the baron Pontmercy, with the intention to denounce Valjean. Instead he actually reveals with definite proofs the truth about Valjean to Marius, who suddenly real-

izes that Valjean had been his mysterious savior on the barricades and that the money given to Cosette had not been stolen.

As soon as Thenardier had left the house, Marius rushed to the garden, where Cosette was still walking.

"Cosette! Cosette!" he cried. "Come! come quick! Let us go. Basque, a carriage! Cosette, come. Ah! My God! It was he who saved my life! Let us not lose a minute! Put on your shawl."

Cosette thought him mad and obeyed.

He could not breathe, he laid his hand on his heart to restrain its throbbing. He paced back and forth with huge strides, he embraced Cosette:

"Ah! Cosette! I am an unhappy wretch!" said he.

Marius was bewildered. He began to catch a glimpse in Jean Valjean of some indescribably lofty and melancholy figure. An unheard-of virtue, supreme and sweet, humble in its immensity, appeared to him. The convict was transfigured into Christ.

Marius was dazzled by this prodigy. He did not know precisely what he beheld, but it was grand.

In an instant, a hackney-carriage stood in front of the door.

Marius helped Cosette in and darted in himself.

"Driver," said he, "Rue de l'Homme Armé, Number 7."

The carriage drove off.

"Ah! what happiness!" ejaculated Cosette. "Rue de l'Homme Armé, I did not dare to speak to you of that. We are going to see M. Jean."

"Thy father! Cosette, thy father more than ever. Cosette, I guess it. You told me that you had never received the letter that I sent you by Gavroche. It must have fallen into his hands. Cosette, he went to the barricade to save me. As it is a necessity with him to be an angel, he saved others also; he saved Javert. He rescued me from that gulf to give me to you. He carried me on his back through that frightful sewer. Ah! I am a monster of ingratitude. Cosette, after having been your providence, he became mine. Just imagine, there was a terrible quagmire enough to drown one a

hundred times over, to drown one in mire. Cosette! he made me traverse it. I was unconscious; I saw nothing, I heard nothing, I could know nothing of my own adventure. We are going to bring him back, to take him with us, whether he is willing or not, he shall never leave us again. If only he is at home! Provided only that we can find him, I will pass the rest of my life in venerating him. Yes, that is how it should be, do you see, Cosette? Gavroche must have delivered my letter to him. All is explained. You understand."

Cosette did not understand a word.

"You are right," she said to him.

Meanwhile the carriage rolled on.

Jean Valjean turned round at the knock which he heard on his door.

"Come in," he said feebly.

The door opened.

Cosette and Marius made their appearance.

Cosette rushed into the room.

Marius remained on the threshold, leaning against the jamb of the door.

"Cosette!" said Jean Valjean.

And he sat erect in his chair, his arms outstretched and trembling, haggard, livid, gloomy, an immense joy in his eyes.

Cosette, stifling with emotion, fell upon Jean Valjean's breast.

"Father!" said she.

Jean Valjean, overcome, stammered:

"Cosette! she! you! Madame! it is thou! Ah! my God!"

And, pressed close in Cosette's arms, he exclaimed:

"It is thou! thou art here! Thou dost pardon me then!"

Marius, lowering his eyelids, in order to keep his tears from flowing, took a step forward and murmured between lips convulsively contracted to repress his sobs:

"My father!"

"And you also, you pardon me!" Jean Valjean said to him.

Marius could find no words, and Jean Valjean added:

"Thanks."

Cosette tore off her shawl and tossed her hat on the bed.

"It embarrasses me," said she.

And, seating herself on the old man's knees, she put aside his white locks with an adorable movement, and kissed his brow.

Jean Valjean, bewildered, let her have her own way.

Cosette, who only understood in a very confused manner, redoubled her caresses, as though she desired to pay Marius' debt.

Jean Valjean stammered:

"How stupid people are! I thought that I should never see her again. Imagine, Monsieur Pontmercy, at the very moment when you entered, I was saying to myself: 'All is over. Here is her little gown, I am a miserable man, I shall never see Cosette again,' and I was saying that at the very moment when you were mounting the stairs. Was not I an idiot? Just see how idiotic one can be! One reckons without the good God. The good God says:

"'You fancy that you are about to be abandoned, stupid! No.

"seating herself on the old man's knees..."

No, things will not go so. Come, there is a good man yonder who is in need of an angel.' And the angel comes, and one sees one's Cosette again! and one sees one's little Cosette once more! Ah! I was very unhappy."

For a moment he could not speak, then he went on:

"I really needed to see Cosette a little bit now and then. A heart needs a bone to gnaw. But I was perfectly conscious that I was in the way. I gave myself reasons: 'They do not want you, keep in your own course, one has not the right to cling eternally.' Ah! God be praised, I see her once more! Dost thou know, Cosette, thy husband is very handsome? Ah! what a pretty embroidered collar thou hast on, luckily. I am fond of that pattern. It was thy husband who chose it, was it not? And then, thou shouldst have some cashmere shawls. Let me call her thou, Monsieur Pontmercy. It will not be for long."

And Cosette began again:

"How wicked of you to have left us like that! Where did you go? Why have you stayed away so long? Formerly your journeys only lasted three or four days. I sent Nicolette, the answer always was: 'He is absent.' How long have you been back? Why did you not let us know? Do you know that you are very much changed? Ah! what a naughty father! he has been ill, and we have not known it! Stay, Marius, feel how cold his hand is!"

"So you are here! Monsieur Pontmercy, you pardon me!" repeated Jean Valjean.

At that word which Jean Valjean had just uttered once more, all that was swelling Marius' heart found vent.

He burst forth:

"Cosette, do you hear? he has come to that! he asks my forgiveness! And do you know what he has done for me, Cosette? He has saved my life. He has done more — he has given you to me. And after having saved me, and after having given you to me, Cosette, what has he done with himself? He has sacrificed himself. Behold the man. And he says to me the ingrate, to me the forgetful, to me the pitiless, to me the guilty one: Thanks! Cosette, my whole life passed at the feet of this man would be

too little. That barricade, that sewer, that furnace, that cesspool, — all that he traversed for me, for thee, Cosette! He carried me away through all the deaths which he put aside before me, and accepted for himself. Every courage, every virtue, every heroism, every sanctity he possesses! Cosette, that man is an angel!"

"Hush! hush!" said Jean Valjean in a low voice. "Why tell all that?"

"But you!" cried Marius with a wrath in which there was veneration, "why did you not tell it to me? It is your own fault, too. You save people's lives, and you conceal it from them! You do more, under the pretext of unmasking yourself, you calumniate yourself. It is frightful."

"I told the truth," replied Jean Valjean.

"No," retorted Marius, "the truth is the whole truth; and that you did not tell. You were Monsieur Madeleine, why not have said so? You saved Javert, why not have said so? I owed my life to you, why not have said so?"

"Because I thought as you do. I thought that you were in the right. It was necessary that I should go away. If you had known about that affair, of the sewer, you would have made me remain near you. I was therefore forced to hold my peace. If I had spoken, it would have caused embarrassment in every way."

"It would have embarrassed what? embarrassed whom?" retorted Marius. "Do you think that you are going to stay here? We shall carry you off. Ah! good heavens! when I reflect that it was by an accident that I have learned all this. You form a part of ourselves. You are her father, and mine. You shall not pass another day in this dreadful house. Do not imagine that you will be here to-morrow."

"To-morrow," said Jean Valjean, "I shall not be here, but I shall not be with you."

"What do you mean?" replied Marius. "Ah! come now, we are not going to permit any more journeys. You shall never leave us again. You belong to us. We shall not loose our hold of you."

"This time it is for good," added Cosette. "We have a carriage at the door. I shall run away with you. If necessary, I shall employ

force."

And she laughingly made a movement to lift the old man in her arms.

"Your chamber still stands ready in our house," she went on. "If you only knew how pretty the garden is now! The azaleas are doing very well there. The walks are sanded with river sand; there are tiny violet shells. You shall eat my strawberries. I water them myself. And no more 'madame,' no more 'Monsieur Jean,' we are living under a Republic, everybody says thou, don't they, Marius? The programme is changed. If you only knew, father, I have had a sorrow, there was a robin redbreast which had made her nest in a hole in the wall, and a horrible cat ate her. My poor, pretty, little robin red-breast which used to put her head out of her window and look at me! I cried over it. I should have liked to kill the cat. But now nobody cries any more. Everybody laughs, everybody is happy. You are going to come with us. How delighted grandfather will be! You shall have your plot in the garden, you shall cultivate it, and we shall see whether your strawberries are as fine as mine. And, then, I shall do everything that you wish, and then, you will obey me prettily."

Jean Valjean listened to her without hearing her. He heard the music of her voice rather than the sense of her words; one of those large tears which are the sombre pearls of the soul welled up slowly in his eyes.

He murmured:

"The proof that God is good is that she is here."

"Father!" said Cosette.

Jean Valjean continued:

"It is quite true that it would be charming for us to live together. Their trees are full of birds. I would walk with Cosette. It is sweet to be among living people who bid each other 'good-day,' who call to each other in the garden. People see each other from early morning. We should each cultivate our own little corner. She would make me eat her strawberries. I would make her gather my roses. That would be charming. Only ..."

He paused and said gently:

"It is a pity."

The tear did not fall, it retreated, and Jean Valjean replaced it with a smile.

Cosette took both the old man's hands in hers.

"My God!" said she, "your hands are still colder than before. Are you ill? Do you suffer?"

"I? No," replied Jean Valjean. "I am very well. Only . . ."

He paused.

"Only what?"

"I am going to die presently."

Cosette and Marius shuddered.

"To die!" exclaimed Marius.

"Yes, but that is nothing," said Jean Valjean.

He took breath, smiled and resumed:

"Cosette, thou wert talking to me, go on, so thy little robin red-breast is dead? Speak, so that I may hear thy voice."

Marius gazed at the old man in amazement.

Cosette uttered a heartrending cry.

"Father! my father! you will live. You are going to live. I insist upon your living, do you hear?"

Jean Valjean raised his head towards her with adoration.

"Oh! yes, forbid me to die. Who knows? Perhaps I shall obey. I was on the verge of dying when you came. That stopped me, it seemed to me that I was born again."

"You are full of strength and life," cried Marius. "Do you imagine that a person can die like this? You have had sorrow, you shall have no more. It is I who ask your forgiveness, and on my knees! You are going to live, and to live with us, and to live a long time. We take possession of you once more. There are two of us here who will henceforth have no other thought than your happiness."

"You see," resumed Cosette, all bathed in tears, "that Marius says that you shall not die."

Jean Valjean continued to smile.

"Even if you were to take possession of me, Monsieur Pontmercy, would that make me other than I am? No, God has

thought like you and myself, and he does not change his mind; it is useful for me to go. Death is a good arrangement. God knows better than we what we need. May you be happy, may Monsieur Pontmercy have Cosette, may youth wed the morning, may there be around you, my children, lilacs and nightingales; may your life be a beautiful, sunny lawn, may all the enchantments of heaven fill your souls, and now let me, who am good for nothing, die; it is certain that all this is right. Come, be reasonable, nothing is possible now, I am fully conscious that all is over. And then, last night, I drank that whole jug of water. How good thy husband is, Cosette! Thou art much better off with him than with me."

A noise became audible at the door.

It was the doctor entering.

"Good-day, and farewell, doctor," said Jean Valjean. "Here are my poor children."

Marius stepped up to the doctor. He addressed to him only this single word: "Monsieur? . . ." But his manner of pronouncing it contained a complete question.

The doctor replied to the question by an expressive glance.

"Because things are not agreeable," said Jean Valjean, "that is no reason for being unjust towards God."

A silence ensued.

All breasts were oppressed.

Jean Valjean turned to Cosette. He began to gaze at her as though he wished to retain her features for eternity.

In the depths of the shadow into which he had already descended, ecstasy was still possible to him when gazing at Cosette. The reflection of that sweet face lighted up his pale visage.

The doctor felt of his pulse.

"Ah! it was you that he wanted!" he murmured, looking at Cosette and Marius.

And bending down to Marius' ear, he added in a very low voice:

"Too late."

Jean Valjean surveyed the doctor and Marius serenely, almost without ceasing to gaze at Cosette.

These barely articulate words were heard to issue from his mouth:

"It is nothing to die; it is dreadful not to live."

All at once he rose to his feet. These accesses of strength are sometimes the sign of the death agony. He walked with a firm step to the wall, thrusting aside Marius and the doctor who tried to help him, detached from the wall a little copper crucifix which was suspended there, and returned to his seat with all the freedom of movement of perfect health, and said in a loud voice, as he laid the crucifix on the table:

"Behold the great martyr."

Then his chest sank in, his head wavered, as though the intoxication of the tomb were seizing hold upon him.

His hands, which rested on his knees, began to press their nails into the stuff of his trousers.

Cosette supported his shoulders, and sobbed, and tried to speak to him, but could not.

Among the words mingled with that mournful saliva which accompanies tears, they distinguished words like the following:

"Father, do not leave us. Is it possible that we have found you only to lose you again?"

It might be said that agony writhes. It goes, comes, advances towards the sepulchre, and returns towards life. There is groping in the action of dying.

Jean Valjean rallied after this semi-swoon, shook his brow as though to make the shadows fall away from it and became almost perfectly lucid once more.

He took a fold of Cosette's sleeve and kissed it.

"He is coming back! doctor, he is coming back," cried Marius.

"You are good, both of you," said Jean Valjean. "I am going to tell you what has caused me pain. What has pained me, Monsieur Pontmercy, is that you have not been willing to touch that money. That money really belongs to your wife. I will explain to you, my children, and for that reason, also, I am glad to see you. Black jet comes from England, white jet comes from Norway. All this is in this paper, which you will read. For bracelets, I invented a way of

substituting for slides of soldered sheet iron, slides of iron laid together. It is prettier, better and less costly. You will understand how much money can be made in that way. So Cosette's fortune is really hers. I give you these details, in order that your mind may be set at rest."

The portress had come upstairs and was gazing in at the half-open door. The doctor dismissed her.

But he could not prevent this zealous woman from exclaiming to the dying man before she disappeared: "Would you like a priest?"

"I have had one," replied Jean Valjean.

And with his finger he seemed to indicate a point above his head where one would have said that he saw someone.

It is probable, in fact, that the Bishop was present at this death agony.

Cosette gently slipped a pillow under his loins.

Jean Valjean resumed:

"Have no fear, Monsieur Pontmercy, I adjure you. The six hundred thousand francs really belong to Cosette. My life will have been wasted if you do not enjoy them! We managed to do very well with those glass goods. We rivalled what is called Berlin jewellery. However, we could not equal the black glass of England. A gross, which contains twelve hundred very well cut grains, only costs three francs."

When a being who is dear to us is on the point of death, we gaze upon him with a look which clings convulsively to him and which would fain hold him back.

Cosette gave her hand to Marius, and both, mute with anguish, not knowing what to say to the dying man, stood trembling and despairing before him.

Jean Valjean sank moment by moment. He was failing; he was drawing near to the gloomy horizon.

His breath had become intermittent; a little rattling interrupted it. He found some difficulty in moving his forearm, his feet had lost all movement, and in proportion as the wretchedness of limb and feebleness of body increased, all the majesty of his soul was

displayed and spread over his brow. The light of the unknown world was already visible in his eyes.

His face paled and smiled. Life was no longer there, it was something else.

His breath sank, his glance grew grander. He was a corpse on which the wings could be felt.

He made a sign to Cosette to draw near, then to Marius; the last minute of the last hour had, evidently, arrived.

He began to speak to them in a voice so feeble that it seemed to come from a distance, and one would have said that a wall now rose between them and him.

"Draw near, draw near, both of you. I love you dearly. Oh! how good it is to die like this! And thou lovest me also, my Cosette. I knew well that thou still felt friendly towards thy poor old man. How kind it was of thee to place that pillow under my loins! Thou wilt weep for me a little, wilt thou not? Not too much. I do not wish thee to have any real griefs. You must enjoy yourselves a great deal, my children. I forgot to tell you that the profit was greater still on the buckles without tongues than on all the rest. A gross of a dozen dozens cost ten francs and sold for sixty. It really was a good business. So there is no occasion for surprise at the six hundred thousand francs, Monsieur Pontmercy. It is honest money. You may be rich with a tranquil mind. Thou must have a carriage, a box at the theatres now and then, and handsome ball dresses, my Cosette, and then, thou must give good dinners to thy friends, and be very happy. I was writing to Cosette a while ago. She will find my letter. I bequeath to her the two candlesticks which stand on the chimney-piece. They are of silver, but to me they are gold, they are diamonds; they change candles which are placed in them into wax-tapers. I do not know whether the person who gave them to me is pleased with me yonder on high. I have done what I could. My children, you will not forget that I am a poor man, you will have me buried in the first plot of earth that you find, under a stone to mark the spot. This is my wish. No name on the stone. If Cosette cares to come for a little while now and then, it will give me pleasure. And you too, Monsieur Pontmercy. I must admit

that I have not always loved you. I ask your pardon for that. Now she and you form but one for me. I feel very grateful to you. I am sure that you make Cosette happy. If you only knew, Monsieur Pontmercy, her pretty rosy cheeks were my delight; when I saw her in the least pale, I was sad. In the chest of drawers, there is a bank-bill for five hundred francs. I have not touched it. It is for the poor. Cosette, dost thou see thy little gown yonder on the bed? dost thou recognize it? That was ten years ago, however. How time flies! We have been very happy. All is over. Do not weep, my children, I am not going very far, I shall see you from there, you will only have to look at night, and you will see me smile. Cosette, dost thou remember Montfermeil? Thou wert in the forest, thou wert greatly terrified; dost thou remember how I took hold of the handle of the water-bucket? That was the first time that I touched thy poor, little hand. It was so cold! Ah! your hands were red then, mademoiselle, they are very white now. And the big doll! dost thou remember? Thou didst call her Catherine. Thou regrettedest not having taken her to the convent! How thou didst make me laugh sometimes, my sweet angel! When it had been raining, thou didst float bits of straw on the gutters, and watch them pass away. One day I gave thee a willow battledore and a shuttlecock with yellow, blue and green feathers. Thou hast forgotten it. Thou wert roguish so young! Thou didst play. Thou didst put cherries in thy ears. Those are things of the past. The forests through which one has passed with one's child, the trees under which one has strolled, the convents where one has concealed oneself, the games, the hearty laughs of childhood, are shadows. I imagined that all that belonged to me. In that lay my stupidity. Those Thenardiers were wicked. Thou must forgive them. Cosette, the moment has come to tell thee the name of thy mother. She was called Fantine. Remember that name — Fantine. Kneel whenever thou utterest it. She suffered much. She loved thee dearly. She had as much unhappiness as thou hast had happiness. That is the way God apportions things. He is there on high, he sees us all, and he knows what he does in the midst of his great stars. I am on the verge of departure, my children. Love each other well and always.

There is nothing else but that in the world: love for each other. You will think sometimes of the poor old man who died here. Oh my Cosette, it is not my fault, indeed, that I have not seen thee all this time, it cut me to the heart; I went as far as the corner of the street, I must have produced a queer effect on the people who saw me pass, I was like a madman, I once went out without my hat. I no longer see clearly, my children, I had still other things to say, but never mind. Think a little of me. Come still nearer. I die happy. Give me your dear and well-beloved heads, so that I may lay my hands upon them."

Cosette and Marius fell on their knees, in despair, suffocating with tears, each beneath one of Jean Valjean's hands. Those august hands no longer moved.

He had fallen backwards, the light of the candles illuminated him.

His white face looked up to heaven, he allowed Cosette and Marius to cover his hands with kisses.

He was dead.

The night was starless and extremely dark. No doubt, in the gloom, some immense angel stood erect with wings outspread, awaiting that soul.

In the cemetery of Père-Lachaise, in the vicinity of the common grave, far from the elegant quarter of that city of sepulchres, far from all the tombs of fancy which display in the presence of eternity all the hideous fashions of death, in a deserted corner, beside an old wall, beneath a great yew tree over which climbs the wild convolvulus, amid dandelions and mosses, there lies a stone. That stone is no more exempt than others from the leprosy of time, of dampness, of the lichens and from the defilement of the birds. The water turns it green, the air blackens it. It is not near any path, and people are not fond of walking in that direction, because the grass is high and their feet are immediately wet. When there is a little sunshine, the lizards come thither. All around there is a quivering of weeds. In the spring, linnets warble in the trees.

This stone is perfectly plain. In cutting it the only thought was

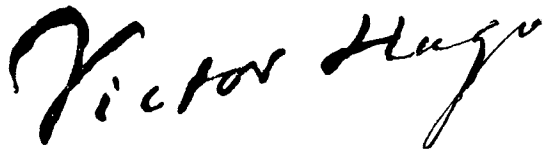
the requirements of the tomb, and no other care was taken than to make the stone long enough and narrow enough to cover a man.

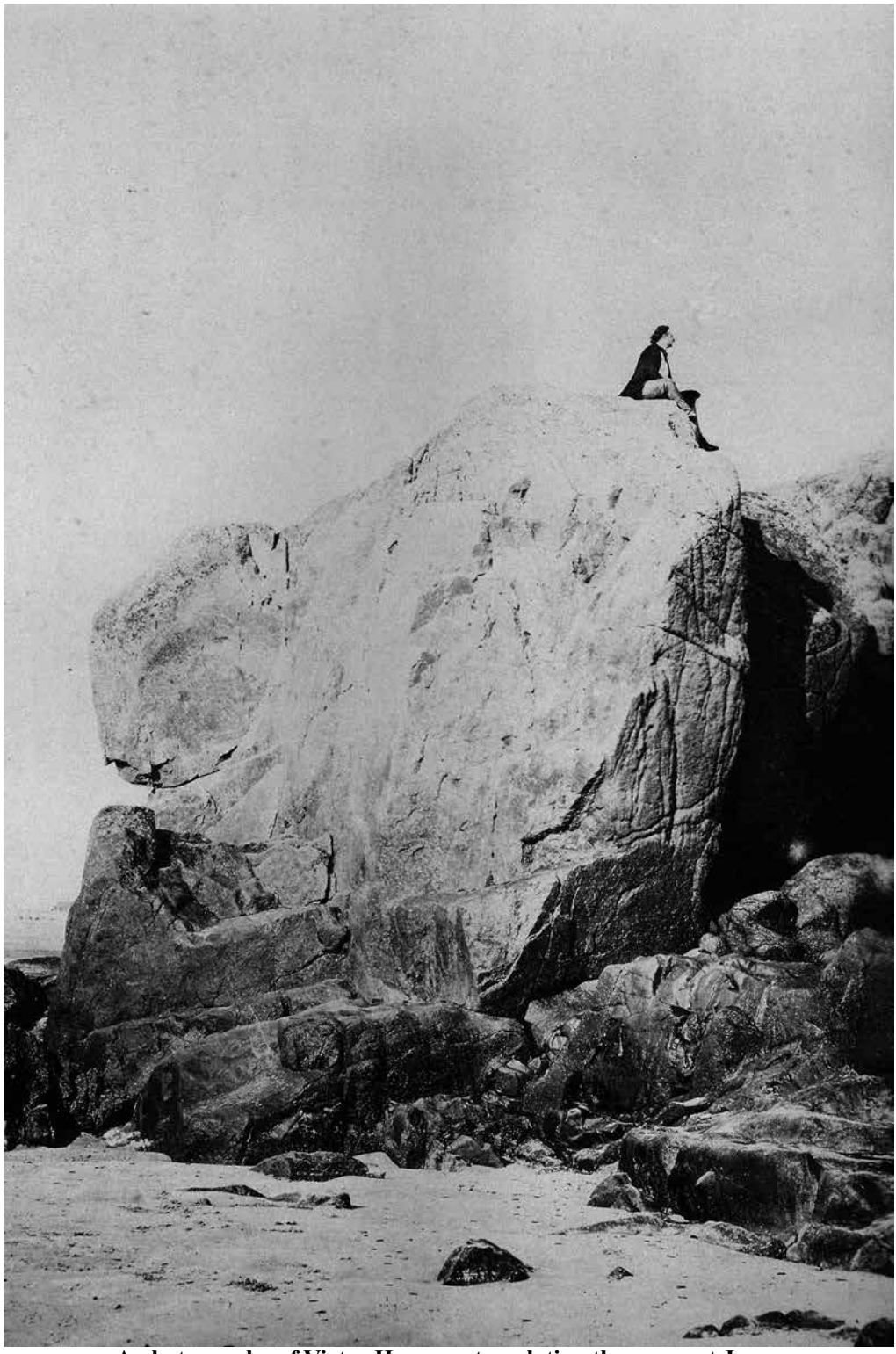
No name is to be read there.

Only, many years ago, a hand wrote upon it in pencil these four lines, which have become gradually illegible beneath the rain and the dust, and which are, to-day, probably effaced:

"Il dort. Quoique le sort fût pour lui bien étrange, il vivait.
Il mourut quand il n'eut plus son ange.
La chose simplement d'elle-même arriva,
Comme la nuit se fait lorsque le jour s'en va."

He sleeps. Although his fate was very strange, he lived.
He died when he had no longer his angel.
The thing came to pass simply, of itself,
as the night comes when day is gone.





A photography of Victor Hugo contemplating the ocean at Jersey

Appendix I

Hugo – A Summary of his Life

Victor Hugo was born in 1802, the son of an army officer and soon-to-be general of Napoleon. Napoleon Bonaparte was not yet emperor at that time but as First Consul for life he was the effective head of state and he seemed by then to have defeated all the enemies of France.

By the age of 13 Victor Hugo had realised that he had a literary calling, his early poems winning a number of awards, including two "mentions" from the Académie Francaise. During the 1820s he became one of the leading figures of the French Romantic movement[1]. In 1830 his position was enhanced by the success of the play 'Hernani' which was subject to fierce controversy, symbolising as it did the conflict between new Romantic ideas and classical French theatre. Indeed, the "battle" surrounding the play

1. What is generally meant by romanticism (or romantic era) especially in France is an artistic and literary movement born at the end of the XVIIIth century, proceeding from an original view of man and of the world. It prefers imagination, intuition and sensibility to reason. It gives more importance to what is specific to the individual and less to what is common to all men. It celebrates in the individual the intense but indefinable feelings, the aspiration for something unattainable, the exaltation caused by the contemplation of the impossible and the torment of not being able to achieve it. It expresses also a passionate love for nature. As an artistic movement, it rejects the classical rules (which were very strict particularly in French tragedy) and more generally it wants to break old forms. According to the romantics, nothing should interfere with the free expression of the artist's emotions.

is now considered to be a major turning point in French literary history.

That battle announced another one, this time a political one, a few months later, when a popular uprising overthrew the Bourbon monarchy. 1830 saw the publication of *Notre Dame de Paris*, with its evocation of life in the Middle Ages centred on the famous Paris cathedral. This novel has of course been on more than one occasion successfully adapted for the cinema, most recently as a Disney cartoon

In 1841 Hugo was elected (at the fifth attempt) to the Académie Francaise. Later he increasingly turned his attention to public and political issues, becoming a Peer of France in 1845. Tragedy also struck during this period when, in September 1843, his daughter Léopoldine and her husband were drowned in the Seine at Villequier in Normandy.

In his earlier years Hugo had been a monarchist, and during the political upheaval in 1848 (which replaced the monarchy with a republic) Hugo was mainly concerned that order should be maintained, initially welcoming and supporting the candidature of Louis Bonaparte (a nephew of the emperor Napoleon) as President of the Republic. He began to realise, however, that his moral and political ambitions were not shared by his political allies, and his relationship with them soon deteriorated.

By July 1851, his opposition to Louis Bonaparte had hardened with his coining of the phrase "we have had Napoleon the Great, now we have to have Napoleon the Small", and after the Coup d'état of the 2nd December, (in which Louis proclaimed himself emperor) he fled the country to avoid arrest, initially to Brussels. It was clear however that, as a close neighbour of France, the Belgian authorities were concerned that Hugo's political statements would strain relationships between the two countries, and in 1852 Hugo moved to Jersey (one of the Channel islands) where there were already a number of "proscribed" opponents to the new French regime. From there he published *Les Châtiments* (Punishments) in which he proclaimed his despise for the new emperor. It is also in Jersey that he started to be interested in

spiritualism.

The agitation of the French exiles irritated the local authorities and led to Hugo having to leave Jersey for another island Guernsey. In 1856, he published *Les Contemplations*, a book of poetry which was an immediate success, and with the proceeds he bought 38 Hauteville, now often known simply as Hauteville House, which he decorated in his own highly imaginative manner. There the view of the ocean and the sight of the French coast in the distance stirred his imagination. In exile Hugo wrote, completed or published the majority of the works for which he is best known, in particular *Les Contemplations* (1856), *Les Misérables* (1862), *La Légende des siècles* (1877), *William Shakespeare* (1864), *Les Chansons des rues et des bois* (1865), *Les Travailleurs de la mer* (1866), *L'Homme qui rit* (1869), and *Quatre-Vingt-Treize* (1874). To varying degrees these works were substantial popular successes, particularly of course *Les Misérables* which remains a popular literary work even today. It illustrates some of Hugo's ideas on the social and moral issues of the time, which he felt to be important. Therein he dwells at length on justice, religion, morality, education, poverty and crime. This long novel has been translated in many languages and has given birth to innumerable plays, films and musicals.

Following the fall of Louis Bonaparte in 1870, Hugo returned to France as a hero and once more took an interest in political life during another period of upheaval further complicated by the Franco-Prussian war. He was elected to the National Assembly in 1871 and was by now the idol of the republican left as well as a famous public and literary figure. Publication of his works continued, including, in 1877, *L'Art d'être grand-père*, one of the first books in French literature to deal specifically with childhood.

Hugo was also a believer in European integration, and as an illustration of this, on the 14th of July 1870, he planted in the garden of Hauteville House an oak (which still flourishes today), predicting that when the tree was mature "The United States of Europe", uniting all European nations, would have become a reality.

Hugo's wish was to be buried in a pauper's coffin. While this wish was granted, he was nevertheless, on his death in 1885, voted a National Funeral by the two government assemblies. The coffin lay in state under the Arc de Triomphe and, on the 1st of June 1885, he was buried as a national hero in the Panthéon. It is estimated that a crowd of at least two million people followed the funeral procession.

Main political upheavals during Hugo's life

1802 Plebiscite confirms Napoleon Bonaparte as First Consul for Life
1804 Napoleon I crowned Emperor
1815 Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo. Abdication. Louis XVIII becomes King of France.
1824 Louis XVIII dies and Charles X ascends the throne.
1830 Charles is overthrown and in his place the more liberal Louis-Philippe is made a constitutional monarch.
1832 Unsuccessful uprising by Parisians to overthrow the monarchy. This is the rebellion Victor Hugo described in *Les Misérables.*
1848 The monarchy is overthrown. Louis Napoleon elected President of the Second Republic.
1851 Louis Napoleon dissolves the National Assembly and proclaims himself Emperor. Second Empire begins.
1870 Franco-prussian war. France is defeated and Napoleon III is taken prisoner. Proclamation of the Third Republic which will last till 1940. Siege of Paris.
1871 Popular Parisian uprising called La Commune, which would be cruelly repressed by the government.

Timeline

1802

February 26: Birth in Besançon, France.

1815-18

Attends the Lycée Louis-Le-Grand in Paris.

1817

Honoured by the French Academy for a poem he wrote and wins first place in a national poetry competition. Hugo was an excellent student who excelled in mathematics, physics and philosophy.

1822

His first book, *Odes et Poésies Diverses* (Miscellaneous Odes and Verses) is published.

Wins a pension of 1,000 Francs per year from King Louis XVIII.

Marries Adèle Foucher who becomes the mother of his children; Leopold-Victor, Charles-Victor, Francois-Victor, Adèle and Leopoldine.

1823

First novel, *Han d'Islande* (Han of Iceland) is published.

1827

Cromwell, Hugo's play, is published and in the foreword, he wrote about the necessity of getting free from the classical restrictions. The debate between French Classicism and Romanticism had begun.

1830

Hugo became one of the leaders of a group of Romantic rebels who were trying to loosen the hold of classical literature in France.

On 25th February, during the first representation of his new play *Hernani*, a fight broke out in the public and it started what is known as the Battle of Hernani, a battle between romantics and traditionalists.

1831

Hugo's next book, *Notre-Dame de Paris* (The Hunchback of Notre Dame) is published. This book increased his popularity and reputation as the greatest writer in France, which led to his election to the French Academy in 1841.

1833

Juliette Drouet, an actress, became his mistress and became his unpaid secretary and travelling companion for the next fifty years.

1843

During this year, he was struck with tragedy: his daughter Léopoldine drowned in the Seine, along with her husband.

In the same year, his play *Les Burgraves* was not well received by the public. For the next few years, Hugo decided to focus on the growing social problems in France and did not write at all.

1845

He was made a peer of France by King Louis-Philippe.

1848

The year of another revolution. By now a Republican Hugo was elected to the French Constitutional Assembly and to the French Legislative Assembly of the new Second Republic. Strong advocate against social injustice.

1851

After the unsuccessful revolt against President Louis Napoleon (later Emperor Napoleon III), when Hugo risked execution for having tried to rally the workers of Paris against the new head of state, he fled to Brussels.

1852

Moved to Jersey, a Channel Island just off the coast of Normandy, France.
Napoléon le Petit (The Little Napoleon) is published.

1853

Hugo's best known works of poetry, *Les Châtiments* (The Punishments) is published.

1855

Moved to Guernsey at the end of October.

1856

Les Contemplations is published. Immediate success.

1862

Les Misérables, his longest and most famous work is published.

1870

After the Franco-Prussian War and the fall of the Empire, Hugo made a triumphant return to Paris.
Resumes his role in politics. Elected to the National Assembly.

1876

Hugo is elected to the Senate, but poor health made him return to Guernsey.

1885

May 22: Death at the age of eighty-three, in Paris.

June 1: National funeral attended by over two million people.
His body was laid in state under the Arc de Triomphe and he was later borne on a pauper's hearse, in accordance with his wishes, to be buried in the Panthéon, the burial place for the great French people whom the French State wants to honour.

Funeral cortege of Victor Hugo, avenue des Champs-Elysées

Appendix II

Historical Background

When Hugo wrote his novel Les Misérables, *the initial results of the new rapid economic development due to machines were already well known: prosperity for a few, exploitation and misery for the new urban proletariat of industrial workers. We give below a brief presentation of the prevailing situation in England and Europe.*

The Social Effects of Industrialization

The beginnings of modern industrialization in the eighteenth century appeared to bear out the belief of the Enlightenment that human reason and ingenuity had the power to perfect the world. The invention of labor-saving machines promised to transform man from a beast of burden into a creature of leisure. But that promise soon began to fade. The "Industrial Revolution" in the beginning at least, benefited only a minority, the middle class, while it brought utmost misery and destitution to the growing urban working class. It was only after industrialization had outgrown its infancy that its blessings came to be shared by more and more people.

Population Growth

Many of the early difficulties of industrialization were due to the unsettling effects that the tremendous population growth had on European society. Between 1815 and 1914, the population of Europe increased more than twofold, from 200 million to 460 million. Another 40 million Europeans during this time emigrated to other parts of the world, especially the United States. The rate of growth differed from country to country. It was largest in Russia, less in England and Germany, and least in France. Population growth was probably due less to an increase in the birth rate than to a decrease in the death rate. This decrease had many causes: improvements in medicine and public sanitation, absence of major wars, greater efficiency in government and administration, the revolution in agriculture leading to better diets and more ample food supplies, and, most important, the acceleration of industrial development. Industry provided the means whereby more people could live, and the increase of population, in turn, supplied the necessary industrial labor force and swelled the ranks of consumers. The growth of population and the increasing industrialization of society thus acted on and served to stimulate each other.

Urbanization and Working-Class Misery

With the increase in population and the growth of industry there came a further important change in European society — the movement of people from the country to the city. Large-scale urbanization had been virtually unknown before the early nineteenth century. But as workers began to flock to the mills, small villages grew into crowded towns and quiet towns into noisy cities. This sudden influx of people brought on wretched housing conditions. Teeming slums lacking in sanitation facilities turned into breeding places of disease, vice, and crime. There was as yet no effective municipal administration to cope with these novel problems, and the workers themselves were too poor to improve their condition.

Poor housing was not the only hardship afflicting the early

workingman. Since mechanized industry required little skill, there was always an abundance of manpower, and wages were kept at a minimum. The average working day was between twelve and sixteen hours. But even this rarely yielded sufficient pay to support a worker's family, so that women and children had to work as well. Since they were more easily controlled and received less pay, they were much in demand. But women and children also suffered more than men did from the harsh conditions in factories and mines. No provisions were made for the workers' safety, and accidents resulting from machines to which they were not accustomed were frequent. There was no insurance against accidents, sickness, or old age. Furthermore, as more machines were used and as more efficient machines were invented, unemployment added to the workers' hardships. As industrialization spread to the Continent, so did the abuses that accompanied it. Conditions in Belgium and France were almost as bad as those in England.

> It is impossible to give a proper representation of the wretched state of many of the inhabitants of the indigent class, situated in the confined streets where each small, ill ventilated apartment of the house contained a family with lodgers in number from seven to nine, and seldom more than two beds for the whole. The want of convenient offices in the neighborhood is attended with many very unpleasant circumstances, as it induces the lazy inmates to make use of chamber utensils, which are suffered to remain in the most offensive state for several days, and are then emptied out of the windows. The writer had occasion a short time ago to visit a person ill of the cholera; his lodgings were in a room of a miserable house situated in the very filthiest part of Pipewellgate, divided into six apartments, and occupied by different families to the number of 26 persons in all. The room contained three wretched beds with two persons sleeping in each; it measured about 12 feet in length and 7 in breadth, and its greatest height would not admit of a person's standing erect; it received light from a small window, the sash of which was fixed. Two of the number lay ill of the cholera, and the rest appeared afraid of the

admission of pure air, having carefully closed up the broken panes with plugs of old linen.

From "Report from the Poor Law Commissioners on the Sanitary Conditions of the Labouring Population of Great Britain," 1842, pp. 21-22.

Middle-Class Indifference

The attitude of much of the middle class toward the misery of the working class was one of indifference. The pioneers of modern industrialization, the new "captains of industry," were tough and ruthless men. They had to be if they wanted to survive, because competition was keen and risks were great. For every one of them who made good, there were several who fell by the wayside; the path of early industrialism was lined with bankruptcies. Economic booms burst; wars closed markets; machinery broke down or became obsolete; and the agrarian supporters of the old order fought stubbornly against middle-class efforts to gain economic and political influence.

The seemingly callous attitude of the middle class toward the hardships of the workers came from the middle-class philosophy of liberalism, which helped justify such selfish behavior. It was the belief in economic liberalism that prevented any drastic measures of social reform in the early part of the nineteenth century. The absence of such reform, in turn, led to various protests on behalf of the workers, of which Marxian socialism became the most effective.

Social Reform

Given the laissez-faire attitude of liberalism, it is not surprising that efforts to solve social problems through government action found little support among the middle class. What social reforms were introduced owed much to the agitation of a few individuals, who were motivated either by humanitarianism or, as in the case

Child labour in a cotton mill (19th century)

of Britain's "Philosophical Radicals," by a desire to be utilitarian and efficient.

Factory Acts

Some of the most effective opposition to early nineteenth-century liberalism came from among the representatives of the old order. For political and economic but also humanitarian reasons, some Tories attacked the new industrial system in its most vulnerable spot, the terrible conditions in the mines and factories. As far back as 1802, Parliament had passed an act that cut down the working hours of apprentices. The first real factory act, passed in 1819, forbade the employment in cotton mills of children under nine years of age and limited the daily labor of children over nine to twelve hours. In 1831 night work was abolished for persons under twenty-one. In 1847 the maximum working day for women

and children was set at ten hours. Two acts in 1842 and 1855 made it illegal to employ women and children in the mining industry.

Despite the best intentions on the part of their sponsors, however, these early factory acts were not very effective. They were not strictly enforced, and they applied chiefly to the cotton industry. Not until 1833 was their scope extended to include other industries, and only then was some system of inspection set up to enforce the new provisions.

Social Legislation

There were other reforms in England besides factory acts. The Municipal Corporations Act of 1835 enabled municipalities to cope more effectively with problems arising from rapid urbanization. To ensure some degree of uniformity in matters of public health, Parliament in 1848 set up a system of local boards of health. One of the most pressing social problems was the care of the poor. The New Poor Law of 1834 for the first time brought some order into the complicated system of poor relief. It was, however, a mixed blessing to the poor. The law abolished the traditional practice of "outdoor relief," under which the wages of the poorest workers had been supplemented from public funds. Henceforth, to be eligible for relief, the poor had to report to workhouses; and by making conditions in these establishments as unpleasant as possible, all but those who could not possibly make a living otherwise were discouraged from going on relief. Here was a measure, clearly utilitarian, that delighted the middle class. It discouraged idleness and cut the expense of poor relief.

On the Continent, little was done to reform the abuses of early industrialism. A French law in 1803 prohibited work in factories before 3:00 a.m. Under the reign of Louis Philippe, the employment of children under eight was prohibited, and the work of children under twelve was limited to eight hours a day. But enforcement of these laws, in France as in England, was very lax. In Belgium, nothing at all was being done to improve the lot of the workers. The only state with any industry in Germany was

Prussia, and the Prussian government, in 1839, introduced a factory law that forbade the employment of children under nine and limited the working hours of older children to ten hours.

Liberalism and Education

The only field of social reform in which the Continent was ahead of Great Britain was education. Here, for once, liberalism was a great help. Like the philosophe of the eighteenth century, the nineteenth-century liberal was a firm believer in education as a means of improving the world and of helping children get ahead. Any governmental measure in favor of education, therefore, had liberal support. Both France and Prussia had a long tradition of public education, which they maintained during the nineteenth century. There was a brief reaction in favor of religious education under the Bourbons, but the Education Act passed under Louis Philippe again asserted the state's role in education. Britain's first provision of public funds for education was not until 1833. It was increased in subsequent years, but even so the amount set aside for education in 1839 was still only half of what it cost to maintain Queen Victoria's horses. Not until 1870 was the first general education act adopted in England. In the meantime, education depended on private initiative, in which the middle class played a leading and beneficial role.

As this discussion has shown, some genuine attempts were made in the first half of the nineteenth century to cope with the ills of early industrialism through social reform. But such attempts ran counter to the laissez-faire philosophy of liberalism. Economic liberalism was, to some extent, a mere rationalization of selfish interests by the middle class. But there was also in it much of the eighteenth-century belief that the world operated according to certain basic laws that could not be altered and that ultimately made for the greater happiness of the greatest number.

This passive acquiescence in things as they were, however, could not possibly satisfy the workers. They refused to believe that the only solution to their troubles was to do nothing, to let matters

take their course. They demanded that remedial action be taken on their behalf, else they were prepared to act for themselves.

Working-class Protest

The protest of the working class took various forms. Some of the discontent expressed itself in political action, as in the revolutions of 1830 and 1848. In another form of protest, workers vented their anger and frustration on the very instruments that to them seemed primarily responsible for their plight — the machines. There were sporadic instances of such "machine-breaking" during the early phase of industrialization, both in England and on the Continent. But these acts of despair could not halt the advance of the machine age. Instead of waging war against mechanization, workers increasingly tried to escape industrialization altogether by emigrating to the United States, where virgin lands offered them the opportunity of making a better living.

* * *

Appendix III

Selected Texts by Victor Hugo

Important addresses by Victor Hugo about peace and the future

Victor Hugo was a visionary who cared deeply for the world. He spoke with great force and vision in several occasions. We give below a few samples of his most important addresses:

I. Opening Address to the Peace Congress (Paris, August 21, 1849)

A day will come when your arms will fall even from your hands! A day will come when war will seem as absurd and impossible between Paris and London, between Petersburg and Berlin, between Vienna and Turin, as it would be impossible and would seem absurd today between Rouen and Amiens, between Boston and Philadelphia. A day will come when you France, you Russia, you Italy, you England, you Germany, you all, nations of the continent, without losing your distinct qualities and your glorious individuality, will be merged closely within a superior unit and you will form the European brotherhood, just as Normandy, Brittany, Burgundy, Lorraine, Alsace, all our provinces are merged together in France. A day will come

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THE PEACE CONGRESS AT PARIS.

M. VICTOR HUGO, PRESIDENT OF THE CONGRESS.

M. V. MARIE-DOMINIQUE AUGUSTE, ARCHBISHOP OF PARIS, HONORARY PRESIDENT OF THE CONGRESS.

Delegates from various parts of the world; the further portion being occupied by visitors, including a large number of ladies, whose light summer costumes formed a lively contrast with the sombre room of delegates, the gravity of whose appearance was somewhat enlivened by the large number of fine bearded worthies there. A gallery, the entire length of the room, was also filled with gay visitors. The Congress was opened by the Archbishop of Paris, who addressed the Congress. As the addresses appeared, they were received with great enthusiasm. M. Victor Hugo (the President of the Congress) pronounced an eloquent address.

A letter was then read from the Archbishop of Paris, to whom the presidency had been offered, but which he was compelled to decline, from ill health. M. Cormenin read a letter from the President of the Assembly, in favour of Congress, without taking sides. The usual publication of the Archbishop's encyclical appeal in behalf of Venice, quoted by us last week, was warmly remembered. We have omitted the different speakers in our report, but we may allude to M. J. Journet, who obtained leave to speak; but his visionary views were accompanied by tone and action so wild and frenzied, that the striking amusement of the Congress was, at last, turned into a feeling of pity for the poor man. Harmony and harmony pervaded the meeting, and every sentiment in relation to the peace and friendship of England and France was responded to with the utmost cordiality. The Eton Choristers (Lord Ashley's protégés) sang stirring chansons and choruses when the assembly separated; the French people were delighted with the English boys, and vice versâ. The French people were the dancing minuets of France acquired an additional air from contrast with the members of the Society of Friends; and the picturesque Frenchwoman looked more piquant beside the staid sisterhood.

On Thursday the sitting was brought with increasing crowds. It was then announced that the Government had ordered all the public buildings to be opened to the members of the Congress, on showing their tickets; and also that on Monday the water-works of Versailles and St. Cloud were to play, for the special amusement of the members of the Congress.

Friday's sitting was more crowded and enthusiastic than the preceding one; and, in conclusion, the friends of peace express the utmost satisfaction and pleasure at the manner in which the French people have responded to them. The Government dispensed with passports and search of luggage. The party from Paris consisted of about 1,000 persons.

The large illustration shows the opening of the Congress by Victor Hugo, with portraits of most of the principal characters around him. Accompanying is the portrait of Victor Hugo, the President, and of J. M. V. Marie Dominique Auguste, Archbishop of Paris, the Honorary President.

THE PEACE CONGRESS, IN THE SALLE DU CIRQUE, AT PARIS: M. VICTOR HUGO OPENING THE PROCEEDINGS.

Illustrated London News: an article about the Peace Congress at Paris, 1849 (top left: a portrait of Hugo, and bottom: opening of the proceedings by Victor Hugo

when the only fields of battle will be markets opening up to trade and minds opening up to ideas. A day will come when the bullets and the bombs will be replaced by votes, by the universal suffrage of the peoples, by the venerable arbitration of a great sovereign senate which will be to Europe what this parliament is to England,

what this diet is to Germany, what this legislative assembly is to France. A day will come when we will display cannon in museums just as we display instruments of torture today, and are amazed that such things could ever have been possible. (…)

It is after all a prodigious and admirable epoch, and the nineteenth century will be — let us say it openly — the greatest page in history. As I reminded you just now, all our advances are revealing and manifesting themselves together, in rapid succession: the decline in international animosity, the disappearance of frontiers from maps and of prejudices from hearts, a movement towards unity, a softening of manners, an increase in the level of education and a drop in the level of penalties, the dominance of the most literary, that is to say the most humane, languages; everything is moving at once, political economy, science, industry, philosophy, legislation, and is converging upon the same end, the creation of well-being and benevolence, and that for me is the end to which I shall always strive, the extinction of misery inside and of war outside.

II. Address to the Peace Congress held in London in 1851

Gentlemen, if someone four centuries ago, at a time when war raged from parish to parish, from town to town, from province to province — if someone had said to Lorraine, to Picardy, to Normandy, to Brittany, to Auvergne, to Dauphiné, to Burgundy, 'A day will come when you will no longer wage war, when you will no longer raise men of arms against each other, when it will no longer be said that Normands have attacked the men of Picardy, and the men of Lorraine have driven back those of Burgundy; that you will still have differences to settle, interests to discuss, certainly disputes to solve, but do you know what you will have in place of men on foot and horseback, in place of guns, falconets, spears, pikes, and swords? You will have a small box made of wood, which you will call a ballot box. And do you know what this box will bring forth? An assembly, an assembly in which

you will all feel you live, an assembly which will be like your own soul, a supreme and popular council which will decide, judge, and solve everything in law, which will cause the sword to fall from every hand and justice to rise in every heart. And this event will say to you, 'There ends your right, here begins your duty. Lay down your arms! Live in peace!' "

On that day you will be conscious of a common thought, common interests, and a common destiny. You will clasp each other's hands and you will acknowledge that you are sons of the same blood and the same race. On that day you will no longer be hostile tribes, but a nation. You will no longer be Burgundy, Normandy, Brittany, Provence, you will be France. On that day your name will no longer be war, but civilization.

Well, you say today — and I am one of those who say it with you — all of us here, we say to France, to England, to Prussia, to Austria, to Spain, to Italy, to Russia, we say to them, 'A day will come when your weapons will fall from your hands, a day when war will seem absurd and be as impossible between Paris and London, St. Petersburg and Berlin, Vienna and Turin, as today it would seem impossible between Rouen and Amiens, Boston and Philadelphia.'

A day will come when there will be no battlefields, but markets opening to commerce and minds opening to ideas. A day will come when the bullets and bombs are replaced by votes, by universal suffrage, by the venerable arbitration of a great supreme senate which will be to Europe what Parliament is to England, the Diet to Germany, and the Legislative Assembly to France.

A day will come when a cannon will be a museum-piece, as instruments of torture are today. And we will be amazed to think that these things once existed!

A day will come when we shall see those two immense groups, the United States of America and the United States of Europe, stretching out their hands across the sea, exchanging their products, their arts, their works of genius, clearing up the globe, making deserts fruitful, ameliorating creation under the eyes of the Creator, and joining together to reap the well-being of all.

Henceforth the goal of great politics, of true politics, is this: the recognition of all nationalities, the restoration of the historical unity of nations and the uniting of the latter to civilization by peace, the relentless enlargement of the civilized group, the setting of an example to the still-savage nations; in short, and this recapitulates all I have said, the assurance that justice will have the last word, spoken in the past by might.

III. Peace Congress in Lausanne: message, September 4, 1869

Fellow citizens of the United States of Europe,

Allow me to give you this name, for the European Federal Republic is established in right and is waiting to be established in fact. You exist, therefore it exists. You confirm it by the union from which unity is taking shape. You are the beginning of a great future.

Alas, I am indeed not among those who would deny that a second war is necessary. What will this war be? A war of conquest. And what is the conquest to be made? The conquest of liberty.

IV. Peace Congress in Lausanne: Closing Address, September 18, 1869

Socialism is vast, it is not narrow. It addresses the whole human problem. It embraces the entire social concept. While it poses important questions of labour and reward, it also proclaims the inviolability of human life, the abolition of murder in all its forms, the reduction of deprivation through education, a marvellous problem solved. It proclaims free and compulsory education. It proclaims the rights of women, the responsibilities of man. Finally it proclaims the sovereignty of the individual which is synonymous with liberty.

What is all of this? It is socialism. Yes. And it is the Republic!

V. Address to French national Assembly: "For war in the present and for peace in the future" (March 1, 1871)

Let Germany feel happy and proud, with two provinces more and her liberty less. But we, we pity her; we pity her this enlargement which contains such abasement, we pity her for having been a people and for being now nothing more than an empire.

I have just said that Germany will have two more provinces. But it is not done yet, and I add, it will never be done. Never, never! To take is not to possess. Possession presupposes consent. Did Turkey possess Athens? Did Austria possess Venice? And did Russia possess Warsaw? Does Spain possess Cuba? Does England possess Gibraltar? In fact, yes, but in right, no!

(…) We shall see France arise again, we shall see her retrieve Lorraine, take back Alsace. But will that be all? No... Seize Trier, Mainz, Cologne, Koblenz, the whole of the left bank of the Rhine. And we shall hear France cry out: It's my turn, Germany, here I am! Am I your enemy? No! I am your sister. I have taken back everything and I give you everything, on one condition, that we shall act as one people, as one family, as one Republic. I shall demolish my fortresses, you will demolish yours. My revenge is fraternity! No more frontiers! The Rhine for everyone! Let us be the same Republic, let us be the United States of Europe, let us be the continental federation, let us be European liberty, let us be universal peace! And now let us shake hands, for we have done one another a service: you have delivered me from my emperor and I have delivered you from yours.

* * *

On Education (extracted from Les Misérables)

Let us not weary of repeating, and sympathetic souls must not forget that this is the first of fraternal obligations, and selfish hearts must understand that the first of political necessities consists in thinking first of all of the disinherited and sorrowing throngs, in solacing, airing, enlightening, loving them, in enlarging their horizon to a magnificent extent, in lavishing upon them education in every form, in offering them the example of labor, never the example of idleness, in diminishing the individual burden by enlarging the notion of the universal aim, in setting a limit to poverty without setting a limit to wealth, in creating vast fields of public and popular activity, in having … a hundred hands to extend in all directions to the oppressed and the feeble, in employing the collective power for that grand duty of opening workshops for all arms, schools for all aptitudes, and laboratories for all degrees of intelligence, in augmenting salaries, diminishing trouble, balancing what should be and what is, that is to say, in proportioning enjoyment to effort and a glut to need; in a word, in evolving from the social apparatus more light and more comfort for the benefit of those who suffer and those who are ignorant.

And, let us say it, all this is but the beginning. The true question is this: labor cannot be a law without being a right.

We will not insist upon this point; this is not the proper place for that.

If nature calls itself Providence, society should call itself foresight.

Intellectual and moral growth is no less indispensable than material improvement. To know is a sacrament, to think is the prime necessity, truth is nourishment as well as grain. A reason which fasts from science and wisdom grows thin. Let us enter equal complaint against stomachs and minds which do not eat. If there is anything more heart-breaking than a body perishing for lack of

bread, it is a soul which is dying from hunger for the light.

The whole of progress tends in the direction of solution. Some day we shall be amazed. As the human race mounts upward, the deep layers emerge naturally from the zone of distress. The obliteration of misery will be accomplished by a simple elevation of level.

On God

I believe in direct God.

The eyes of the masses are weak; this is their problem. Dogmas and rituals are glasses which help the short-sighted people to see the star. I can see God with naked eyes. Distinctly. I leave dogmas, rituals and symbols to the short-sighted intelligence. Glasses are useful; eyes are more precious. Faith through dogmas is good. Direct faith is better.

A religion is a translation. Those men who are said to "reveal" a religion look at the unknown which exists outside of man. High above there is a light and they can see it. They turn a mirror towards it. This mirror is more or less clear, more or less polished, more or less chromatic, more or less cleaned.

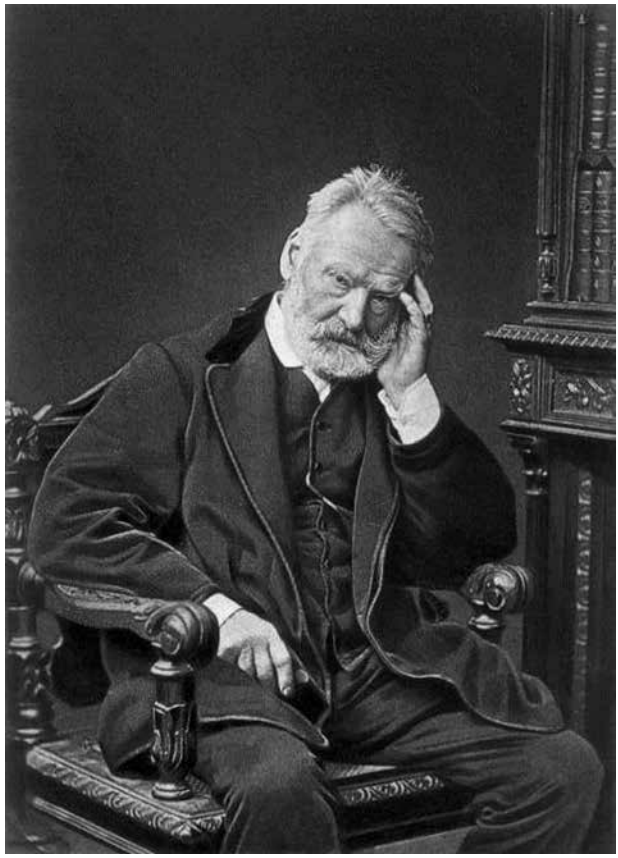
This mirror is the consciousness of these men.

Events, despotisms, kings, captains, rulers, at times make a lot of dust upon it.

…

In short, all religions are bad and all religions are good. Break them all: out of that immense shattered mirror, out of those innumerable pieces swept away in a heap, you will see the unique star shining. Once you have thrown away all these portraits of the Truth, twisted to the point of falsehood, the majestic image will appear.

Out of all the destroyed religions, comes out the indestructible. This is because, I have said it, all religions are translations. Under all their thick layers, there is the text…



On Voltaire

This is an oration delivered by Victor Hugo in 1878 on the occasion of the 100th death anniversary of Voltaire. Voltaire was a great writer, satirist and philosopher of the XVIIIth century. His devastating criticism of absolutism, injustice, oppression, intolerance of all kinds and religious fanaticism (along with that of several other writers of the "Enlightenment Age") contributed a good deal in bringing about the French Revolution.

A hundred years ago to-day a man died. He died immortal. He departed laden with years, laden wih works, laden with the most illustrious and the most fearful of responsibilities, the responsibility of the human conscience informed and rectified. He went cursed and blessed, cursed by the past, blessed by the future; and these, gentlemen, are the two superb forms of glory. On his death-bed he had, on the one hand, the acclaim of contemporaries and of posterity; on the other, that triumph of hooting and of hate which the implacable past bestows upon those who have combated it. He was more than a man; he was an age. He had exercised a function and fulfilled a mission. He had been evidently chosen for the work which he had done, by the Supreme Will, which manifests itself as visibly in the laws of destiny as in the laws of nature.

The eighty-four years that this man lived occupy the interval that separates the monarchy at its apogee from the revolution in its dawn. When he was born, Louis XIV still reigned; when he died, Louis XVI reigned already; so that his cradle could see the last rays of the great throne, and his coffin the first gleams from the great abyss.

Before going further, let us come to an understanding, gentlemen, upon the word abyss. There are good abysses; such are

the abysses in which evil is engulfed.

Gentlemen, since I have interrupted myself, allow me to complete my thought. No word imprudent or unsound will be pronounced here. We are here to perform an act of civilization. We are here to make affirmation of progress, to pay respect to philosophers for the benefits of philosophy, to bring to the eighteenth century the testimony of the nineteenth, to honor magnanimous combatants and good servants, to felicitate the noble effort of peoples, industry, science, the valiant march in advance, the toil to cement human concord; in one word, to glorify peace, that sublime, universal desire. Peace is the virtue of civilization; war is its crime. We are here, at this grand moment, in this solemn hour, to bow religiously before the moral law, and to say to the world, which hears France, this: There is only one power, conscience, in the service of justice: and there is only one glory, genius, in the service of truth. That said, I continue:

Before the Revolution, gentlemen, the social structure was this:

At the base, the people;

Above the people, religion represented by the clergy;

By the side of religion, justice represented by the magistracy.

And, at that period of human society, what was the people? It was ignorance. What was religion? It was intolerance. And what was justice? It was injustice. Am I going too far in my words? Judge.

I will confine myself to the citation of two facts, but decisive ones.

At Toulouse, October 13, 1761, there was found in a lower story of a house a young man hanged. The crowd gathered, the clergy fulminated, the magistracy investigated. It was a suicide; they made of it an assassination. In what interest? In the interest of religion. And who was accused? The father. He was a Huguenot, and he wished to hinder his son from becoming a Catholic. There was here a moral monstrosity and a material impossibility; no matter! This father had killed his son; this old man had hanged this young man. Justice travailed, and this was the result. In the

month of March, 1762, a man with white hair, Jean Calas, was conducted to a public place, stripped naked, stretched on a wheel, the members bound on it, the head hanging. Three men are there upon a scaffold; a magistrate, named David, charged to superintend the punishment, a priest to hold the crucifix, and the executioner with a bar of iron in his hand. The patient, stupefied and terrible, regards not the priest, and looks at the executioner. The executioner lifts the bar of iron, and breaks one of his arms. The victim groans and swoons. The magistrate comes forward; they make the condemned inhale salts; he returns to life. Then another stroke of the bar; another groan. Calas loses consciousness; they revive him, and the executioner begins again; and, as each limb before being broken in two places receives two blows, that makes eight punishments. After the eighth swooning the priest offers him the crucifix to kiss; Calas turns away his head, and the executioner gives him the coup de grace; that is to say, crushes in his chest with the thick end of the bar of iron. So died Jean Calas.

That lasted two hours. After his death the evidence of the suicide came to light. But an assassination had been committed. By whom? By the judges.

Another fact. After the old man, the young man. Three years later, in 1765, in Abbeville, the day after a night of storm and high wind, there was found upon the pavement of a bridge an old crucifix of worm-eaten wood, which for three centuries had been fastened to the parapet. Who had thrown down this crucifix? Who committed this sacrilege? It is not known. Perhaps a passer-by. Perhaps the wind. Who is the guilty one? The bishop of Amiens launches a monitoire. Note what a monitoire was: it was an order to all the faithful, on pain of hell, to declare what they knew or believed they knew of such or such a fact; a murderous injunction, when addressed by fanaticism to ignorance. The monitoire of the bishop of Amiens' does its work; the town gossip assumes the character of the crime charged. Justice discovers, or believes it discovers, that on the night when the crucifix was thrown down, two men, two officers, one named La Barre, the other d'Étallonde, passed over the bridge of Abbeville, that they

were drunk, and that they sang a guardroom song. The tribunal was the Seneschalcy of Abbeville. The Seneschalcy of Abbeville was equivalent to the court of the Capitouls of Toulouse. It was not less just. Two orders for arrest were issued. D' Étallonde escaped, La Barre was taken. Him they delivered to judicial examination. He denied having crossed the bridge; he confessed to having sung the song. The Seneschalcy of Abbeville condemned him; he appealed to the Parliament of Paris. He was conducted to Paris; the sentence was found good and confirmed. He was conducted back to Abbeville in chains. I abridge. The monstrous hour arrives. They begin by subjecting the Chevalier de La Barre to the torture, ordinary and extraordinary, to make him reveal his accomplices. Accomplices in what? In having crossed a bridge and sung a song. During the torture one of his knees was broken; his confessor, on hearing the bones crack, fainted away. The next day, June 5, 1766, La Barre was drawn to the great square of Abbeville, where flamed a penitential fire; the sentence was read to La Barre; then they cut off one of his hands; then they tore out his tongue with iron pincers; then, in mercy, his head was cut off and thrown into the fire. So died the Chevalier de la Barre. He was nineteen years of age.

Then, O Voltaire! thou didst utter a cry of horror, and it will be to thine eternal glory!

Then didst thou enter upon the appalling trial of the past; thou didst plead against tyrants and monsters, the cause of the human race, and thou didst gain it. Great man, blessed be thou forever.

The frightful things that I have recalled were accomplished in the midst of a polite society; its life was gay and light; people went and came; they looked neither above nor below themselves; their indifference had become carelessness; graceful poets, Saint-Aulaire, Bouffiers, Gentil-Bernard, composed pretty verses; the court was all festival; Versailles was brilliant; Paris ignored what was passing; and then it was that, through religious ferocity, the judges made an old man die upon the wheel, and the priests tore out a child's tongue for a song.

In the presence of this society, frivolous and dismal, Voltaire

Le Chevalier de la Barre, who had become a symbol of an arbitrary justice was rehabilitated by the French Revolution. Later a statue of him (above) would be erected in Montmartre (Paris). What is written on the pedestal is: *To the Chevalier de la Barre, tortured to death at the age of 19, on 1st July 1766, for not removing their hats when a religious procession went by.* (That was one of the many accusations that were added to the first one. Another one was to keep at home some of Voltaire's banned books).

alone, having before his eyes those united forces, the court, the nobility, capital; that unconscious power, the blind multitude; that terrible magistracy, so severe to subjects, so docile to the master, crushing and flattering, kneeling on the people before the king; that clergy, vile mélange of hypocrisy and fanaticism; Voltaire alone, I repeat it, declared war against that coalition of all the social iniquities, against that enormous and terrible world, and he accepted battle with it. And what was his weapon? That which has the lightness of the wind and the power of the thunderbolt. A pen.

With that weapon he fought; with that weapon he conquered.

Gentlemen, let us salute that memory.

Voltaire conquered; Voltaire waged the splendid kind of warfare, the war of one alone against all; that is to say, the grand warfare. The war of thought against matter, the war of reason against prejudice, the war of the just against the unjust, the war for the oppressed against the oppressor; the war of goodness, the war of kindness. He had the tenderness of a woman and the wrath of a hero. He was a great mind, and an immense heart.

He conquered the old code and the old dogma. He conquered the feudal lord, the Gothic judge, the Roman priest. He raised the populace to the dignity of people. He taught, pacificated, and civilized. He fought for Sirven and Montbailly, as for Calas and La Barre; he accepted all the menaces, all the outrages, all the persecutions, calumny, and exile. He was indefatigable and immovable. He conquered violence by a smile, despotism by sarcasm, infallibility by irony, obstinacy by perseverance, ignorance by truth.

I have just pronounced the word, smile. I pause at it. Smile! It is Voltaire.

Let us say it, gentlemen, pacification is the great side of the philosopher; in Voltaire the equilibrium always re-establishes itself at last. Whatever may be his just wrath, it passes, and the irritated Voltaire always gives place to the Voltaire calmed. Then in that profound eye the SMILE appears.

That smile is wisdom. That smile. I repeat, is Voltaire. That smile sometimes becomes laughter, but the philosophic sadness

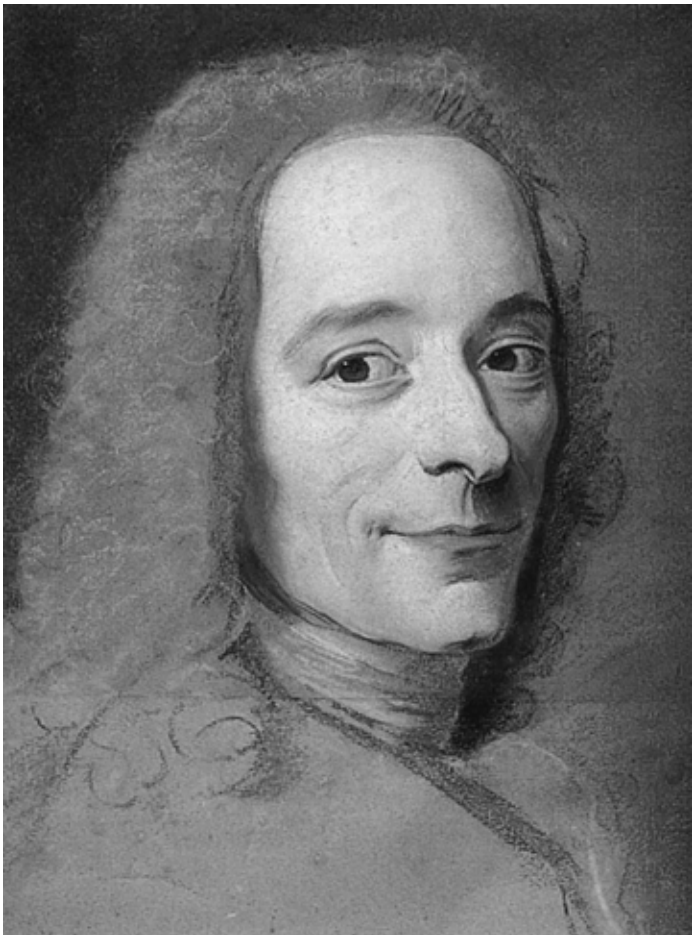
tempers it. Toward the strong it is mockery; toward the weak it is a caress. It disquiets the oppressor, and reassures the oppressed. Against the great, it is raillery; for the little, it is pity. Ah, let us be moved by that smile! It had in it the rays of the dawn. It illuminated the true, the just, the good, and what there is of worthy in the useful. It lighted up the interior of superstitions. Those ugly things it is salutary to see; he has shown them. Luminous, that smile was fruitful also. The new society, the desire for equality and concession, and that beginning of fraternity which called itself tolerance, reciprocal good-will, the just accord of men and rights, reason recognized as the supreme law, the annihilation of prejudices and fixed opinions, the serenity of souls, the spirit of indulgence and of pardon, harmony, peace – behold, what has come from that great smile!

On the day – very near, without any doubt – when the identity of wisdom and clemency will be recognized, the day when the amnesty will be proclaimed, I affirm it, up there, in the stars, Voltaire will smile.

Gentlemen, between two servants of Humanity, who appeared eighteen hundred years apart, there is a mysterious relation.

To combat Pharisaism; to unmask imposture; to overthrow tyrannies, usurpations, prejudices, falsehoods, superstitions; to demolish the temple in order to rebuild it, that is to say, to replace the false by the true; to attack a ferocious magistracy; to attack a sanguinary priesthood; to take a whip and drive the money-changers from the sanctuary; to reclaim the heritage of the disinherited; to protect the weak, the poor, the suffering, the overwhelmed, to struggle for the persecuted and oppressed -- that was the war of Jesus Christ! And who waged that war? It was Voltaire.

The completion of the evangelical work is the philosophical work; the spirit of meekness began, the spirit of tolerance continued. Let us say it with a sentiment of profound respect; JESUS WEPT; VOLTAIRE SMILED. Of that divine tear and of that human smile is composed the sweetness of the present civilization.



Voltaire's famous smile

Did Voltaire always smile? No. He was often indignant. You remarked it in my first words.

Certainly, gentlemen, measure, reserve, proportion are reason's supreme law. We can say that moderation is the very breath of the philosopher. The effort of the wise man ought to be to condense into a sort of serene certainty all the approximations of which philosophy is composed. But at certain moments, the passion for the true rises powerful and violent, and it is within its right in so doing, like the stormy winds which purify. Never, I insist upon it, will any wise man shake those two august supports of social labor, justice and hope; and all will respect the judge if he is embodied justice, and all will venerate the priest if he represents hope. But if the magistracy calls itself torture, if the Church calls itself Inquisition, then Humanity looks them in the face and says to the judge: "I will none of thy law!" and says to the priest: "I will none of thy dogma! I will none of thy fire on the earth and thy hell in the future!" Then philosophy rises in wrath, and arraigns the judge before justice, and the priest before God!

This is what Voltaire did. It was grand.

What Voltaire was, I have said; what his age was, I am about to say.

Gentlemen, great men rarely come alone; large trees seem larger when they dominate a forest; there they are at home. There was a forest of minds around Voltaire; that forest was the eighteenth century. Among those minds there were summits: Montesquieu, Buffon, Beaumarchais, and among others, two, the highest after Voltaire: Rousseau and Diderot. Those thinkers taught men to reason; reasoning well leads to acting well; justness in the mind becomes justice in the heart. Those toilers for progress labored usefully. Buffon founded naturalism; Beaumarchais discovered, outside of Molière, a kind of comedy until then unknown almost, the social comedy; Montesquieu made in law some excavations so profound that he succeeded in exhuming the right. As to Rousseau, as to Diderot, let us pronounce those two names apart; Diderot, a vast intelligence, inquisitive, a tender heart, a thirst for justice, wished to give certain notions as the foundation of true

ideas, and created the Encyclopedia. Rousseau rendered to woman an admirable service, completing the mother by the nurse, placing near each other those two majesties of the cradle. Rousseau, a writer, eloquent and pathetic, a profound oratorical dreamer, often divined and proclaimed political truth; his ideal borders on the real; he had the glory of being the first man in France who called himself citizen. The civic fibre vibrates in Rousseau; that which vibrates in Voltaire is tile universal fibre. One can say that in the fruitful eighteenth century, Rousseau represented the people; Voltaire, still more vast, represented Man. Those powerful writers disappeared, but they left us their soul, the Revolution.

Yes, the French Revolution was their soul. It was their radiant manifestation. It came from them; we find them everywhere in that blessed and superb catastrophe, which formed the conclusion of the past and the opening of the future. In that clear light, which is peculiar to revolutions, and which beyond causes permits us to perceive effects, and beyond the first plan the second, we see behind Danton Diderot, behind Robespierre Rousseau, and behind Mirabeau Voltaire. These formed those.

Gentlemen, to sum up epochs, by giving them the names of men, to name ages, to make of them in some sort human personages, has only been done by three peoples: Greece, Italy, France. We say, the Age of Pericles, the Age of Augustus, the Age of Leo X, the Age of Louis XIV, the Age of Voltaire. Those appellations have a great significance. This privilege of giving names to periods belonging exclusively to Greece, to Italy, and to France, is the highest mark of civilization. Until Voltaire, they were the names of the chiefs of states; Voltaire is more than the chief of a state; he is a chief of ideas; with Voltaire a new cycle begins. We feel that henceforth the supreme governmental power is to be thought. Civilization obeyed force; it will obey the ideal. It was the sceptre and the sword broken, to be replaced by the ray of light; that is to say, authority transfigured into liberty. Henceforth, no other sovereignty than the law for the people, and the conscience for the individual. For each of us, the two aspects of progress separate themselves clearly, and they are these: to exercise one's right; that

is to say, to be a man; to perform one's duty; that is to say, to be a citizen.

Such is the signification of that word, the Age of Voltaire; such is the meaning of that august event, the French Revolution.

The two memorable centuries that preceded the eighteenth, prepared for it; Rabelais warned royalty in Gargantua, and Molière warned the Church in Tartuffe. Hatred of force and respect for right are visible in those two illustrious spirits.

Whoever says to-day, 'might makes right', performs an act of the Middle Ages, and speaks to men three hundred years behind their time.

Gentlemen, the nineteenth century glorifies the eighteenth century. The eighteenth proposed, the nineteenth concludes. And my last word will be the declaration, tranquil but inflexible, of progress.

The time has come. The right has found its formula: human federation.

To-day, force is called violence, and begins to be judged; war is arraigned. Civilization, upon the complaint of the human race, orders the trial, and draws up the great criminal indictment of conquerors and captains. This witness, History, is summoned. The reality appears. The factitious brilliancy is dissipated. In many cases the hero is a species of assassin. The peoples begin to comprehend that increasing the magnitude of a crime cannot be its diminution; that, if to kill is a crime, kill many cannot be an extenuating circumstance; that, if to steal is a shame, to invade cannot glory; that Te Deums do not count for much matter; that homicide is homicide; that bloodshed is bloodshed; that it serves nothing to call one's self Caesar or Napoleon; and that, in the eyes of the eternal God, the figure of a murderer is not changed because, instead of a gallows cap, there is placed upon his head an emperor's crown.

Ah! let us proclaim absolute truths. Let us dishonor war. No; glorious war does not exist. No; it is not good, and it is not useful, to make corpses. No; it cannot be that life travails for death. No; oh, mothers that surround me, it cannot be that war, the robber,

should continue to take from you your children. No; it cannot be that women should bear children in pain, that men should be born, that people should plow and sow, that the farmer should fertilize the fields, and the workmen enrich the city, that industry should produce marvels, that genius should produce prodigies, that the vast human activity should in presence of the starry sky, multiply efforts and creations, all to result in that frightful international exposition which is called a field of battle!

The true field of battle, behold it here! It is this rendezvous of the masterpieces of human labor which Paris offers the world at this moment.[1]

The true victory is the victory of Paris.

Alas! we cannot hide it from ourselves, that the present hour, worthy as it is of admiration and respect, has still some mournful aspects; there are still shadows on the horizon; the tragedy of the peoples is not finished; war, wicked war, is still there, and it has the audacity to lift its head in the midst of this august festival of peace. Princes for two years past, obstinately adhere to a fatal misunderstanding; their discord forms an obstacle to our concord, and they are ill-inspired to condemn us to the statement of such a contrast.

Let this contrast lead us back to Voltaire. In the presence of menacing possibilities, let us be more pacific than ever. Let us turn toward that great death, toward that great life, toward that great spirit. Let us bend before the venerated tombs. Let us take counsel of him whose life, useful to men, was extinguished a hundred years ago, but whose work is immortal. Let us take counsel of the other powerful thinkers, the auxiliaries of this glorious Voltaire, of Jean Jacques, of Diderot, of Montesquieu. Let us give the word to those great voices. Let us stop the effusion of human blood. Enough! enough! despots! Ah! barbarism persists; very well, let civilization be indignant. Let the eighteenth century come to the help of the nineteenth. The philosophers, our prede-

1. The "universal Exhibition" of 1878 was then open in Paris and attracted many visitors. It was a time of great rejoice and pride in all the new modern inventions and realisations

cessors, are the apostles of the true; let us invoke those illustrious shades; let them, before monarchies meditate wars, proclaim the right of man to life, the right of conscience to liberty, the sovereignty of reason, the holiness of labor, the beneficence of peace: and since night issues from the thrones, let the light come from the tombs.

from *The Writings of Voltaire*. New York: E.R. Dumont, 1901

Appendix IV

Tributes to Victor Hugo

by well-known artists and writers

Victor in Poesy, Victor in Romance,
Cloud-weaver of phantasmal hopes and fears,
French of the French, and Lord of human tears;
Child-lover; Bard whose fame-lit laurels glance
Darkening the wreaths of all that would advance,
Beyond our strait, their claim to be thy peers;
Weird Titan by thy winter weight of years
As yet unbroken, Stormy voice of France!

— Tennyson

Of all the French writers that I have read, I like Molière and Racine best. There are fine things in Balzac and passages in Mérimée which strike one like a keen blast of sea air. Alfred de Musset is impossible! I admire Victor Hugo — I appreciate his genius, his brilliancy, his romanticism; though he is not one of my literary passions. But Hugo and Goethe and Schiller and all great poets of all great nations are interpreters of eternal things, and my spirit reverently follows them into the regions where Beauty and Truth and Goodness are one.

— Hellen Keller, "The Story of My Life"

"Like a page from Hugo..."

The Hague, 30 March & 1 April 1883

I am reading *Les Misérables* by Victor Hugo. A book which I remember of old, but I had a great longing to read it again. It is very beautiful, that figure of Monseigneur Myriel or Bienvenu I think sublime.

You spoke in your last letter of "exerting influence" in connection with your patient. That Mgr Myriel reminds me of Corot or Millet, though he was a priest and the other two, painters. ...You surely know *Les Misérables*, and certainly the illustrations which Brion made for it too, very good and very appropriate.

It is good to read such a book again, I think, just to keep some feelings alive. Especially love for humanity, and the faith in, and consciousness of, something higher, in short, quelque chose là-haut.

I was absorbed in it for a few hours this afternoon, and then came into the studio about the time the sun was setting. From the window I looked down on a wide dark foreground — dug-up gardens and fields of warm black earth of a very deep tone. Diagonally across it runs a little path of yellowish sand, bordered with greeen grass and slender, spare young poplars. The background was formed by a grey silhouette for the city, with the round roof of the railway station, and spires, and chimneys. And moreover, backs of houses everywhere; but at that time of evening, everything is blended by the tone. So viewed in a large way, the whole thing is simply a foreground of black dug-up earth, a path across it, behind it a grey silhouette of the city, with spires, and over it all, almost at the horizon, the red sun. It was exactly like a page from Hugo, and I am sure that you would have been struck by it, and that you would describe it better than I.

— Vincent van Gogh (in a letter to his brother Theo)

"Few books in the world can be compared with it"

… We look in vain for any similar blemish in *Les Misérables.* Here, on the other hand, there is perhaps the nearest approach to literary restraint that Hugo has ever made: there is here certainly the ripest and most easy development of his powers. It is the moral intention of this great novel to awaken us a little, if it may be — for such awakenings are unpleasant — to the great cost of this society that we enjoy and profit by, to the labour and sweat of those who support the litter, civilisation, in which we ourselves are so smoothly carried forward. People are all glad to shut their eyes; and it gives them a very simple pleasure when they can forget that our laws commit a million individual injustices, to be once roughly just in the general; that the bread that we eat, and the quiet of the family, and all that embellishes life and makes it worth having, have to be purchased by death — by the deaths of animals, and the deaths of men wearied out with labour, and the deaths of those criminals called tyrants and revolutionaries, and the deaths of those revolutionaries called criminals. It is to something of all this that Victor Hugo wishes to open men's eyes in *Les Misérables*; and this moral lesson is worked out in masterly coincidence with the artistic effect. The deadly weight of civilisation to those who are below presses sensibly on our shoulders as we read. A sort of mocking indignation grows upon us as we find Society rejecting, again and again, the services of the most serviceable; setting Jean Valjean to pick oakum, casting Galileo into prison, even crucifying Christ. There is a haunting and horrible sense of insecurity about the book. The terror we thus feel is a terror for the machinery of law, that we can hear tearing, in the dark, good and bad between its formidable wheels with the iron stolidity of all machinery, human or divine. This terror incarnates itself sometimes and leaps horribly out upon us; as when the crouching mendicant looks up, and Jean Valjean, in the light of the street lamp, recognises the face of the detective; as when the lantern of the patrol flashes suddenly through the darkness of the sewer; or as when the fugitive comes forth at last at evening, by

the quiet riverside, and finds the police there also, waiting stolidly for vice and stolidly satisfied to take virtue instead. The whole book is full of oppression, and full of prejudice, which is the great cause of oppression. We have the prejudices of M. Gillenormand, the prejudices of Marius, the prejudices in revolt that defend the barricade, and the throned prejudices that carry it by storm. And then we have the admirable but ill-written character of Javert, the man who had made a religion of the police, and would not survive the moment when he learned that there was another truth outside the truth of laws; a just creation, over which the reader will do well to ponder.

With so gloomy a design this great work is still full of life and light and love. The portrait of the good Bishop is one of the most agreeable things in modern literature. The whole scene at Montfermeil is full of the charm that Hugo knows so well how to throw about children. Who can forget the passage where Cosette, sent out at night to draw water, stands in admiration before the illuminated booth, and the huckster behind "lui faisait un peu l'effet d'être le Père éternel?" [looked to her a little like the Eternal Father] The pathos of the forlorn sabot laid trustingly by the chimney in expectation of the Santa Claus that was not, takes us fairly by the throat; there is nothing in Shakespeare that touches the heart more nearly. The loves of Cosette and Marius are very pure and pleasant, and we cannot refuse our affection to Gavroche, although we may make a mental reservation of our profound disbelief in his existence. Take it for all in all, there are few books in the world that can be compared with it. There is as much calm and serenity as Hugo has ever attained to; the melodramatic coarsenesses that disfigured *Notre Dame* [de Paris] are no longer present. There is certainly much that is painfully improbable; and again, the story itself is a little too well constructed; it produces on us the effect of a puzzle, and we grow incredulous as we find that every character fits again and again into the plot, and is, like the child's cube, serviceable on six faces; things are not so well arranged in life as all that comes to. Some of the digressions, also, seem out of place, and do nothing but interrupt and irritate. But

when all is said, the book remains of masterly conception and of masterly development, full of pathos, full of truth, full of a high eloquence. …

— Robert Louis Stevenson
in "Preface. By Way of Criticism" (The Art of Writing)

At Victor Hugo's Newspaper Office

Probably the most interesting newspaper office I have ever visited is that of the Paris Rappel, which is owned by Victor Hugo and his son. The Rappel is the largest of the radical journals of Paris; it is as ably written as any of the newspapers of that great city, which is no wonder, considering that the great poet himself is a regular contributor to its columns; and it has a circulation so extensive as to make it very profitable property.

I had a letter to Victor Hugo, and, not finding him at his residence in the Rue Deluc, drove to the office of the Rappel, where, I was told, I would be certain to meet him. Le Rappel occupies most elegant apartments in a new five-story building on the Boulevard Montmartre. The editorial sanctum is a splendid room on the second floor, with large windows, and a most delightful view of one of the finest portions of Paris.

… the door opened, and Victor Hugo himself stepped in. I recognized him at once, although nearly thirty years had passed since I had seen him last. That was in 1845, when he delivered a fiery speech in the Chamber of Peers. His hair then was black, now it was white as snow; but his bearing was still as proud and erect as then, and his eye still possessed that magnetic, wonderful brilliancy, which renders his face, although not exactly handsome, so remarkably attractive. Louis Philippe, with whom Victor Hugo was on excellent terms, always said of him:

"Whenever M. Hugo asks any thing of me, I grant it at once. I would not dare to look him in his great, curious eye, and refuse."

Let me add that Victor Hugo never asked anything wrong of

that king.

His welcome was cordial in the extreme. He informed me that Dickens, my poor, dear friend, had told him, in 1858, that I intended to visit him at his retreat on the island of Guernsey. How kind to remember it! We were friends at once. Not a trace of haughtiness is to be found in the manners of this prince of poets. He invited me to dine with him that day at six, and would not hear of any excuses.

He asked me to look at the papers a moment, rang a bell, and took from the entering boy a proof-sheet. I could not help watching him as he glanced over it. It was a brief editorial, but it evidently did not please him. Seizing a lead-pencil, he hastily wrote some lines on the proof-sheet, and then whispered to his son. The latter made a soothing remark to his father, which at once removed the frown from Victor Hugo's fine brow.

I asked him how he liked newspaper work. He laughed, and said he was hardly able to give a competent opinion about it, as he did so little of it.

"You must ask M. de Girardin about it" he said, good-naturedly. "He can tell you all about it. I never was much of a journalist."

"You write your editorials in verse," I said; and I complimented him with unfeigned admiration upon the magnificent lines he had recently addressed to the Count de Chambord.

To my astonishment, father and son looked at one another and smiled.

The son explained it all to me. "Father," he said, "blamed me for giving the poem to the printer. He was dissatisfied after finishing it. It was not good enough. I gave it, without his knowledge, to the compositors. Next day he was angry with me. I am glad, M. Andersen, that you side with me."

And thus we chatted on for over an hour. Assistant editors and reporters came in. The younger Hugo gave them their instructions in the kindest manner, his father interposing, now and then, with one of those caustic remarks for which he is noted.

In the course of the conversation he asked me about my eyesight. He said he had read somewhere that I had been in danger

of losing it entirely.

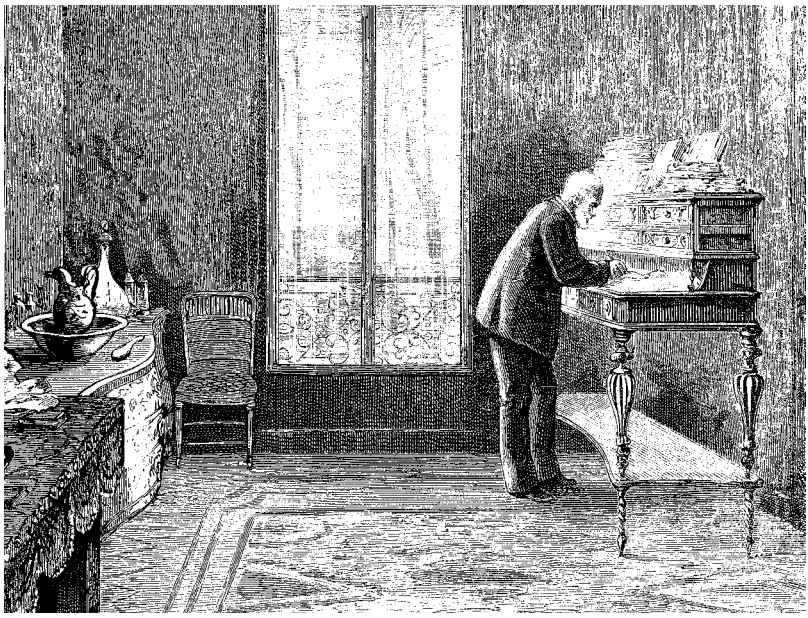
"I was twenty-two years old" he said, "when the doctors forbade me to read, under pain of becoming blind. Eighteen months I did not open a book nor write a line; but, when my eyes did not get any better, I pursued the opposite course. Then I did get better. For once the doctors were at fault."

A number of proof-sheets were brought to him, and I rose.

He took both my hands.

"At six," he said, warmly to me; "and you must stay all evening."

— Hans Christian Andersen



Hugo writing at his desk

List of Victor Hugo's Works

This list is given to show the extraordinary output of Victor Hugo as an author. Some titles are given with English translation, some are only given in French.

Published during Hugo's lifetime

- Cromwell preface only (1819)
- Odes et poésies diverses (1822)
- Odes (Hugo) (1823)
- Hans d'Islande (1823) (Hans of Iceland)
- Nouvelles Odes (1824)
- Bug-Jargal (1826)
- Odes et Ballades (1826) (Odes and Ballads)
- Cromwell (1827)
- Les Orientales (1829) (Orientalia)
- Le Dernier jour d'un condamné (1829) (The Last Day of a Condemned Man)
- Hernani (1830)
- Notre-Dame de Paris (1831), (The Hunchback of Notre-Dame)
- Marion Delorme (1831)
- Les Feuilles d'automne (1831) (Autumn Leaves)
- Le roi s'amuse (1832)
- Lucrèce Borgia (1833) (Lucretia Borgia)
- Marie Tudor (1833)
- Littérature et philosophie mêlées (1834) (A Blend of Literature and Philosophy)
- Claude Gueux (1834)

- Angelo, tyran de Padoue (1835)
- Les Chants du crépuscule (1835) (Songs of the Half Light)
- La Esmeralda (only libretto of an opera written by Victor Hugo himself) (1836)
- Les Voix intérieures (1837)
- Ruy Blas (1838)
- Les Rayons et les ombres (1840)
- Le Rhin (1842)
- Les Burgraves (1843)
- Napoléon le Petit (1852) (Napoleon the Little)
- Les Châtiments (1853)
- Les Contemplations (1856) (The Contemplations)
- Les Tryne (1856)
- La Légende des siècles (1859) (The Legend of the Ages)
- Les Misérables (1862)
- William Shakespeare (1864)
- Les Chansons des rues et des bois (1865) (Songs of Street and Wood)
- Les Travailleurs de la Mer (1866), (Toilers of the Sea)
- La voix de Guernsey (1867)
- L'Homme qui rit (1869), (The Man Who Laughs)
- L'Année terrible (1872)
- Quatrevingt-treize (Ninety-Three) (1874)
- Mes Fils (1874)
- Actes et paroles – Avant l'exil (1875)
- Actes et paroles – Pendant l'exil (1875) (Deeds and Words)
- Actes et paroles – Depuis l'exil (1876)
- La Légende des Siècles 2e série (1877)
- L'Art d'être grand-père (1877) (The Art of Being a Grandfather)
- Histoire d'un crime, 1re partie (1877) (History of a Crime)
- Histoire d'un crime, 2e partie (1878)
- Le Pape (1878)

- La pitié suprême (1879)
- Religions et religion (1880) (Religions and Religion)
- L'Âne (1880)
- Les Quatres vents de l'esprit (1881) (The Four Winds of the Spirit)
- Torquemada (1882)
- La Légende des siècles Tome III (1883)
- L'Archipel de la Manche (1883)

Published after his death

- Théâtre en liberté (1886)
- La Fin de Satan (1886)
- Choses vues (1887)
- Toute la lyre (1888) (The Whole Lyre)
- Amy Robsart (1889)
- Les Jumeaux (1889)
- Actes et Paroles Depuis l'exil, 1876–1885 (1889)
- Alpes et Pyrénées (1890) (Alps and Pyrenees)
- Dieu (1891)
- France et Belgique (1892)
- Toute la lyre – dernière série (1893)
- Les fromages (1895)
- Correspondences – Tome I (1896)
- Correspondences – Tome II (1898)
- Les années funestes (1898)
- Choses vues – nouvelle série (1900)
- Post-scriptum de ma vie (1901)
- Dernière Gerbe (1902)
- Mille francs de récompense (1934)
- Océan. Tas de pierres (1942)
- L'Intervention (1951)
- Conversations with Eternity (1998)

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Other monographs distributed by Auroville Press Publishers

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Catherine the Great
Uniting Men – Jean Monnet
Gods and the World
Joan of Arc
The Crucifixion
Nachiketas
Socrates
Sri Krishna in Brindavan
Sri Rama – The Beloved and Victorious Hero
Arguments for the Existence of God
Taittiriya Upanishad
Selected Episodes from Raghuvamsam of Kalidasa
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Printed at Auroville Press
2013