

VICTOR HUGO, LASCELLES  
WRAXALL

LES  
MISÉRABLES, V.  
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**Lascelles Wraxall**  
**Victor Hugo**  
**Les Misérables, v. 1**

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*Les Misérables, v. 1/5: Fantine:*

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# Victor Hugo

## Les Misérables, v. 1/5: Fantine

### PREFACE

So long as, by the effect of laws and of customs, social degradation shall continue in the midst of civilization, making artificial hells, and subjecting to the complications of chance the divine destiny of man; so long as the three problems of the age, – the debasement of man by the proletariat, the ruin of woman by the force of hunger, the destruction of children in the darkness, – shall not be solved; so long as anywhere social syncope shall be possible: in other words, and from a still broader point of view, so long as ignorance and misery shall remain on earth, books like this cannot fail to be useful.

HAUTEVILLE-HOUSE, 1862.

# **BOOK I**

## **A JUST MAN**

### **CHAPTER I**

#### **M. MYRIEL**

In 1815 M. Charles François Bienvenu Myriel was Bishop of D – . He was a man of about seventy-five years of age, and had held the see of D – since 1806. Although the following details in no way affect our narrative, it may not be useless to quote the rumors that were current about him at the moment when he came to the diocese, for what is said of men, whether it be true or false, often occupies as much space in their life, and especially in their destiny, as what they do. M. Myriel was the son of a councillor of the Aix Parliament. It was said that his father, who intended that he should be his successor, married him at the age of eighteen or twenty, according to a not uncommon custom in parliamentary families. Charles Myriel, in spite of this marriage (so people said), had been the cause of much tattle. He was well built, though of short stature, elegant, graceful, and witty; and the earlier part of his life was devoted to the world and to gallantry. The Revolution came, events hurried on, and the parliamentary families, decimated and hunted down, became

dispersed. M. Charles Myriel emigrated to Italy in the early part of the Revolution, and his wife, who had been long suffering from a chest complaint, died there, leaving no children. What next took place in M. Myriel's destiny? Did the overthrow of the old French society, the fall of his own family, and the tragic-spectacles of '93, more frightful perhaps to the emigrés who saw them from a distance with the magnifying power of terror, cause ideas of renunciation and solitude to germinate in him? Was he, in the midst of one of the distractions and affections which occupied his life, suddenly assailed by one of those mysterious and terrible blows which often prostrate, by striking at his heart, a man whom public catastrophes could not overthrow by attacking him in his existence and his fortune? No one could have answered these questions; all that was known was that when he returned from Italy he was a priest.

In 1804 M. Myriel was Curé of B – (Brignolles). He was already aged, and lived in great retirement. Towards the period of the coronation a small matter connected with his curacy, no one remembers what, took him to Paris. Among other powerful persons he applied to Cardinal Fesch on behalf of his parishioners. One day, when the Emperor was paying a visit to his uncle, the worthy curé, who was waiting in the ante-room, saw his Majesty pass. Napoleon, noticing this old man regard him with some degree of curiosity, turned and asked sharply, —

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

"Sire," M. Myriel said, "you are looking at a good man and I

at a great man. We may both profit by it."

The Emperor, on the same evening, asked the Cardinal the curé's name, and some time after M. Myriel, to his great surprise, learned that he was nominated Bishop of D – . What truth, by the way, was there in the stories about M. Myriel's early life? No one knew, for few persons had been acquainted with his family before the Revolution. M. Myriel was fated to undergo the lot of every new comer to a little town, where there are many mouths that speak, and but few heads that think. He was obliged to undergo it, though he was bishop, and because he was bishop. But, after all, the stories in which his name was mingled were only stories, rumors, words, remarks, less than words, mere *palabres*, to use a term borrowed from the energetic language of the South. Whatever they might be, after ten years of episcopacy and residence at D – , all this gossip, which at the outset affords matter of conversation for little towns and little people, had fallen into deep oblivion. No one would have dared to speak of it, no one have dared to remember it.

M. Myriel had arrived at D – , accompanied by an old maid, Mlle. Baptistine, who was his sister, and ten years younger than himself. Their only servant was a female of the same age as Mademoiselle, of the name of Madame Magloire, who, after having been the servant of M. le Curé, now assumed the double title of waiting-woman to Mademoiselle, and house-keeper to Monseigneur. Mlle. Baptistine was a tall, pale, slim, gentle person; she realized the ideal of what the word "respectable"

expresses, for it seems necessary for a woman to be a mother in order to be venerable. She had never been pretty, but her whole life, which had been but a succession of pious works, had eventually cast over her a species of whiteness and brightness, and in growing older she had acquired what may be called the beauty of goodness. What had been thinness in her youth had become in her maturity transparency, and through this transparency the angel could be seen. She seemed to be a shadow, there was hardly enough body for a sex to exist; she was a little quantity of matter containing a light – an excuse for a soul to remain upon the earth. Madame Magloire was a fair, plump, busy little body, always short of breath, – in the first place, through her activity, and, secondly, in consequence of an asthma.

On his arrival M. Myriel was installed in his episcopal palace with all the honors allotted by the imperial decrees which classify the Bishop immediately after a Major-General. The Mayor and the President paid him the first visit, and he on his side paid the first visit to the General and the Prefect. When the installation was ended the town waited to see its bishop at work.

## CHAPTER II

# M. MYRIEL BECOMES MONSEIGNEUR WELCOME

The Episcopal Palace of D – adjoined the hospital. It was a spacious, handsome mansion, built at the beginning of the last century by Monseigneur Henri Puget, Doctor in Theology of the Faculty of Paris, and Abbé of Simore, who was Bishop of D – in 1712. This palace was a true seigneurial residence: everything had a noble air in it, – the episcopal apartments, the reception rooms, the bed-rooms, the court of honor, which was very wide, with arcades after the old Florentine fashion, and the gardens planted with magnificent trees. In the dining-room, a long and superb gallery on the ground floor, Monseigneur Henri Puget had given a state dinner on July 29, 1714, to Messeigneurs Charles Brûlart de Genlis, Archbishop, Prince of Embrun; Antoine de Mesgrigny, Capuchin and Bishop of Grasse; Philip de Vendôme, Grand Prior of France and Abbé of St. Honoré de Lérins; François de Berton de Grillon, Baron and Bishop of Vence; Cæsar de Sabran de Forcalquier, Bishop and Lord of Glandève, and Jean Soanen, priest of the oratory, preacher in ordinary to the King, and Bishop and Lord of Senez. The portraits of these seven reverend personages decorated the dining-room, and the memorable date, JULY 29, 1714, was engraved in golden letters

on a white marble tablet.

The hospital was a small, single-storeyed house with a little garden. Three days after his arrival the Bishop visited it, and when his visit was over asked the Director to be kind enough to come to his house.

"How many patients have you at this moment?" he asked.

"Twenty-six, Monseigneur."

"The number I counted," said the Bishop.

"The beds are very close together," the Director continued.

"I noticed it."

"The wards are only bed-rooms, and difficult to ventilate."

"I thought so."

"And then, when the sun shines, the garden is very small for the convalescents."

"I said so to myself."

"During epidemics, and we have had the typhus this year, and had miliary fever two years ago, we have as many as one hundred patients, and do not know what to do with them."

"That thought occurred to me."

"What would you have, Monseigneur!" the Director said, "we must put up with it."

This conversation had taken place in the dining-hall on the ground floor. The Bishop was silent for a moment, and then turned smartly to the Director.

"How many beds," he asked him, "do you think that this room alone would hold?"

"Monseigneur's dining-room?" the stupefied Director asked.

The Bishop looked round the room, and seemed to be estimating its capacity.

"It would hold twenty beds," he said, as if speaking to himself, and then, raising his voice, he added, —

"Come, Director, I will tell you what it is. There is evidently a mistake. You have twenty-six persons in five or six small rooms. There are only three of us, and we have room for fifty. There is a mistake, I repeat; you have my house and I have yours. Restore me mine; this is yours."

The next day the twenty-six poor patients were installed in the Bishop's palace, and the Bishop was in the hospital. M. Myriel had no property, as his family had been ruined by the Revolution. His sister had an annuity of 500 francs, which had sufficed at the curacy for personal expenses. M. Myriel, as Bishop, received from the State 15,000 francs a year. On the same day that he removed to the hospital, M. Myriel settled the employment of that sum once for all in the following way. We copy here a note in his own handwriting.

NOTE FOR REGULATING MY HOUSEHOLD EXPENSES.

For the little seminary	1500 francs.
Congregation of the mission	100 -
For the Lazarists of Montdidier	100 -
Seminary of foreign missions at Paris	200 -
Congregation of Saint Esprit	150 -
Religious establishments in the Holy Land	100 -
Societies of maternal charity	300 -
Additional for the one at Ariès	50 -
Works for improvement of prisons	400 -
Relief and deliverance of prisoners	500 -
For liberation of fathers of family imprisoned for debt	1000 -
Addition to the salary of poor schoolmasters in the diocese	2000 -
Distribution of grain in the Upper Alps	100 -
Ladies' Society for gratuitous instruction of poor girls at D-, Manosque, and Sisteron	1500 -
For the poor	6000 -
Personal expenses	1000 -
Total	15,000 francs

During the whole time he held the see of D – , M. Myriel made no change in this arrangement. He called this, as we see, regulating his household expenses. The arrangement was accepted with a smile by Mlle. Baptistine, for that sainted woman regarded M. Myriel at once as her brother and her bishop; her friend according to nature, her superior according to the Church. She loved and venerated him in the simplest way. When he spoke she bowed, when he acted she assented. The servant alone, Madame Magloire, murmured a little. The Bishop, it will have been noticed, only reserved 1000 francs, and on this sum, with Mlle. Baptistine's pension, these two old women and old man

lived. And when a village curé came to D-, the Bishop managed to regale him, thanks to the strict economy of Madame Magloire and the sensible management of Mlle. Baptistine. One day, when he had been at D – about three months, the Bishop said, —

"For all that, I am dreadfully pressed."

"I should think so," exclaimed Madame Magloire. "Monseigneur has not even claimed the allowance which the department is bound to pay for keeping up his carriage in town, and for his visitations. That was the custom with bishops in other times."

"True," said the Bishop, "you are right, Madame Magloire." He made his claim, and shortly after the Council-general, taking the demand into consideration, voted him the annual sum of 3000 francs, under the heading, "Allowance to the Bishop for maintenance of carriage, posting charges, and outlay in visitations."

This caused an uproar among the cits of the town, and on this occasion a Senator of the Empire, ex-member of the Council of the Five Hundred, favourable to the 18th Brumaire, and holding a magnificent appointment near D – , wrote to the Minister of Worship, M. Bigot de Préameneu, a short, angry, and confidential letter, from which we extract these authentic lines:

" – Maintenance of carriage! what can he want one for in a town of less than 4000 inhabitants? Visitation charges! in the first place, what is the good of visitations at all? and, secondly, how can he travel post in this mountainous country, where there

are no roads, and people must travel on horseback? The very bridge over the Durance at Château Arnoux can hardly bear the weight of a cart drawn by oxen. These priests are all the same, greedy and avaricious! This one played the good apostle when he arrived, but now he is like the rest, and must have his carriage and post-chaise. He wishes to be as luxurious as the old bishops. Oh this priesthood! My Lord, matters will never go on well till the Emperor has delivered us from the skullcaps. Down with the Pope! (there was a quarrel at the time with Rome). As for me, I am for Cæsar and Cæsar alone, etc., etc., etc."

The affair, on the other hand, greatly gladdened Madame Magloire. "Come," she said to Mlle. Baptistine, "Monseigneur began with others, but he was obliged to finish with himself. He has regulated all his charities, and here are 3000 francs for us at last!"

The same evening the Bishop wrote, and gave his sister, a note conceived thus: —

### CARRIAGE AND TRAVELLING EXPENSES.

To provide the hospital patients with broth	1500 francs.
The society of maternal charity at Aix	250 -
The society of maternal charity at Draguignan	250 -
For foundlings	500 -
For orphans	500 -
Total	3000 -

Such was M. Myriel's budget. As for the accidental receipts,

such as fees for bans, christenings, consecrating churches or chapels, marriages, &c., the Bishop collected them from the rich with so much the more eagerness because he distributed them to the poor. In a short time the monetary offerings became augmented. Those who have and those who want tapped at M. Myriel's door, the last coming to seek the alms which the former had just deposited. The Bishop in less than a year became the treasurer of all charity and the cashier of all distress. Considerable sums passed through his hands, but nothing could induce him to make any change in his mode of life, or add the slightest superfluity to his expenditure.

Far from it, as there is always more wretchedness at the bottom than paternity above, all was given, so to speak, before being received; it was like water on dry ground: however much he might receive he had never a farthing. At such times he stripped himself. It being the custom for the bishops to place their Christian names at the head of their mandates and pastoral letters, the poor people of the country had selected the one among them which conveyed a meaning, and called him Monseigneur Welcome (Bienvenu). We will do like them, and call him so when occasion serves. Moreover, the name pleased him. "I like that name," he would say. "The Welcome corrects the Monseigneur."

We do not assert that the portrait we are here drawing is probably as far as fiction goes: we confine ourselves to saying that it bears a likeness to the reality.

## CHAPTER III

# A GOOD BISHOP AND A HARD BISHOPRIC

The Bishop, though he had converted his coach into alms, did not the less make his visitations. The diocese of D – is fatiguing; there are few plains and many mountains, and hardly any roads, as we saw just now: twenty-two curacies, forty-one vicarages, and two hundred and eighty-five chapels of ease. It was a task to visit all these, but the Bishop managed it. He went on foot when the place was near, in a carriage when it was in the plain, and on a mule when it was in the mountains. The two old females generally accompanied him, but when the journey was too wearying for them he went alone.

One day he arrived at Senez, which is an old Episcopal town, mounted on a donkey; his purse, which was very light at the time, had not allowed him any other equipage. The Mayor of the city came to receive him at the door of the Bishop's Palace, and saw him dismount with scandalized eyes. A few cits were laughing round him. "M. Mayor and gentlemen," the Bishop said, "I see what it is that scandalizes you. You consider it great pride for a poor priest to ride an animal which our Saviour once upon a time bestrode. I did so through necessity, I assure you, and not through vanity."

On his tours the Bishop was indulgent and gentle, and preached less than he conversed. His reasonings and models were never far-fetched, and to the inhabitants of one country he quoted the example of an adjacent country. In those cantons where people were harsh to the needy he would say, "Look at the people of Briançon. They have given the indigent, the widows, and the orphans, the right of mowing their fields three days before all the rest. They rebuild their houses gratuitously when they are in ruins. Hence it is a country blessed of GOD. For one hundred years not a single murder has been committed there." To those eager for grain and good crops, he said, "Look at the people of Embrun. If a father of a family at harvest-time has his sons in the army, his daughters serving in the town, or if he be ill or prevented from toil, the Curé recommends him in his sermon; and on Sunday after Mass all the villagers, men, women, and children, go into his field, and cut and carry home his crop." To families divided by questions of money or inheritance he said, "Look at the Highlanders of Devolny, a country so wild that the nightingale is not heard once in fifty years. Well, when the father of a family dies there the boys go off to seek their fortune, and leave the property to the girls, so that they may obtain husbands." In those parts where the farmers are fond of lawsuits, and ruin themselves in writs, he would say, "Look at those good peasants of the valley of Queyras. There are three thousand souls there. Why, it is like a little republic. Neither judge nor bailiff is known there, and the Mayor does everything.

He divides the imposts, taxes everybody conscientiously, settles quarrels gratis, allots patrimonies without fees, gives sentences without costs, and is obeyed because he is a just man among simple men." In villages where there was no schoolmaster he again quoted the people of Queyras. "Do you know what they do? As a small place, containing only twelve or fifteen hearths, cannot always support a master, they have schoolmasters paid by the whole valley, who go from village to village, spending a week in one, ten days in another, and teaching. These masters go the fairs, where I have seen them. They can be recognized by the pens they carry in their hat-band. Those who only teach reading have but one pen: those who teach reading and arithmetic have two: those who teach reading, arithmetic, and Latin, have three. But what a disgrace it is to be ignorant! Do like the people of Queyras."

He spoke thus, gravely and paternally. When examples failed him he invented parables, going straight to the point, with few phrases and a good deal of imagery. His was the eloquence of the Apostles, convincing and persuading.

## CHAPTER IV

# WORKS RESEMBLING WORDS

The Bishop's conversation was affable and lively. He condescended to the level of the two old females who spent their life near him, and when he laughed it was a schoolboy's laugh. Madame Magloire was fond of calling him "Your Grandeur." One day he rose from his easy chair and went to fetch a book from his library: as it was on one of the top shelves, and as the Bishop was short, he could not reach it "Madame Magloire," he said, "bring me a chair, for my Grandeur does not rise to that shelf."

One of his distant relatives, the Countess de L<sup>ô</sup>, rarely let an opportunity slip to enumerate in his presence what she called the "hopes" of her three sons. She had several very old relatives close to death's door, of whom her sons were the natural heirs. The youngest of the three would inherit from a great-aunt 100,000 francs a year; the second would succeed to his uncle's dukedom, the third to his grandfather's peerage. The Bishop generally listened in silence to this innocent and pardonable maternal display. Once, however, he seemed more dreamy than usual, while Madame de L<sup>ô</sup> was repeating all the details of their successions and "hopes." She broke off somewhat impatiently. "Good gracious, cousin," she said, "what are you thinking, about?" "I am thinking," said the Bishop, "of something singular,

which, if my memory is right, is in St. Augustine. Place your hopes in the man to whom it is impossible to succeed."

On another occasion, receiving a letter announcing the death of a country gentleman, in which, in addition to the dignities of the defunct, all the feudal and noble titles of all his relatives were recorded, – "What a back death has! what an admirable burthen of titles he is made lightly to bear," he exclaimed, "and what sense men must possess thus to employ the tomb in satisfying their vanity."

He displayed at times a gentle raillery, which nearly always contained a serious meaning. During one Lent a young vicar came to D – and preached at the cathedral. He was rather eloquent, and the subject of his sermon was charity. He invited the rich to give to the needy in order to escape hell, which he painted in the most frightful way he could, and reach paradise, which he made desirable and charming. There was among the congregation a rich, retired merchant, somewhat of a usurer, who had acquired two million francs by manufacturing coarse cloths, serges, and caddis. In his whole life-time M. Géborand had never given alms to a beggar, but after this sermon it was remarked that he gave every Sunday a sou to the old women begging at the cathedral gate. There were six of them to share it. One day the Bishop saw him bestowing his charity, and said to his sister, with a smile, "Look at M. Géborand buying heaven for a sou."

When it was a question of charity he would not let himself be rebuffed even by a refusal, and at such times made remarks which

caused people to reflect. Once he was collecting for the poor in a drawing-room of the town. The Marquis de Champtercier was present, a rich old avaricious man, who contrived to be at once ultra-Royalist and ultra-Voltairian. This variety has existed. The Bishop on reaching him touched his arm, "Monsieur le Marquis, you must give me something." The Marquis turned and answered dryly: "I have my own poor, Monseigneur." "Give them to me," said the Bishop. One day he delivered the following sermon at the cathedral: —

"My very dear brethren, my good friends, there are in France thirteen hundred and twenty thousand peasants' houses which have only three openings; eighteen hundred and seventeen thousand which have only two openings, the door and the window; and, lastly, three hundred and forty-six thousand cabins which have only one opening, the door, and this is because of a thing called the door and window tax. Just place poor families, aged women and little children, in these houses, and then see the fevers and maladies! Alas! God gives men fresh air, and the law sells it to them. I do not accuse the law, but I bless God. In the Isère, in the Var, in the two Alps, Upper and Lower, the peasants have not even trucks, but carry manure on their backs: they have no candles, and burn resinous logs and pieces of rope steeped in pitch. It is the same through all the high parts of Dauphiné. They make bread for six months, and bake it with dried cow-dung. In winter they break this bread with axes and steep it in water for four-and-twenty hours before they can eat it. Brethren, have pity,

see how people suffer around you!"

A Provençal by birth, he easily accustomed himself to all the dialects of the South: this greatly pleased the people, and had done no little in securing him admission to all minds. He was, as it were, at home in the hut and on the mountain. He could say the grandest things in the most vulgar idioms, and as he spoke all languages he entered all hearts. However, he was the same to people of fashion as to the lower classes.

He never condemned anything hastily or without taking the circumstances into calculation. He would say, Let us look at the road by which the fault has come. Being, as he called himself with a smile, an ex-sinner, he had none of the intrenchments of rigorism, and, careless of the frowns of the unco' good, professed loudly a doctrine which might be summed up nearly as follows,

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"Man has upon him the flesh which is at once his burden and his temptation. He carries it with him and yields to it. He must watch, restrain, and repress it, and only obey it in the last extremity. In this obedience there may still be a fault: but the fault thus committed is venial. It is a fall, but a fall on the knees, which may end in prayer. To be a saint is the exception, to be a just man is the rule. Err, fail, sin, but be just. The least possible amount of sin is the law of man: no sin at all is the dream of angels. All that is earthly is subjected to sin, for sin is a gravitation."

When he saw everybody cry out and grow indignant, all of a sudden, he would say with a smile, "Oh! oh, it seems as if

this is a great crime which all the world is committing. Look at the startled hypocrites, hastening to protest and place themselves under cover."

He was indulgent to the women and the poor on whom the weight of human society presses. He would say, "The faults of women, children, servants, the weak, the indigent, and the ignorant are the fault of husbands, fathers, masters, the strong, the rich, and the learned." He also said, "Teach the ignorant as much as you possibly can: society is culpable for not giving instruction gratis, and is responsible for the night it produces. This soul is full of darkness, and sin is committed, but the guilty person is not the man who commits the sin, but he who produces the darkness."

As we see, he had a strange manner, peculiarly his own, of judging things. I suspect that he obtained it from the Gospels. He one day heard in a drawing-room the story of a trial which was shortly to take place. A wretched man, through love of a woman and a child he had by her, having exhausted his resources, coined false money, which at that period was an offence punished by death. The woman was arrested while issuing the first false piece manufactured by the man. She was detained, but there was no proof against her. She alone could accuse her lover and ruin him by confessing. She denied. They pressed her, but she adhered to her denial. Upon this, the attorney for the crown had an idea: he feigned infidelity on the lover's part, and contrived, by cleverly presenting the woman with fragments of letters, to

persuade her that she had a rival, and that the man was deceiving her. Then, exasperated by jealousy, she denounced her lover, confessed everything, proved everything. The man was ruined, and would shortly be tried with his accomplice at Aix. The story was told, and everybody was delighted at the magistrate's cleverness. By bringing jealousy into play he brought out the truth through passion, and obtained justice through revenge. The Bishop listened to all this in silence, and when it was ended he asked: "Where will this man and woman be tried?" "At the assizes." Then he continued, "And where will the attorney for the crown be tried?"

A tragical event occurred at D – . A man was condemned to death for murder. He was a wretched fellow, not exactly educated, not exactly ignorant, who had been a mountebank at fairs and a public writer. The trial attracted the attention of the towns-people. On the eve of the day fixed for the execution the prison chaplain was taken ill, and a priest was wanted to assist the sufferer in his last moments. The Curé was sent for, and it seems that he refused, saying, "It is no business of mine, I have nothing to do with the mountebank, I am ill too, and besides, that is not my place." This answer was carried to the Bishop, who said, "The Curé is right, it is not his place, it is mine." He went straight to the prison, entered the mountebank's cell, called him by name, took his hand, and spoke to him. He spent the whole day with him, forgetting sleep and food while praying to God for the soul of the condemned man. He told him the best truths, which are

the most simple. He was father, brother, friend – bishop only to bless. He taught him everything, while reassuring and consoling him. This man was about to die in desperation: death was to him like an abyss, and he shuddered as he stood on its gloomy brink. He was not ignorant enough to be completely indifferent, and his condemnation, which was a profound shock, had here and there broken through that partition which separates us from the mystery of things, and which we call life. He peered incessantly out of this world through these crevices, and only saw darkness; but the Bishop showed him a light.

On the morrow, when they came to fetch the condemned man, the Bishop was with him. He followed him, and showed himself to the mob in his purple cassock, and with the episcopal cross round his neck, side by side with this rope-bound wretch. He entered the cart with him, he mounted the scaffold with him. The sufferer, so gloomy and crushed on the previous day, was radiant; he felt that his soul was reconciled, and he hoped for heaven. The Bishop embraced him, and at the moment when the knife was about to fall, said: "The man whom his fellow-men kill, God resuscitates. He whom his brothers expel finds the Father again. Pray, believe, enter into life! The Father is there!" When he descended from the scaffold there was something in his glance which made the people open a path for him; it was impossible to say whether his pallor or his serenity were the more admirable. On returning to the humble abode, which he called smilingly his palace, he said to his sister: "I have just been

officiating pontifically."

As the most sublime things are often those least understood, there were persons in the town who said, in commenting on the Bishop's conduct, "It is affectation." This, however, was only the talk of drawing-rooms; the people who do not regard holy actions with suspicion were affected, and admired. As for the Bishop, the sight of the guillotine was a shock to him, and it was long ere he recovered from it.

The scaffold, in fact, when it stands erect before you, has something about it that hallucinates. We may feel a certain amount of indifference about the punishment of death, not express an opinion, and say yes or no, so long as we have never seen a guillotine; but when we have come across one the shock is violent, and we must decide either for or against. Some admire it, like De Maistre, others execrate it, like Beccaria. The guillotine is the concretion of the law, it calls itself *vindicta*; it is not neutral, and does not allow you to remain neutral. The person who perceives it shudders with the most mysterious of shudders. All the social questions raise their notes of interrogation round this cutter. The scaffold is a vision, it is not carpenter's work, it is not a machine, it is not a lifeless mechanism made of wood, steel, and ropes. It seems to be a species of being possessing a gloomy intuition; you might say that the wood-work lives, that the machine hears, that the mechanism understands, that the wood, the steel, and the ropes, have a volition. In the frightful reverie into which its presence casts the mind the scaffold appears

terrible, and mixed up with what it does. The scaffold is the accomplice of the executioner; it devours, it eats flesh and drinks blood. The scaffold is a species of monster, manufactured by the judge and the carpenter, a spectre that seems to live a sort of horrible life made up of all the death it has produced. Hence the impression was terrible and deep; on the day after the execution, and for many days beyond, the Bishop appeared crushed. The almost violent serenity of the mournful moment had departed; the phantom of social justice haunted him. He who usually returned from all his duties with such radiant satisfaction seemed to be reproaching himself. At times he soliloquized, and stammered unconnected sentences in a low voice. Here is one which his sister overheard and treasured up: "I did not believe that it was so monstrous. It is wrong to absorb oneself in the divine law so greatly as no longer to perceive the human law. Death belongs to God alone. By what right do men touch that unknown thing?"

With time these impressions were attenuated, and perhaps effaced. Still it was noticed that from this period the Bishop avoided crossing the execution square.

M. Myriel might be called at any hour to the bedside of the sick and the dying. He was not ignorant that his greatest duty and greatest labor lay there. Widowed or orphaned families had no occasion to send for him, for he came of himself. He had the art of sitting down and holding his tongue for hours by the side of a man who had lost the wife he loved, or of a mother bereaved of

her child. As he knew the time to be silent, he also knew the time to speak. What an admirable consoler he was! he did not try to efface grief by oblivion, but to aggrandize and dignify it by hope. He would say: "Take care of the way in which you turn to the dead. Do not think of that which perishes. Look fixedly, and you will perceive the living light of your beloved dead in heaven." He knew that belief is healthy, and he sought to counsel and calm the desperate man by pointing out to him the resigned man, and to transform the grief that gazes at a grave by showing it the grief that looks at a star.

# CHAPTER V

## MONSEIGNEUR'S CASSOCKS LAST TOO LONG

M. Myriel's domestic life was full of the same thoughts as his public life. To any one who could inspect it closely, the voluntary poverty in which the Bishop lived would have been a solemn and charming spectacle. Like all old men, and like most thinkers, he slept little, but that short sleep was deep. In the morning he remained in contemplation for an hour, and then read mass either at the cathedral or in his house. Mass over, he breakfasted on rye bread dipped in the milk of his own cows. Then he set to work.

A bishop is a very busy man. He must daily receive the secretary to the bishopric, who is generally a canon, and almost every day his grand vicars. He has congregations to control, permissions to grant, a whole ecclesiastical library to examine, in the shape of diocesan catechisms, books of hours, etc.; mandates to write, sermons to authorize, curés and mayors to reconcile, a clerical correspondence, an administrative correspondence, on one side the State, on the other the Holy See; in a word, a thousand tasks. The time which these thousand tasks, his offices, and his breviary left him, he gave first to the needy, the sick, and the afflicted; the time which the afflicted, the sick, and the needy left him he gave to work. Sometimes he hoed in his garden, at

others he read and wrote. He had only one name for both sorts of labor, he called them gardening. "The mind is a garden," he would say.

Toward mid-day, when the weather was fine, he went out and walked in the country or the town, frequently entering the cottages. He could be seen walking alone in deep thought, looking down, leaning on his long cane, dressed in his violet wadded and warm great coat, with his violet stockings thrust into clumsy shoes, and wearing his flat hat, through each corner of which were passed three golden acorns as tassels. It was a festival wherever he appeared, it seemed as if his passing had something warming and luminous about it; old men and children came to the door to greet the Bishop as they did the sun. He blessed them and they blessed him, and his house was pointed out to anybody who was in want of anything. Now and then he stopped, spoke to the little boys and girls, and smiled on their mothers. He visited the poor so long as he had any money; when he had none he visited the rich. As he made his cassocks last a long time, and he did not wish the fact to be noticed, he never went into town save in his wadded violet coat. This was rather tiresome in summer.

On returning home he dined. The dinner resembled the breakfast. At half-past eight in the evening he supped with his sister, Madame Magloire standing behind them and waiting on them. Nothing could be more frugal than this meal; but if the Bishop had a curé to supper, Madame Magloire would take advantage of it to serve Monseigneur with some excellent fish

from the lake, or famous game from the mountain. Every curé was the excuse for a good meal, and the Bishop held his tongue. On other occasions his repast only consisted of vegetables boiled in water and soup made with oil. Hence it was said in the town: "When the Bishop does not fare like a curé he fares like a trappist."

After supper he conversed for half an hour with Mlle. Baptistine and Madame Magloire; then he returned to his room and began writing again, either on loose leaves or on the margin of some folio. He was well read, and a bit of a *savant*, and has left five or six curious MSS. on theological subjects, among others a dissertation on the verse from Genesis, "In the beginning the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." He compared this verse with three texts, – the Arabic, which says, "The winds of God breathed;" Flavius Josephus, who said, "A wind from on high fell upon the earth;" and lastly the Chaldaic of Onkelos, "A wind coming from God breathed on the face of the waters." In another dissertation he examines the works of Hugo, Bishop of Ptolemaïs, great-grand-uncle of him who writes this book, and he proves that to this bishop must be attributed the various opuscles published in the last century under the pseudonym of Barleycourt. At times, in the midst of his reading, no matter what book he held in his hands, he would suddenly fall into a deep meditation, from which he only emerged to write a few lines on the pages of the book. These lines have frequently no connection with the book that

contains them. We have before us a note written by him on the margin of a quarto entitled, "Correspondence of Lord Germain with Generals Clinton and Cornwallis, and the Admirals of the American Station. Versailles, Prinçot; and Paris, Pissot, Quai des Augustins." Here is the note.

"O thou who art! Ecclesiastes calls you Omnipotence; the Maccabees call you Creator; the Epistle to the Ephesians calls you Liberty; Baruch calls you Immensity; the Psalms call you Wisdom and Truth; St. John calls you Light; the Book of Kings calls you Lord; Exodus calls you Providence; Leviticus, Holiness; Esdras, Justice; Creation calls you God; man calls you the Father; but Solomon calls you Mercy, and that is the fairest of all your names."

About nine o'clock the two females withdrew and went up to their bed-rooms on the first floor, leaving him alone till morning on the ground floor. Here it is necessary that we should give an exact idea of the Bishop's residence.

## CHAPTER VI BY WHOM THE HOUSE WAS GUARDED

The house the Bishop resided in consisted, as we have said, of a ground floor and one above it, three rooms on the ground, three bed-rooms on the first floor, and above them a store-room. Behind the house was a quarter of an acre of garden. The two females occupied the first floor, and the Bishop lodged below. The first room, which opened on the street, served him as dining-room, the second as bed-room, the third as oratory. You could not get out of the oratory without passing through the bed-room, or out of the bed-room without passing through the sitting-room. At the end of the oratory was a closed alcove with a bed, for any one who stayed the night, and the Bishop offered this bed to country curés whom business or the calls of their parish brought to D — .

The hospital surgery, a small building added to the house and built on a part of the garden, had been transformed into kitchen and cellar. There was also in the garden a stable, which had been the old hospital kitchen, and in which the Bishop kept two cows. Whatever the quantity of milk they yielded, he invariably sent one half every morning to the hospital patients. "I am paying my tithes," he was wont to say.

His room was rather spacious, and very difficult to heat in the cold weather. As wood is excessively dear at D – , he hit on the idea of partitioning off with planks a portion of the cow-house. Here he spent his evenings during the great frosts, and called it his "winter drawing-room." In this room, as in the dining-room, there was no other furniture but a square deal table and four straw chairs. The dining-room was also adorned with an old buffet stained to imitate rosewood. The Bishop had made the altar which decorated his oratory out of a similar buffet, suitably covered with white cloths and imitation lace. His rich penitents and the religious ladies of D – had often subscribed to pay for a handsome new altar for Monseigneur's oratory; each time he took the money and gave it to the poor. "The finest of all altars," he would say, "is the soul of an unhappy man who is consoled and thanks God."

There were in his oratory two straw priedieus, and an arm-chair, also of straw, in his bed-room. When he by chance received seven or eight persons at the same time, the Prefect, the General, the staff of the regiment quartered in the town, or some pupils of the Lower Seminary, it was necessary to fetch the chairs from the winter drawing-room, the priedieus from the oratory, and the easy chair from the bed-room: in this way as many as eleven seats could be collected for the visitors. At each new visit a room was unfurnished. It happened at times that there would be twelve; in such a case the Bishop concealed the embarrassing nature of the situation by standing before the chimney if it were

winter, or walking up and down the room were it summer.

There was also another chair in the alcove, but it was half robbed of the straw, and had only three legs to stand on, so that it could only be used when resting against a wall. Mlle. Baptistine also had in her bed-room a very large settee of wood, which had once been gilt and covered with flowered chintz, but it had been necessary to raise this settee to the first floor through the window, owing to the narrowness of the stairs: and hence it could not be reckoned on in any emergency. It had been Mlle. Baptistine's ambition to buy drawing-room furniture of mahogany and covered with yellow Utrecht velvet, but this would have cost at least 500 francs, and seeing that she had only succeeded in saving for this object 42 francs 5 sous in five years, she gave up the idea. Besides, who is there that ever attains his ideal?

Nothing more simple can be imagined than the Bishop's bedroom. A long window opening on the garden; opposite the bed, an iron hospital bed with a canopy of green serge; in the shadow of the bed, behind a curtain, toilet articles, still revealing the old elegant habits of the man of fashion; two doors, one near the chimney leading to the oratory, the other near the library leading to the dining-room. The library was a large glass case full of books; the chimney of wood, painted to imitate marble, was habitually fireless; in the chimney were a pair of iron andirons ornamented with two vases, displaying garlands and grooves which had once been silvered, which was a species of episcopal

luxury; over the chimney a crucifix of unsilvered copper fastened to threadbare black velvet, in a frame which had lost its gilding; near the window was a large table with an inkstand, loaded with irregularly arranged papers and heavy tomes; before the table the straw arm-chair; in front of the bed a priedieu borrowed from the oratory.

Two portraits, in oval frames, hung on the wall on either side of the bed. Small gilded inscriptions on the neutral tinted ground of the canvas by the side of the figures indicated that the portraits represented, one the Abbé de Chaliot, Bishop of St. Claude; the other the Abbé Tourteau, Vicar-general of Agde, and Abbé of Grand Champs, belonging to the Cistercian order in the diocese of Chartres. The Bishop, on succeeding to the hospital infirmary, found the pictures there and left them. They were priests, probably donors, – two motives for him to respect them. All he knew of the two personages was that they had been nominated by the King, the one to his bishopric, the other to his benefice, on the same day, April 27, 1785. Madame Magloire having unhooked the portraits to remove the dust, the Bishop found this circumstance recorded in faded ink on a small square of paper which time had turned yellow, and fastened by four wafers behind the portrait of the Abbé of Grand Champs.

He had at his window an antique curtain of heavy woollen stuff, which had grown so old that Madame Magloire, in order to avoid the expense of a new one, was obliged to make a large seam in the very middle of it. The seam formed a cross, and

the Bishop often drew attention to it. "How pleasant that is," he would say. All the rooms in the house, ground floor and first floor, were white-washed, which is a barrack and hospital fashion. Still, some years later, Madame Magloire discovered, as we shall see further on, paintings under the white-washed paper, in Mlle. Baptistine's bed-room. The rooms were paved with red bricks which were washed every week, and there were straw mats in front of all the beds. This house, moreover, managed by two females, was exquisitely clean from top to bottom. This was the only luxury the Bishop allowed himself, for, as he said, "It takes nothing from the poor." We must allow, however, that of the old property there still remained six silver spoons and forks and a soup-ladle, which Madame Magloire daily saw with delight shining splendidly on the coarse white table-cloth. And as we are here depicting the Bishop of D – as he was, we must add that he had said, more than once, "I do not think I could give up eating with silver." To this plate must be added two heavy candlesticks of massive silver, which the Bishop inherited from a great-aunt. These branched candlesticks each held two wax candles, and usually figured on the Bishop's chimney. When he had any one to dinner, Madame Magloire lit the candles and placed the two candlesticks on the table. There was in the Bishop's bed-room, at the head of his bed, a small cupboard in the wall, in which Madame Magloire each night placed the plate and the large ladle. I am bound to add that the key was never taken out.

The garden, spoiled to some extent by the ugly buildings to

which we have referred, was composed of four walks, radiating round a cesspool; another walk ran all round the garden close to the surrounding white wall. Between these walks were four box-bordered squares. In three of them Madame Magloire grew vegetables; in the fourth the Bishop had placed flowers; here and there were a few fruit-trees. Once Madame Magloire had said, with a sort of gentle malice, "Monseigneur, although you turn everything to use, here is an unemployed plot. It would be better to have lettuces there than bouquets." "Madame Magloire," the Bishop answered, "you are mistaken; the beautiful is as useful as the useful." He added, after a moment's silence, "More so, perhaps."

This square, composed of three or four borders, occupied the Bishop almost as much as his books did. He liked to spend an hour or two there, cutting, raking, and digging holes in which he placed seeds. He was not so hostile to insects as a gardener would have liked. However, he made no pretensions to botany; he was ignorant of groups and solidism; he did not make the slightest attempt to decide between Tournefort and the natural method; he was not a partisan either of Jussieu or Linnæus. He did not study plants, but he loved flowers. He greatly respected the professors, but he respected the ignorant even more; and without ever failing in this respect, he watered his borders every summer evening with a green-painted tin pot.

The house had not a single door that locked. The door of the dining-room, which, as we said, opened right on the cathedral

square, had formerly been adorned with bolts and locks like a prison gate. The Bishop had all this iron removed, and the door was only hasped either night or day: the first passer-by, no matter the hour, had only to push it. At the outset the two females had been greatly alarmed by this never-closed door; but the Bishop said to them, "Have bolts placed on the doors of your rooms if you like." In the end they shared his confidence, or at least affected to do so: Madame Magloire alone was from time to time alarmed. As regards the Bishop, his idea is explained, or at least indicated, by these three lines, which he wrote on the margin of a Bible: "This is the distinction: the physician's doors must never be closed, the priest's door must always be open." On another book, entitled "Philosophy of Medical Science," he wrote this other note: "Am I not a physician like them? I also have my patients: in the first place, I have theirs, whom they call the sick, and then I have my own, whom I call the unhappy." Elsewhere he also wrote: "Do not ask the name of the man who seeks a bed from you, for it is before all the man whom his name embarrasses that needs an asylum."

It came about that a worthy curé – I forget whether it were he of Couloubroux or he of Pompierry – thought proper to ask him one day, probably at the instigation of Madame Magloire, whether Monseigneur was quite certain that he was not acting to some extent imprudently by leaving his door open day and night for any who liked to enter, and if he did not fear lest some misfortune might happen in a house so poorly guarded.

The Bishop tapped his shoulder with gentle gravity, and said to him, "Nisi Dominus custodierit domum, in vanum vigilant qui custodiunt eam."

Then he spoke of something else. He was fond of saying too, "There is the Priest's bravery as well as that of the Colonel of Dragoons. The only thing is that ours must be quiet."

## CHAPTER VII

### CRAVATTE

Here naturally comes a fact which we must not omit, for it is one of those which will enable us to see what manner of man the Bishop of D – was. After the destruction of the band of Gaspard Bès, which had infested the gorges of Ollioules, Cravatte, one of his lieutenants, took refuge in the mountains. He concealed himself for a while with his brigands, the remnant of Bès' band, in the county of Nice, then went to Piedmont, and suddenly re-appeared in France, via Barcelonnette. He was seen first at Jauziers, and next at Tuiles; he concealed himself in the caverns of the Joug de l'Aigle, and descended thence on the hamlets and villages by the ravines of the Ubaye. He pushed on even as far as Embrun, entered the church one night and plundered the sacristy. His brigandage desolated the country, and the gendarmes were in vain placed on his track. He constantly escaped, and at times even offered resistance, for he was a bold scoundrel. In the midst of all this terror the Bishop arrived on his visitation, and the Mayor came to him and urged him to turn back. Cravatte held the mountain as far as Arche and beyond, and there was danger, even with an escort. It would be uselessly exposing three or four unhappy gendarmes.

"For that reason," said the Bishop, "I intend to go without escort."

"Can you mean it, Monseigneur?" the Mayor exclaimed.

"I mean it so fully that I absolutely refuse gendarmes, and intend to start in an hour."

"Monseigneur, you will not do that!"

"There is in the mountain," the Bishop continued, "a humble little parish, which I have not visited for three years. They are good friends of mine, and quiet and honest shepherds. They are the owners of one goat out of every thirty they guard; they make very pretty woollen ropes of different colors, and they play mountain airs on small six-holed flutes. They want to hear about heaven every now and then, and what would they think of a bishop who was afraid? What would they say if I did not go?"

"But, Monseigneur, the brigands."

"Ah," said the Bishop, "you are right; I may meet them. They too must want to hear about heaven."

"But this band is a flock of wolves."

"Monsieur Mayor, it may be that this is precisely the flock of which Christ has made me the shepherd. Who knows the ways of Providence?"

"Monseigneur, they will plunder you."

"I have nothing."

"They will kill you."

"A poor old priest who passes by, muttering his mummery? Nonsense, what good would that do them?"

"Oh, good gracious, if you were to meet them!"

"I would ask them for alms for my poor."

"Monseigneur, do not go. In Heaven's name do not, for you expose your life."

"My good sir," said the Bishop, "is that all? I am not in this world to save my life, but to save souls."

There was no help for it, and he set out only accompanied by a lad, who offered to act as his guide. His obstinacy created a sensation in the country, and caused considerable alarm. He would not take either his sister or Madame Magloire with him. He crossed the mountain on a mule, met nobody, and reached his good friends the goat-herds safe and sound. He remained with them a fortnight, preaching, administering the sacraments, teaching, and moralizing. When he was ready to start for home he resolved to sing a Te Deum pontifically, and spoke about it to the Curé. But what was to be done? There were no episcopal ornaments. All that could be placed at his disposal was a poor village sacristy, with a few old faded and pinchbeck covered chasubles.

"Pooh!" said the Bishop; "announce the Te Deum in your sermon for all that. It will come right in the end."

Inquiries were made in the surrounding churches: but all the magnificence of these united humble parishes would not have been sufficient decently to equip a cathedral chorister. While they were in this embarrassment a large chest was brought and left at the curacy for the Bishop by two strange horse-men, who started again at once. The chest was opened and found to contain a cope of cloth of gold, a mitre adorned with diamonds, an

archiepiscopal cross, a magnificent crozier, and all the pontifical robes stolen a month back from the treasury of our Lady of Embrun. In the chest was a paper on which were written these words: "Cravatte to Monseigneur Welcome."

"Did I not tell you that it would be all right?" the Bishop said, then he added with a smile, "God sends an archbishop's cope to a man who is contented with a curé's surplice."

"Monseigneur," the Curé muttered, with a gentle shake of his head, "God – or the devil."

The Bishop looked fixedly at the Curé and repeated authoritatively, "God!"

When he returned to Chastelon, and all along the road, he was regarded curiously. He found at the Presbytery of that town Mlle. Baptistine and Madame Magloire waiting for him, and he said to his sister, "Well, was I right? The poor priest went among these poor mountaineers with empty hands, and returns with his hands full. I started only taking with me my confidence in Heaven, and I bring back the treasures of a cathedral."

The same evening before retiring he said too, "Never let us fear robbers or murderers. These are external and small dangers; let us fear ourselves; prejudices are the real robbers, vices the true murderers. The great dangers are within ourselves. Let us not trouble about what threatens our head or purse, and only think of what threatens our soul." Then, turning to his sister, he added, "Sister, a priest ought never to take precautions against his neighbor. What his neighbor does God permits, so let us confine

ourselves to praying to God when we believe that a danger is impending over us. Let us pray, not for ourselves, but that our brother may not fall into error on our account."

Events, however, were rare in his existence. We relate those we know, but ordinarily he spent his life in always doing the same things at the same moment. A month of his year resembled an hour of his day. As to what became of the treasure of Embrun Cathedral, we should be greatly embarrassed if questioned on that head. There were many fine things, very tempting and famous to steal on behalf of the poor. Stolen they were already, one moiety of the adventure was accomplished: the only thing left to do was to change the direction of the robbery, and make it turn slightly towards the poor. Still, we affirm nothing on the subject; we merely mention that among the Bishop's papers a rather obscure note was found, which probably refers to this question, and was thus conceived: "The question is to know whether it ought to go to the cathedral or the hospital."

## CHAPTER VIII

# PHILOSOPHY AFTER DRINKING

The Senator, to whom we have already alluded, was a skilful man, who had made his way with a rectitude that paid no attention to all those things which constitute obstacles, and are called conscience, plighted word, right, and duty: he had gone straight to his object without once swerving from the line of his promotions and his interest. He was an ex-procureur, softened by success, anything but a wicked man, doing all the little services in his power for his sons, his sons-in-law, his relatives, and even his friends: he had selected the best opportunities, and the rest seemed to him something absurd. He was witty, and just sufficiently lettered to believe himself a disciple of Epicurus, while probably only a product of Pigault Lebrun. He was fond of laughing pleasantly at things infinite and eternal, and at the crotchets "of our worthy Bishop." He even laughed at them with amiable authority in M. Myriel's presence. On some semi-official occasion the Count – (this Senator) and M. Myriel met at the Prefect's table. At the dessert the Senator, who was merry but quite sober, said, —

"Come, Bishop, let us have a chat. A senator and a bishop can hardly meet without winking at each other, for we are two augurs, and I am about to make a confession to you. I have my system of philosophy."

"And you are right," the Bishop answered; "as you make your philosophy, so you must lie on it. You are on the bed of purple."

The Senator, thus encouraged, continued, — "Let us be candid."

"Decidedly."

"I declare to you," the Senator went on, "that the Marquis d'Argens, Pyrrho, Hobbes, and Naigeon are no impostors. I have in my library all my philosophers with gilt backs."

"Like yourself, Count," the Bishop interrupted him.

The Senator proceeded, —

"I hate Diderot; he is an ideologist, a declaimer, and a revolutionist, believing in his heart in Deity, and more bigoted than Voltaire. The latter ridiculed Needham, and was wrong, for Needham's eels prove that God is unnecessary. A drop of vinegar in a spoonful of flour supplies the *fiat lux*; suppose the drop larger, and the spoonful bigger, and you have the world. Man is the eel; then, of what use is the Eternal Father? My dear Bishop, the Jehovah hypothesis wearies me; it is only fitted to produce thin people who think hollow. Down with the great All which annoys me! Long live Zero, who leaves me at peace! Between ourselves, and in order to confess to my pastor, as is right and proper, I confess to you that I possess common sense. I am not wild about your Saviour, who continually preaches abnegation and sacrifice. It is advice offered by a miser to beggars. Abnegation, why? Sacrifice, for what object? I do not see that one wolf sacrifices itself to cause the happiness of

another wolf. Let us, therefore, remain in nature. We are at the summit, so let us have the supreme philosophy. What is the use of being at the top, if you cannot see further than the end of other people's noses? Let us live gayly, for life is all in all. As for man having a future elsewhere, up there, down there, somewhere, I do not believe a syllable of it. Oh yes! recommend sacrifices and abnegation to me. I must take care of all I do. I must rack my brains about good and evil, justice and injustice, fas et nefas. Why so? because I shall have to give account for my actions. When? after my death. What a fine dream! after death! He will be a clever fellow who catches me. Just think of a lump of ashes seized by a shadowy hand. Let us speak the truth, we who are initiated and have raised the skirt of Isis; there is no good, no evil, but there is vegetation. Let us seek reality and go to the bottom; hang it all, we must scent the truth, dig into the ground for it and seize it. Then it offers you exquisite delights; then you become strong and laugh. I am square at the base, my dear Bishop, and human immortality is a thing which anybody who likes may listen to. Oh! what a charming prospect! What a fine billet Adam has! You are a soul, you will be an angel, and have blue wings on your shoulder-blades. Come, help me, is it not Tertullian who says that the blessed will go from one planet to the other? Very good; they will be the grasshoppers of the planets. And then they will see God; Ta, ta, ta. These paradises are all nonsense, and God is a monstrous fable. I would not say so in the *Moniteur*, of course, but I whisper it between friends, *inter pocula*. Sacrificing

the earth for paradise is giving up the substance for the shadow. I am not such an ass as to be the dupe of the Infinite. I am nothing, my name is Count Nothing, Senator. Did I exist before my birth? no; shall I exist after my death? no. What am I? a little dust aggregated by an organism. What have I to do on this earth? I have the choice between suffering and enjoyment. To what will suffering lead me? to nothingness, but I shall have suffered. To what will enjoyment lead me? to nothingness, but I shall have enjoyed. My choice is made; a man must either eat or be eaten, and so I eat, for it is better to be the tooth than the grass. That is my wisdom; after which go on as I impel you; the grave-digger is there, the Pantheon for such as us, and all fall into the large hole. *Finis*, and total liquidation, that is the vanishing point Death is dead, take my word for it; and I laugh at the idea of any one present affirming the contrary. It is an invention of nurses, old Bogey for children, Jehovah for men. No, our morrow is night; behind the tomb there is nothing but equal nothings. You may have been Sardanapalus, you may have been St. Vincent de Paul: it all comes to the same – nothing. That is the truth, so live above all else; make use of your *me*, so long as you hold it. In truth, I tell you, my dear Bishop, I have my philosophy, and I have my philosophers, and I do not let myself be deluded by fables. After all, something must be offered persons who are down in the world, – the barefooted, the strugglers for existence and the wretched: and so they are offered pure legends – chimeras – the soul – immortality – paradise – the stars – to swallow. They chew

that and put it on their dry bread. The man who has nothing has God, and that is something at any rate. I do not oppose it, but I keep M. Naigeon for myself; God is good for the plebs."

The Bishop clapped his hands.

"That is what I call speaking," he exclaimed. "Ah, what an excellent and truly wonderful thing this materialism is! it is not every man who wishes that can have it. Ah! when a man has reached that point, he is no longer a dupe; he does not let himself be stupidly exiled, like Cato; or stoned, like St. Stephen; or burnt, like Joan of Arc. Those who have succeeded in acquiring this materialism have the joy of feeling themselves irresponsible, and thinking that they can devour everything without anxiety, places, sinecures, power well or badly gained, dignities, lucrative tergiversations, useful treachery, folly, capitulations with their consciences, and that they will go down to the tomb after digesting it all properly. How agreeable this is! I am not referring to you, my dear Senator, still I cannot refrain from congratulating you. You great gentlemen have, as you say, a philosophy of your own, and for yourselves, exquisite, refined, accessible to the rich alone, good with any sauce, and admirably seasoning the joys of life. This philosophy is drawn from the profundities, and dug up by special searchers. But you are kind fellows, and think it no harm that belief in God should be the philosophy of the populace, much in the same way as a goose stuffed with chestnuts is the truffled turkey of the poor."

# CHAPTER IX

## THE BROTHER DESCRIBED BY THE SISTER

To give an idea of the domestic life of the Bishop of D – , and the manner in which these two saintly women subordinated their actions, their thoughts, even their feminine instincts, which were easily startled, to the habits and intentions of the Bishop, before he required to express them in words, we cannot do better than copy here a letter from Mlle Baptistine to the Viscountess de Boischevron, her friend of childhood. This letter is in our possession.

*"D – , 16th Dec., 18 – .*

"MY DEAR MADAME, – Not a day passes in which we do not talk about you. That is our general habit, but there is an extra reason at present. Just imagine that, in washing and dusting the ceilings and walls, Madame Magloire has made a discovery, and now our two rooms papered with old white-washed paper would not disgrace a chateau like yours. Madame Magloire has torn down all the paper, and there are things under it. My sitting-room, in which there was no furniture, and in which we used to hang up the linen to dry, is fifteen feet in height, eighteen wide, and has a ceiling which was once gilded, and rafters, as in your house. It was covered with canvas during the time this

mansion was an hospital. But it is my bed-room, you should see; Madame Magloire has discovered, under at least ten layers of paper, paintings which, though not excellent, are endurable. There is Telemachus dubbed a knight by Minerva; and there he is again in the gardens: I forget their names, but where the Roman ladies only went for a single night. What can I tell you? I have Roman ladies (*here an illegible word*), and so on. Madame Magloire has got it all straight. This summer she intends to repair a little damage, re-varnish it all, and my bed-room will be a real museum. She has also found in a corner of the garret two consoles in the old fashion; they want twelve francs to regild them, but it is better to give that sum to the poor: besides, they are frightfully ugly, and I should prefer a round mahogany table.

"I am very happy, for my brother is so good; he gives all he has to the sick and the poor, and we are often greatly pressed. The country is hard in winter, and something must be done for those who are in want. We are almost lighted and warmed, and, as you can see, that is a great comfort. My brother has peculiar habits; when he does talk, he says 'that a bishop should be so.' Just imagine that the house door is never closed: any one who likes can come in, and is at once in my brother's presence. He fears nothing, not even night; and he says that is his way of showing his bravery. He does not wish me to feel alarmed for him, or for Madame Magloire to do so; he exposes himself to all dangers, and does not wish us to appear as if we even noticed it. We must understand him. He goes out in the rain, he wades through

the water, and travels in winter. He is not afraid of the night, suspicious roads, or encounters. Last year he went all alone into a country of robbers, for he would not take us with him. He stayed away a whole fortnight, and folk thought him dead, but he came back all right, and said, 'Here's the way in which I was robbed,' and he opened a chest full of all the treasures of Embrun Cathedral, which the robbers had given him. That time I could not refrain from scolding him a little, but was careful only to speak when the wheels made a noise, so that no one could hear me.

"At first I said to myself; there is no danger that checks him, and he is terrible; but at present I have grown accustomed to it. I make Madame Magloire a sign not to annoy him, and he risks his life as he pleases. I carry off Magloire, go to my bed-room, pray for him, and fall asleep. I am tranquil because I know that if any harm happened to him it would be the death of me. I shall go to heaven with my brother and my bishop. Madame Magloire has had greater difficulty than myself in accustoming herself to what she calls his imprudence, but at present she has learned to put up with it. We both pray; we are terrified together, and fall asleep. If the Fiend were to enter the house no one would try to stop him, and after all what have we to fear in this house? There is always some one with us who is the stronger, the demon may pass by, but our Lord lives in it. That is enough for me, and my brother no longer requires to say a word to me. I understand him without his speaking, and we leave ourselves in the hands of Providence,

for that is the way in which you must behave to a man who has grandeur in his soul.

"I have questioned my brother about the information you require concerning the De Faux family. You are aware that he knows everything, and what a memory he has, for he is still a good Royalist. It is really a very old Norman family belonging to the Generalty of Caen. Five hundred years ago there were a Raoul, a John, and a Thomas de Faux, who were gentlemen, and one of them Seigneur of Rochefort. The last was Guy Stephen Alexander, who was Major-general, and something in the Brittany Light Horse: his daughter, Maria Louisa, married Adrian Charles de Gramont, son of Duke Louis de Gramont, Peer of France, Colonel of the French Guards, and Lieutenant-general in the army. The name is written Faux, Fauq, and Faouq.

"My dear madam, recommend us to the prayers of your holy relative the Cardinal. As for your dear Sylvanie, she has done well in not wasting the few moments she passes by your side in writing to me. She is well, works according to your wishes, and loves me still: that is all I desire. Her souvenir sent me through you safely reached me, and I am delighted at it. My health is not bad, and yet I grow thinner every day. Good-by, my paper is running out and compels me to break off. A thousand kind regards from your Baptistine.

"P.S. Your little nephew is delightful: do you know that he is nearly five years of age? Yesterday he saw a horse pass with knee-caps on, and he said, 'What has he got on his knees?' He is

such a dear child. His little brother drags an old broom about the room like a coach, and cries, 'Hu!'"

As may be seen from this letter, the two women managed to yield to the Bishop's ways, with the genius peculiar to woman, who comprehends a man better than he does himself. The Bishop of D — , beneath the candid, gentle air which never broke down, at times did grand, bold, and magnificent things, without even appearing to suspect the fact. They trembled, but let him alone. At times Madame Magloire would hazard a remonstrance beforehand, but never during or after the deed. They never troubled him either by word or sign when he had once begun an affair. At certain moments, without his needing to mention the fact, or perhaps when he was not conscious of it, so perfect was his simplicity, they vaguely felt that he was acting episcopally, and at such times they were only two shadows in the house. They served him passively, and if disappearance were obedience, they disappeared. They knew, with an admirable intuitive delicacy, that certain attentions might vex him, and hence, though they might believe him in peril, they understood, I will not say his thoughts, but his nature, and no longer watched over him. They intrusted him to God. Moreover, Baptistine said, as we have just read, that her brother's death would be her death. Madame Magloire did not say so, but she knew it.

# CHAPTER X

## THE BISHOP FACES A NEW LIGHT

At a period rather later than the date of the letter just quoted he did a thing which the whole town declared to be even more venturesome than his trip in the mountains among the bandits. A man lived alone in the country near D – : this man, let us out with the great word at once, was an ex-conventionalist, of the name of G – . People talked about him in the little world of D – with a species of horror. A conventionalist, only think of that! Those men existed at the time when people "thou-ed" one another and were called citizens. This man was almost a monster: he had not voted for the King's death, but had done all but that, and was a quasi-regicide. How was it that this man had not been tried by court-martial, on the return of the legitimate princes? They need not have cut his head off, for clemency is all right and proper, but banishment for life would have been an example, and so on. Moreover, he was an atheist, like all those men. It was the gossip of geese round a vulture.

And was this G – a vulture? Yes, if he might be judged by his ferocious solitude. As he had not voted the King's death, he was not comprised in the decree of exile, and was enabled to remain in France. He lived about three miles from the town, far from every village, every road, in a nook of a very wild valley. He had there, so it was said, a field, a hut, a den. He had no neighbors, not

even passers-by; since he had lived in the valley the path leading to it had become overgrown with grass. People talked of the spot as of the hangman's house. Yet the Bishop thought of it, and from time to time gazed at a spot on the horizon where a clump of trees pointed out the old conventionalist's valley, and said "There is a soul there alone," and he added to himself, "I owe him a visit."

But, let us confess it, this idea, which at the first blush was natural, seemed to him after a moment's reflection strange and impossible, almost repulsive. For, in his heart, he shared the general impression, and the conventionalist inspired him, without his being able to account for it, with that feeling which is the border line of hatred, and which is so well expressed by the word "estrangement."

Still the shepherd ought not to keep aloof from a scabby sheep; but then what a sheep it was! The good Bishop was perplexed; at times he started in that direction, but turned back. One day a rumor spread in the town, that a shepherd boy who waited on G – in his den, had come to fetch a doctor: the old villain was dying, paralysis was overpowering him, and he could not last out the night. Happy release! some added.

The Bishop took his stick, put on his overcoat to hide his well-worn cassock, as well as to protect him against the night breeze which would soon rise, and set out. The sun had almost attained the horizon when the Bishop reached the excommunicated spot. He perceived with a certain heart-beating that he was close to the wild beast's den. He strode across a ditch, clambered over a

hedge, entered a neglected garden, and suddenly perceived the cavern behind some shrubs. It was a low, poor-looking hut, small and clean, with a vine nailed over the front.

In front of the door an old white-haired man, seated in a worn-out wheel-chair, was smiling in the sun. By his side stood a boy, who handed him a pot of milk. While the Bishop was looking at him the old man uplifted his voice. "Thanks," he said, "I want nothing further," and his smile was turned from the sun to rest on the boy.

The Bishop stepped forward, and at the noise of his footsteps the seated man turned his head, and his face expressed all the surprise it is possible to feel after a long life.

"Since I have lived here," he said, "you are the first person who has come to me. Who may you be, sir?"

The Bishop answered, "My name is Bienvenu Myriel."

"I have heard that name uttered. Are you not he whom the peasants call Monseigneur Welcome?"

"I am."

The old man continued, with a half-smile, "In that case you are my Bishop?"

"A little."

"Come in, sir."

The conventionalist offered his hand to the Bishop, but the Bishop did not take it – he confined himself to saying, —

"I am pleased to see that I was deceived. You certainly do not look ill."

"I am about to be cured, sir," the old man said; then after a pause he added, "I shall be dead in three hours. I am a bit of a physician, and know in what way the last hour comes. Yesterday only my feet were cold; to-day the chill reached my knees; now I can feel it ascending to my waist, and when it reaches the heart I shall stop. The sun is glorious, is it not? I had myself wheeled out in order to take a farewell glance at things. You can talk to me, for it does not weary me. You have done well to come and look at a dying man, for it is proper that there should be witnesses. People have their fancies, and I should have liked to go on till dawn. But I know that I can hardly last three hours. It will be night, but, after all, what matter? Finishing is a simple affair, and daylight is not necessary for it. Be it so, I will die by star-light."

Then he turned to the lad:

"Go to bed. You sat up the other night, and must be tired."

The boy went into the cabin; the old man looked after him, and added, as if speaking to himself, —

"While he is sleeping I shall die; the two slumbers can keep each other company."

The Bishop was not so moved as we might imagine he would be. He did not think that he saw God in this way of dying: and — let us out with it, as the small contradictions of great hearts must also be indicated — he, who at times laughed so heartily at his grandeur, was somewhat annoyed at not being called Monseigneur, and was almost tempted to reply, Citizen. He felt an inclination for coarse familiarity, common enough

with doctors and priests, but to which he was not accustomed. This man after all, this conventionalist, this representative of the people, had been a mighty one of the earth: for the first time in his life, perhaps, the Bishop felt disposed to sternness.

The Republican, in the mean while, regarded him with modest cordiality, in which, perhaps, could be traced that humility which is so becoming in a man who is on the point of returning to the dust. The Bishop, on his side, though he generally guarded against curiosity, which according to him was akin to insult, could not refrain from examining the conventionalist with an attention which, as it did not emanate from sympathy, would have pricked his conscience in the case of any other man. The conventionalist produced the effect upon him of being beyond the pale of the law, even the law of charity.

G — , calm, almost upright, and possessing a sonorous voice, was one of those grand octogenarians who are the amazement of the physiologist. The Revolution possessed many such men, proportioned to the age. The thoroughly tried man could be seen in him, and, though so near his end, he had retained all the signs of health. There was something which would disconcert death in his bright glance, his firm accent, and the robust movement of his shoulders: Azrael, the Mohammedan angel of the tomb, would have turned back fancying that he had mistaken the door. G — seemed to be dying because he wished to do so; there was liberty in his agony, and his legs alone, by which the shadows clutched him, were motionless. While the feet were dead and cold, the

head lived with all the power of life and appeared in full light. G — at this awful moment resembled the king in the Oriental legend, flesh above and marble below. The Bishop sat down on a stone and began rather abruptly: —

"I congratulate you," he said, in the tone people employ to reprimand; "*at least* you did not vote the King's death."

The Republican did not seem to notice the covert bitterness of this remark, *at least*; he replied, without a smile on his face, —

"Do not congratulate me, sir: I voted the death of the tyrant." It was the accent of austerity opposed to that of sternness.

"What do you mean?" the Bishop continued.

"I mean that man has a tyrant, Ignorance, and I voted for the end of that tyrant which engendered royalty, which is the false authority, while knowledge is the true authority. Man must only be governed by knowledge."

"And by his conscience," the Bishop added.

"That is the same thing. Conscience is the amount of innate knowledge we have in us."

Monseigneur Welcome listened in some surprise to this language, which was very novel to him. The Republican continued, —

"As for Louis XVI. I said No. I do not believe that I have the right to kill a man, but I feel the duty of exterminating a tyrant, and I voted for the end of the tyrant. That is to say, for the end of prostitution for women; the end of slavery for men; and the end of night for children. In voting for the Republic I voted for all this: I

voted for fraternity, concord, the Dawn! I aided in the overthrow of errors and prejudices, and such an overthrow produces light; we hurled down the old world, and that vase of wretchedness, by being poured over the human race, became an urn of joy."

"Mingled joy," said the Bishop.

"You might call it a troubled joy, and now, after that fatal return of the past which is called 1814, a departed joy. Alas! the work was incomplete, I grant; we demolished the ancient régime in facts, but were not able to suppress it completely in ideas. It is not sufficient to destroy abuses, but morals must also be modified. Though the mill no longer exists, the wind still blows."

"You demolished: it may be useful, but I distrust a demolition complicated with passion."

"Right has its passion, Sir Bishop, and that passion is an element of progress. No matter what may be said, the French Revolution is the most powerful step taken by the human race since the advent of Christ. It may be incomplete, but it was sublime. It softened minds, it calmed, appeased, and enlightened, and it spread civilization over the world. The French Revolution was good, for it was the consecration of humanity."

The Bishop could not refrain from muttering, — "Yes? '93!"

The Republican drew himself up with almost mournful solemnity, and shouted, as well as a dying man could shout, —

"Ah! there we have it! I have been waiting for that. A cloud had been collecting for fifteen hundred years, and at the end of that period it burst: you are condemning the thunder-clap."

The Bishop, without perhaps confessing it to himself, felt that the blow had gone home; still he kept a good countenance, and answered, —

"The judge speaks in the name of justice; the priest speaks in that of pity, which is only a higher form of justice. A thunder-clap must not deceive itself."

And he added as he looked fixedly at the conventionalist, —

"And Louis XVII.?"

The Republican stretched forth his hand and seized the Bishop's arm.

"Louis XVII. Let us consider. Whom do you weep for? Is it the innocent child? in that case I weep with you. Is it the royal child? in that case I must ask leave to reflect. For me, the thought of the brother of Cartouche, an innocent lad, hung up under the armpits in the Place de Grève until death ensued, for the sole crime of being Cartouche's brother, is not less painful than the grandson of Louis XV., the innocent boy martyred in the Temple Tower for the sole crime of being the grandson of Louis XV."

"I do not like such an association of names, sir," said the Bishop.

"Louis XV.? Cartouche? On behalf of which do you protest?"

There was a moment's silence; the Bishop almost regretted having come, and yet felt himself vaguely and strangely shaken. The conventionalist continued, —

"Ah! sir priest, you do not like the crudities of truth, but Christ loved them; he took a scourge and swept the temple. His lightning

lash was a rough discourser of truths. When he exclaimed, 'Suffer little children to come unto me,' he made no distinction among them. He made no difference between the dauphin of Barabbas and the dauphin of Herod. Innocence is its own crown, and does not require to be a Highness; it is as august in rags as when crowned with *fleurs de lis*."

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

"You have named Louis XVII.," the conventionalist continued; "let us understand each other. Shall we weep for all the innocents, martyrs, and children of the lowest as of the highest rank? I am with you there, but as I said, in that case we must go back beyond '93, and begin our tears before Louis XVII. I will weep over the children of the kings with you, provided that you weep with me over the children of the people."

"I weep for all," said the Bishop.

"Equally!" G – exclaimed; "and if the balance must be uneven, let it be on the side of the people, as they have suffered the longest."

There was again a silence, which the Republican broke. He rose on his elbow, held his chin with his thumb and forefinger, as a man does mechanically when he is interrogating and judging, and fixed on the Bishop a glance full of all the energy of approaching death. It was almost an explosion.

"Yes, sir; the people have suffered for a long time. But let me ask why you have come to question and speak to me about Louis XVII.? I do not know you. Ever since I have been in this

country I have lived here alone, never setting my foot across the threshold, and seeing no one but the boy who attends to me. Your name, it is true, has vaguely reached me, and I am bound to say that it was pronounced affectionately, but that means nothing, for clever people have so many ways of making the worthy, simple folk believe in them. By the bye, I did not hear the sound of your coach; you doubtless left it down there behind that clump of trees at the cross roads. I do not know you, I tell you; you have informed me that you are the Bishop, but that teaches me nothing as to your moral character. In a word – I repeat my question, Who are you? You are a bishop, that is to say, a prince of the Church, one of those gilded, escutcheoned annuitants who have fat prebends – the Bishopric of D – , with 15,000 francs income, 10,000 francs fees, or a total of 25,000 francs, – who have kitchens, liveries, keep a good table, and eat water-fowl on a Friday; who go about, with lackeys before and behind, in a gilded coach, in the name of the Saviour who walked barefoot! You are a prelate; you have, like all the rest, income, palace, horses, valets, a good table, and like all the rest you enjoy them: that is all very well, but it says either too much or too little; it does not enlighten me as to your intrinsic and essential value when you come with the probable intention of bringing me wisdom. To whom am I speaking – who are you?"

The Bishop bowed his head, and answered, "I am a worm."

"A worm in a carriage!" the Republican growled.

It was his turn to be haughty, the Bishop's to be humble; the

latter continued gently, —

"Be it so, sir. But explain to me how my coach, which is a little way off behind the trees, my good table, and the water-fowl I eat on Friday, my palace, my income, and my footmen, prove that pity is not a virtue, that clemency is not a duty, and that '93 was not inexorable."

The Republican passed his hand over his forehead, as if to remove a cloud.

"Before answering you," he said, "I must ask you to forgive me. I was in the wrong, sir, for you are in my house and my guest. You discuss my ideas, and I must restrict myself to combating your reasoning. Your wealth and enjoyments are advantages which I have over you in the debate, but courtesy bids me not employ them. I promise not to do so again."

"I thank you," said the Bishop.

G — continued: "Let us return to the explanation you asked of me. Where were we? What was it you said, that '93 was inexorable?"

"Yes, inexorable," the Bishop said; "what do you think of Marat clapping his hands at the guillotine?"

"What do you think of Bossuet singing a Te Deum over the Dragonnades?"

The response was harsh, but went to its mark with the rigidity of a Minié bullet. The Bishop started, and could not parry it, but he was hurt by this way of mentioning Bossuet. The best minds have their fetishes, and at times feel vaguely wounded by

any want of respect on the part of logic. The conventionalist was beginning to gasp; that asthma which is mingled with the last breath affected his voice; still he retained perfect mental clearness in his eyes. He continued, —

"Let us say a few words more on this head. Beyond the Revolution, which, taken in its entirety, is an immense human affirmation, '93, alas, is a reply. You consider it inexorable, but what was the whole monarchy? Carrier is a bandit, but what name do you give to Montrevel? Fouquier Tainville is a scoundrel, but what is your opinion about Lamoignon-Bâville? Maillard is frightful, but what of Saulx-Tavannes, if you please? Father Duchêne is ferocious, but what epithet will you allow me for Père Letellier? Jourdan Coupe-Tête is a monster, but less so than the Marquis de Louvois. I pity Marie Antoinette, Archduchess and Queen, but I also pity the poor Huguenot woman who, in 1685, while suckling her child, was fastened, naked to the waist, to a stake, while her infant was held at a distance. Her breast was swollen with milk, her heart with agony; the babe, hungry and pale, saw that breast and screamed for it, and the hangman said to the wife, mother, and nurse, 'Abjure!' giving her the choice between the death of her infant and the death of her conscience. What do you say of this punishment of Tantalus adapted to a woman? Remember this carefully, sir, the French Revolution had its reasons, and its wrath will be absolved by the future. Its result is a better world; and a caress for the human race issues from its most terrible blows. I must stop, for the game is all in my favor

— besides, I am dying."

And ceasing to regard the Bishop, the Republican finished his thought with the following few calm words, —

"Yes, the brutalities of progress are called revolutions, but when they are ended, this fact is recognized; the human race has been chastised, but it has moved onwards."

The Republican did not suspect that he had carried in turn every one of the Bishop's internal intrenchments. One still remained, however, and from this, the last resource of Monseigneur's resistance, came this remark, in which all the roughness of the commencement was perceptible.

"Progress must believe in God, and the good cannot have impious servants. A man who is an atheist is a bad guide for the human race."

The ex-representative of the people did not reply. He trembled, looked up to the sky, and a tear slowly collected in his eye. When the lid was full the tear ran down his livid cheek, and he said in a low, shaking voice, as if speaking to himself, —

"Oh thou! oh ideal! thou alone existest!"

The Bishop had a sort of inexpressible commotion; after a silence the old man raised a finger to heaven and said, —

"The infinite is. It is there. If the infinite had not a me, the I would be its limit; it would not be infinite; in other words, it would not be. But it is. Hence it has a me. This I of the infinite is God."

The dying man uttered these words in a loud voice, and with

a shudder of ecstasy as if he saw some one. When he had spoken his eyes closed, for the effort had exhausted him. It was evident that he had lived in one minute the few hours left him. The supreme moment was at hand. The Bishop understood it; he had come here as a priest, and had gradually passed from extreme coldness to extreme emotion; he looked at these closed eyes, he took this wrinkled and chilly hand and bent down over the dying man.

"This hour is God's. Would you not consider it matter of regret if we had met in vain?"

The Republican opened his eyes again; a gravity which suggested the shadow of death was imprinted on his countenance.

"Monsieur le Bishop," he said, with a slowness produced perhaps more by the dignity of the soul than by failing of his strength, "I have spent my life in meditation, contemplation, and study. I was sixty years of age when my country summoned me and ordered me to interfere in its affairs. I obeyed. There were abuses, and I combated them; tyranny, and I destroyed it; rights and principles, and I proclaimed and confessed them; the territory was invaded, and I defended it; France was menaced, and I offered her my chest; I was not rich, and I am poor. I was one of the masters of the State; the bank cellars were so filled with specie that it was necessary to prop up the walls, which were ready to burst through the weight of gold and silver, but I dined in the Rue de l'Arbre Sec, at two-and-twenty sous a head. I succored the oppressed. I relieved the suffering. I tore

up the altar cloth, it is true, but it was to stanch the wounds of the country. I ever supported the onward march of the human race towards light, and I at times resisted pitiless progress. When opportunity served, I protected my adversaries, men of your class. And there is at Peteghem in Flanders, on the same site where the Merovingian Kings had their summer palace, a monastery of Urbanists, the Abbey of St. Claire en Beaulieu, which I saved in 1793. I did my duty according to my strength, and what good I could. After which I was driven out, tracked, pursued, persecuted, maligned, mocked, spat upon, accursed, and proscribed. For many years I have felt that persons believed they had a right to despise me. My face has been held accursed by the poor ignorant mob, and, while hating no one, I accepted the isolation of hatred. Now, I am eighty-six years of age and on the point of death; what have you come to ask of me?"

"Your blessing!" said the Bishop, and knelt down. When the Bishop raised his head again, the conventionalist's countenance had become august: he had just expired. The Bishop returned home absorbed in the strangest thoughts, and spent the whole night in prayer. On the morrow curious worthies tried to make him talk about G – the Republican, but he only pointed to heaven. From this moment he redoubled his tenderness and fraternity for the little ones and the suffering.

Any allusion to "that old villain of a G – " made him fall into a singular reverie; no one could say that the passing of that mind before his, and the reflection that great conscience cast upon

his, had not something to do with this approach to perfection. This "pastoral visit" nearly created a stir among the small local coteries.

"Was it a bishop's place to visit the death-bed of such a man? It was plain that he had no conversion to hope for, for all these Revolutionists are relapsed! Then why go? what had he to see there? He must have been very curious to see the fiend carry off a soul."

One day a Dowager, of the impertinent breed which believes itself witty, asked him this question, "Monseigneur, people are asking when your Grandeur will have the red cap?" "Oh, oh!" the Bishop answered, "that is an ominous color. Fortunately those who despise it in a cap venerate it in a hat."

## CHAPTER XI

### A RESTRICTION

We should run a strong risk of making a mistake were we to conclude from this that Monseigneur Welcome was "a philosophic bishop," or "a patriotic curé." His meeting, which might almost be called his conjunction, with the conventionalist G – produced in him a sort of amazement, which rendered him more gentle than ever. That was all.

Though Monseigneur was anything rather than a politician, this is perhaps the place to indicate briefly what was his attitude in the events of that period, supposing that Monseigneur ever dreamed of having an attitude. We will, therefore, go back for a few years. A short time after M. Myriel's elevation to the Episcopate, the Emperor made him a Baron, simultaneously with some other bishops. The arrest of the Pope took place, as is well known, on the night of July 5, 1809, at which time M. Myriel was called by Napoleon to the Synod of French and Italian Bishops convened at Paris. This Synod was held at Notre Dame and assembled for the first time on June 15, 1811, under the Presidency of Cardinal Fesch. M. Myriel was one of the ninety-five bishops convened, but he was only present at one session and three or four private conferences. As bishop of a mountain diocese, living so near to nature in rusticity and poverty, it seems that he introduced among these eminent personages ideas

which changed the temperature of the assembly. He went back very soon to D – , and when questioned about this hurried return, he replied, "I was troublesome to them. The external air came in with me and I produced the effect of an open door upon them." Another time he said, "What would you have? those Messieurs are princes, while I am only a poor peasant bishop."

The fact is, that he displeased: among other strange things he let the following remarks slip out, one evening when he was visiting one of his most influential colleagues: "What fine clocks! What splendid carpets! What magnificent liveries! You must find all that very troublesome? Oh! I should not like to have such superfluities to yell incessantly in my ears: there are people who are hungry; there are people who are cold; there are poor, there are poor."

Let us remark parenthetically, that a hatred of luxury would not be an intelligent hatred, for it would imply a hatred of the arts. Still in churchmen any luxury beyond that connected with their sacred office is wrong, for it seems to reveal habits which are not truly charitable. An opulent priest is a paradox, for he is bound to live with the poor. Now, can a man incessantly both night and day come in contact with distress, misfortune, and want, without having about him a little of that holy wretchedness, like the dust of toil? Can we imagine a man sitting close to a stove and not feeling hot? Can we imagine a workman constantly toiling at a furnace, and have neither a hair burned, a nail blackened, nor

a drop of perspiration, nor grain of soot on his face? The first proof of charity in a priest, in a bishop especially, is poverty. This was doubtless the opinion of the Bishop of D – .

We must not believe either that he shared what we might call the "ideas of the age" on certain delicate, points; he mingled but slightly in the theological questions of the moment, in which Church and State are compromised; but had he been greatly pressed we fancy he would have been found to be Ultramontane rather than Gallican. As we are drawing a portrait, and do not wish to conceal anything, we are forced to add that he was frigid toward the setting Napoleon. From 1813 he adhered to or applauded all hostile demonstrations, he refused to see him when he passed through on his return from Elba, and abstained from ordering public prayers for the Emperor during the Hundred Days.

Besides his sister, Mlle. Baptistine, he had two brothers, one a general, the other a prefect. He wrote very frequently to both of them. For some time he owed the former a grudge, because the General, who at the time of the landing at Cannes held a command in Provence, put himself at the head of twelve hundred men and pursued the Emperor as if he wished to let him escape. His correspondence was more affectionate with the other brother, the ex-prefect, a worthy, honest man, who lived retired at Paris.

Monseigneur Welcome, therefore, also had his hour of partisan spirit, his hour of bitterness, his cloud. The shadow

of the passions of the moment fell athwart this gentle and great mind, which was occupied by things eternal. Certainly such a man would have deserved to have no political opinions. Pray let there be no mistake as to our meaning: we do not confound what are called "political opinions" with the grand aspiration for progress, with that sublime, patriotic, democratic and human faith, which in our days must be the foundation of all generous intelligence. Without entering into questions which only indirectly affect the subject of this book, we say, it would have been better had Monseigneur Welcome not been a Royalist, and if his eye had not turned away, even for a moment, from that serene contemplation, in which the three pure lights of Truth, Justice, and Charity are seen beaming above the fictions and hatreds of this world, and above the stormy ebb and flow of human affairs.

While allowing that GOD had not created Monseigneur Welcome for political functions, we could have understood and admired a protest in the name of justice and liberty, a proud opposition, a perilous and just resistance offered to Napoleon, all-powerful. But conduct which pleases us towards those who are rising, pleases us less towards those who are falling. We only like the contest so long as there is danger; and, in any case, only the combatants from the beginning have a right to be the exterminators at the end. A man who has not been an obstinate accuser during prosperity must be silent when the crash comes; the denouncer of success is the sole legitimate judge of

the fell. For our part, when Providence interferes and strikes we let it do so. 1812 begins to disarm us; in 1813 the cowardly rapture of silence by the taciturn legislative corps, emboldened by catastrophes, could only arouse indignation; in 1814, in the presence of the traitor Marshals, in the presence of that senate, passing from one atrocity to another, and insulting after deifying, and before the idolaters kicking their idol and spitting on it, it was a duty to turn one's head away; in 1815, as supreme disasters were in the air, as France had a shudder of their sinister approach, as Waterloo, already open before Napoleon could be vaguely distinguished, the dolorous acclamation offered by the army and the people had nothing laughable about it, and – leaving the despot out of the question – a heart like the Bishop of D – 's ought not to have misunderstood how much there was august and affecting in this close embrace between a great nation and a great man on the verge of an abyss.

With this exception, the Bishop was in all things just, true, equitable, intelligent, humble, and worthy; beneficent, and benevolent, which is another form of beneficence. He was a priest, a sage, and a man. Even in the political opinions with which we have reproached him, and which we are inclined to judge almost severely, we are bound to add that he was tolerant and facile, more so perhaps than the writer of these lines. The porter of the Town Hall had been appointed by the Emperor; he was an ex-non-commissioned officer of the old guard, a legionary of Austerlitz, and as Bonapartist as the eagle. This poor

fellow now and then made thoughtless remarks, which the law of that day qualified as seditious. From the moment when the Imperial profile disappeared from the Legion of Honor, he never put on his uniform again, that he might not be obliged, as he said, to bear his cross. He had himself devotedly removed the Imperial effigy from the cross which Napoleon had given him with his own hands, and though this made a hole he would not let anything be put in its place. "Sooner die," he would say, "than wear the three frogs on my heart." He was fond of ridiculing Louis XVIII. aloud. "The old gouty fellow with his English gaiters, let him be off to Prussia with his salsifies." It delighted him thus to combine in one imprecation the two things he hated most, England and Prussia. He went on thus till he lost his place, and then he was starving in the street with wife and children. The Bishop sent for him, gave him a gentle lecturing, and appointed him Beadle to the cathedral.

In nine years, through his good deeds and gentle manners, Monseigneur Welcome had filled the town of D – with a sort of tender and filial veneration. Even his conduct to Napoleon had been accepted, and, as it were, tacitly pardoned, by the people, an honest weak flock of sheep, who adored their Emperor but loved their Bishop.

## CHAPTER XII

# MONSEIGNEUR'S SOLITUDE

There is nearly always round a bishop a squad of little abbés, as there is a swarm of young officers round a general. They are what that delightful St. Francis de Sales calls somewhere "sucking priests." Every career has its aspirants, who pay their respects to those who have reached the goal; there is not a power without its following, not a fortune without its court. The seekers for a future buzz round the splendid present. Every metropolitan has his staff: every bishop who is at all influential has his patrol of Seminarist Cherubim, who go the rounds, maintain order in the episcopal palace, and mount guard round Monseigneur's smile. Pleasing a bishop is a foot in the stirrup for a sub-deaconry; after all, a man must make his way, and apostles do not despise canonries.

In the same way as there are "gros bonnets," elsewhere, there are large mitres in the Church. They are bishops who stand well with the Court, well endowed, clever, favorites of society, who doubtless know how to pray, but also how to solicit, not scrupulous about having a whole diocese waiting in their ante-rooms, connecting links between the sacristy and diplomacy, more abbés than priests, rather prelates than bishops. Happy the man who approaches them! As they stand in good credit they shower around them, on the obsequious and their favored, and on all the youth who know the art of pleasing, fat livings, prebends,

archdeaconries, chaplaincies, and cathedral appointments, while waiting for episcopal dignities. While themselves advancing, they cause their satellites to progress, and it is an entire solar system moving onwards. Their beams throw a purple hue over their suite, and their prosperity is showered over the actors behind the scenes in nice little bits of promotions. The larger the patron's diocese, the larger the favorite's living. And then there is Rome. A bishop who contrives to become an archbishop, an archbishop who manages to become a cardinal, takes you with him as a Conclavist; you enter the rota, you have the pallium, you are an auditor, a chamberlain, a Monsignore, and from Grandeur to Eminence there is but a step, and between Eminence and Holiness there is only the smoke of the balloting tickets. Every cassock can dream of the tiara. The priest is in our days the only man who can regularly become a king, and what a king! The supreme king! Hence what a hotbed of longings is a seminary! How many blushing choristers, how many young abbés, have on their head Perrette's milk-jar! how easily ambition calls itself a profession! and perhaps it does so in good faith and in self-deception, for it is so unworldly.

Monseigneur Welcome, humble, poor, and out of the world, was not counted among the large mitres. This was visible in the utter absence of young priests around him. We have seen that at Paris "he did not take," and not an aspirant tried to cling to this solitary old man; not the most youthful ambition tried to flourish in his shade. His canons and vicars were good old

men, walled up like him in this diocese which had no issue to the Cardinal's hat, and who resembled their bishop with this difference, that they were finished while he was completed. The impossibility of growing up near Monseigneur Welcome was so well felt, that young priests whom he ordained at once obtained letters commendatory to the Archbishop of Aix, or Auch, and went off at score. For, after all, we repeat, men wish to be pushed upward. A saint who lives in a state of excessive self-denial is a dangerous neighbor, he might possibly communicate to you by contagion an incurable poverty, a stiffening of the joints useful for advancement, and, in a word, more renunciation than you care for: and such scabby virtue is shunned. Hence came the isolation of Monseigneur Welcome. We live in the midst of a gloomy society. Succeed, – such is the teaching which falls drop by drop from the corruption hanging over us.

Success is a very hideous thing, and its resemblance with merit deceives men. For the herd, success has nearly the same profile as supremacy. Success, that twin brother of talent, has a dupe, – history. Tacitus and Juvenal alone grumble at it. In our days an almost official philosophy wears the livery of success, and waits in its ante-room. Succeed, that is the theory, for prosperity presupposes capacity. Win in the lottery and you are a clever man, for he who triumphs is revered. All you want is to be born under a fortunate star. Have luck and you will have the rest, be fortunate and you will be thought a great man; leaving out five or six immense exceptions, which form the lustre of an age,

contemporary admiration is blear-eyedness. Gilding is gold, and it does you no harm to be any one so long as you are the parvenu. The mob is an old Narcissus, adoring itself and applauding the mob. That enormous faculty by which a man is a Moses, Æschylus, Dante, Michael Angelo, or Napoleon, the multitude decrees broadcast and by acclamation to any one who attains his object, no matter in what. Let a notary transfigure himself into a deputy; a false Corneille produce Tiridates; an eunuch contrive to possess a harem; a military Prudhomme accidentally gain the decisive battle of an age; an apothecary invent cardboard soles for the army of the Sambre-et-Meuse, and make out of the cardboard sold for leather an income of 400,000 francs a year; a pedler espouse usury and put it to bed with seven or eight millions, of which he is the father and she the mother; a preacher become a bishop by his nasal twang; let the steward of a good family be so rich on leaving service that he is made Chancellor of the Exchequer – and men will call it genius, in the same way as they call Mousqueton's face beauty and Claude's mien majesty. They confound with the constellations of profundity the stars which the duck's feet make in the soft mud of the pond.

## CHAPTER XIII

### WHAT HE BELIEVED

It is not our business to gauge the Bishop of D – from an orthodox point of view. In the presence of such a soul we only feel inclined to respect. The conscience of the just man must be believed on its word; besides, certain natures granted, we admit the possibility of the development of all the beauties of human virtue in a creed differing from our own. What did he think of this dogma or that mystery? These heart-secrets are only known to the tomb which souls enter in a state of nudity. What we are certain of is, that he never solved difficulties of faith by hypocrisy. It is impossible for the diamond to rot. He believed as much as he possibly could, and would frequently exclaim, "I believe in the Father." He also derived from his good deeds that amount of satisfaction which suffices the conscience, and which whispers to you, "You are with God."

What we think it our duty to note is that, beyond his faith, he had an excess of love. It was through this, *quia multum amavit*, that he was considered vulnerable by "serious men," "grave persons," and "reasonable people," those favorite phrases of our melancholy world in which selfishness is under the guidance of pedantry. What was this excess of love. It was a serene benevolence, spreading over men, as we have already indicated, and on occasion extending even to things. He loved without

disdain, and was indulgent to God's creation. Every man, even the best, has in him an unreflecting harshness, which he reserves for animals, but the Bishop of D – had not this harshness, which is, however, peculiar to many priests. He did not go so far as the Brahmin, but seemed to have meditated on the words of Ecclesiastes – "Who knoweth the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?" An ugly appearance, a deformity of instinct, did not trouble him or render him indignant; he was moved, almost softened, by them. It seemed as if he thoughtfully sought, beyond apparent life, for the cause, the explanation, or the excuse. He examined without anger, and with the eye of a linguist deciphering a palimpsest, the amount of chaos which still exists in nature. This reverie at times caused strange remarks to escape from him. One morning he was in his garden and fancied himself alone; but his sister was walking behind, though unseen by him. He stopped and looked at something on the ground. It was a large black, hairy, horrible spider. His sister heard him mutter, "Poor brute, it is not thy fault." Why should we not repeat this almost divine childishness of goodness? It may be puerile, but of such were the puerilities of St. Francis d'Assisi and Marcus Aurelius. One day he sprained himself because he did not wish to crush an ant.

Such was the way in which this just man lived: at times he fell asleep in his garden, and then nothing could be more venerable. Monseigneur Welcome had been formerly, if we may believe the stories about his youth and even his manhood, a

passionate, perhaps violent man. His universal mansuetude was less a natural instinct than the result of a grand conviction, which had filtered through life into his heart, and slowly dropped into it thought by thought, for in a character, as in a rock, there may be waterholes. Such hollows, however, are ineffaceable, such formations indestructible. In 1815, as we think we have said, he reached his seventy-fifth year, but did not seem sixty. He was not tall, and had a tendency to stoutness, which he strove to combat by long walks; he stood firmly, and was but very slightly built. But these are details from which we will not attempt to draw any conclusion, for Gregory XVI. at the age of eighty was erect and smiling, which did not prevent him being a bad priest. Monseigneur Welcome had what people call "a fine head," which was so amiable that its beauty was forgotten. When he talked with that infantine gayety which was one of his graces you felt at your ease by his side, and joy seemed to emanate from his whole person. His fresh, ruddy complexion, and all his white teeth, which he had preserved and displayed when he laughed, gave him that open facile air which makes you say of an aged man, "He is a worthy person." That, it will be remembered, was the effect he produced on Napoleon. At the first glance, and when you saw him for the first time, he was in reality only a worthy man, but if you remained some hours in his company, and saw him in thought, he became gradually transfigured and assumed something imposing; his wide and serious brow, already august through the white hair, became also august through meditation;

majesty was evolved from the goodness; though the latter did not cease to gleam, you felt the same sort of emotion as you would if you saw a smiling angel slowly unfold his wings without ceasing to smile. An inexpressible respect gradually penetrated you and ascended to your head, and you felt that you had before you one of those powerful, well-bred, and indulgent souls whose thoughts are so great that they cannot but be gentle.

As we have seen, prayer, celebration of the Mass, almsgiving, consoling the afflicted, tilling a patch of ground, frugality, hospitality, self-denial, confidence, study, and labor, filled every day of his life. *Filled* is the exact word, and certainly the Bishop's day was full of good thoughts, good words, and good actions. Still, it was not complete. If cold or wet weather prevented him from spending an hour or two in the garden before going to bed after the two females had retired, it seemed as it were a species of rite of his to prepare himself for sleep by meditation, in the presence of the grand spectacle of the heavens by night. At times, even at an advanced hour of night, if the women were not asleep, they heard him slowly pacing the walks. He was then alone with himself, contemplative, peaceful, adoring, comparing the serenity of his heart with that of ether, affected in the darkness by the visible splendor of the constellations, and the invisible splendor of God, and opening his soul to thoughts which fall from the unknown. At such moments, offering up his heart at the hour when the nocturnal flowers offer up their perfumes, he could not have said himself, possibly, what was passing in his mind; but he

felt something fly out of him and something descend into him.

He dreamed of the grandeur and presence of God; of future eternity, that strange mystery; of past eternity, that even stranger mystery; of all the infinities which buried themselves before his eyes in all directions: and without seeking to comprehend the incomprehensible, he gazed at it. He did not study God; he was dazzled by Him. He considered this magnificent concourse of atoms which reveals forces, creates individualities in unity, proportions in space, innumerability in the Infinite, and through light produces beauty. Such a concourse incessantly takes place, and is dissolved again, and hence come life and death.

He would sit down on a wood bench with his back against a rickety trellis, and gaze at the stars through the stunted sickly profiles of his fruit trees. This quarter of an acre, so poorly planted, and so encumbered with sheds and out-houses, was dear to him, and was sufficient for him. What more was wanting to this aged man, who divided the leisure of his life, which knew so little leisure, between gardening by day and contemplation by night? Was not this limited enclosure with the sky for its roof sufficient for him to be able to adore God by turns in His most delicious and most sublime works? Was not this everything, in fact? and what could be desired beyond? A small garden to walk about in, and immensity to dream in; at his feet, what can be cultivated and gathered; over his head, what can be studied and meditated; a few flowers on the earth, and all the stars in the heavens.

# CHAPTER XIV

## WHAT HE THOUGHT

One last word.

As these details might, especially at the present day, and to employ an expression which is now fashionable, give the Bishop of D – a certain "Pantheistic" physiognomy, and cause it to be believed, either to his praise or blame, that he had in him one of those personal philosophies peculiar to our age, which germinate sometimes in solitary minds, and grow until they take the place of religion, we must lay stress on the fact that not one of the persons who knew Monseigneur Welcome believed himself authorized in thinking anything of the sort. What enlightened this man was his heart, and his wisdom was the product of the light which emanates from it.

He had no systems, but abundance of deeds. Abstruse speculations contain vertigo, and nothing indicates that he ventured his mind amid the Apocalypses. The apostle may be bold, but the bishop must be timid. He probably refrained from going too deep into certain problems reserved to some extent for great and terrible minds. There is a sacred horror beneath the portals of the enigma; the dark chasms gape before you, but something tells you that you must not enter: woe to him who penetrates. Geniuses, in the profundities of abstraction and pure speculation, being situated, so to speak, above dogmas, propose

their ideas to God; their prayer audaciously offers a discussion, and their adoration interrogates. This is direct religion, full of anxiety and responsibility for the man who attempts to carry the escarpment by storm.

Human meditation has no limits; at its own risk and peril it analyzes and produces its own bedazzlement; we might almost say that, through a species of splendid reaction, it dazzles nature with it. The mysterious world around us gives back what it receives, and it is probable that the contemplators are contemplated. However this may be, there are in the world men – are they men? – who distinctly perceive on the horizon of dreamland the heights of the Absolute, and have the terrible vision of the mountain of the Infinite. Monseigneur Welcome was not one of these men, for he was not a genius. He would have feared these sublimities, on which even very great men, like Swedenborg and Pascal, fell in their insanity. Assuredly, such powerful reveries have their utility, and by these arduous routes ideal perfection is approached, but he took a short-cut, – the Gospel. He did not attempt to convert his chasuble into Elijah's cloak, he cast no beam of the future over the gloomy heaving of events; there was nothing of the prophet or the Magus about him. This humble soul loved, that was all.

It is probable that he expanded prayer into a superhuman aspiration; but a man can no more pray too much than he can love too much, and if it were a heresy to pray further than the text, St Theresa and St Jérôme would be heretics. He bent down

over all that groaned and all that expiated; the universe appeared to him an immense malady; he felt a fever everywhere; he heard the panting of suffering all around him, and without trying to solve the enigma, he sought to heal the wound. The formidable spectacle of created things developed tenderness in him; he was solely engaged in finding for himself and arousing in others the best way of pitying and relieving. Existence was to this good and rare priest a permanent subject of sorrow seeking for consolation.

There are some men who toil to extract gold, but he labored to extract pity; the universal wretchedness was his mine. Sorrow all around was only an opportunity for constant kindness. "Love one another" he declared to be complete; he wished for nothing more, and that was his entire doctrine. One day the Senator, who believed himself a "philosopher," said to the Bishop: "Just look at the spectacle of the world; all are fighting, and the strongest man is the cleverest. Your 'love one another' is nonsense." "Well," Monseigneur Welcome replied, without discussion, "if it be nonsense, the soul must shut itself up in it like the pearl in the oyster." He consequently shut himself up in it, lived in it, was absolutely satisfied with it, leaving on one side those prodigious questions which attract and terrify, the unfathomable perspectives of the abstract, the precipices of metaphysics, all those depths which for the apostle converge in God, for the atheist in nothingness: destiny, good, and evil, the war of being against being, human consciousness, the pensive somnambulism of the animal, transformation through death, the recapitulation

of existences which the grave contains, the incomprehensible grafting of successive loves on the enduring Me, essence, substance, the Nil and Ens nature, liberty, necessity; in a word, he avoided all the gloomy precipices over which the gigantic archangels of the human mind bend, the formidable abysses which Lucretius, Manou, St. Paul, and Dante contemplate with that flashing eye which seems, in regarding Infinity, to make stars sparkle in it.

Monseigneur Welcome was simply a man who accepted mysterious questions without scrutinizing, disturbing them, or troubling his own mind, and who had in his soul a grave respect for the shadow.

# **BOOK II**

## **THE FALL**

### **CHAPTER I**

#### **THE CLOSE OF A DAY'S MARCH**

At the beginning of October, 1815, and about an hour before sunset, a man travelling on foot entered the little town of D – . The few inhabitants, who were at the moment at their windows or doors, regarded this traveller with a species of inquietude. It would be difficult to meet a wayfarer of more wretched appearance; he was a man of middle height, muscular and robust, and in the full vigor of life. He might be forty-six to forty-eight years of age. A cap with a leather peak partly concealed his sunburnt face, down which the perspiration streamed. His shirt of coarse yellow calico, fastened at the neck by a small silver anchor, allowed his hairy chest to be seen; he had on a neck-cloth twisted like a rope, trousers of blue ticking worn and threadbare, white at one knee and torn at the other; an old gray ragged blouse patched at one elbow with a rag of green cloth; on his back a large new well-filled and well-buckled knapsack, and a large knotty stick in his hand. His stockingless feet were thrust into iron-shod shoes, his hair was clipped, and his beard long. Perspiration,

heat, travelling on foot, and the dust, added something sordid to his wretched appearance. His hair was cut close and yet was bristling, for it was beginning to grow a little, and did not seem to have been cut for some time.

No one knew him; he was evidently passing through the town. Where did he come from? The South perhaps, the sea-board, for he made his entrance into D – by the same road Napoleon had driven along seven months previously when going from Cannes to Paris. The man must have been walking all day, for he seemed very tired. Some women in the old suburb at the lower part of the town had seen him halt under the trees on the Gassendi Boulevard, and drink from the fountain at the end of the walk. He must have been very thirsty, for the children that followed him saw him stop and drink again at the fountain on the Market-place. On reaching the corner of the Rue Poichevert, he turned to the left and proceeded to the Mayor's office. He went in and came out again a quarter of an hour after. A gendarme was sitting on the stone bench near the door, on which General Drouot had mounted on March 4th, to read to the startled town-folk of D – the proclamation of the gulf of Juan. The man doffed his cap and bowed humbly to the gendarme; the latter, without returning his salute, looked at him attentively, and then entered the office.

There was at that time at D – a capital inn, with the sign of the Cross of Colbas. This inn was kept by a certain Jacquin Labarre, a man highly respected in the town for his relationship to another Labarre, who kept the Three Dolphins at Grenoble, and had

served in the Guides. When the Emperor landed, many rumors were current in the country about the Three Dolphins; it was said that General Bertrand, in the disguise of a wagoner, had stopped there several times in the month of January, and distributed crosses of honor to the soldiers, and handfuls of napoleons to the towns-people. The fact was that the Emperor on entering Grenoble refused to take up his quarters at the Prefecture; he thanked the Mayor, and said, "I am going to a worthy man whom I know," and he went to the Three Dolphins. The glory of the Grenoble Labarre was reflected for a distance of five-and-twenty leagues on the Labarre of the Cross of Colbas. The towns-people said of him, "He is cousin to the one at Grenoble."

The man proceeded to this inn, which was the best in the town, and entered the kitchen, the door of which opened on the street. All the ovens were heated, and a large fire blazed cheerily in the chimney. The host, who was at the same time head-cook, went from the hearth to the stew-pans, very busy in attending to a dinner intended for the carriers, who could be heard singing and talking noisily in an adjoining room. Any one who has travelled knows that no people feed so well as carriers. A fat marmot, flanked by white-legged partridges and grouse, was turning on a long spit before the fire; while two large carp from Lake Lauzet and an Alloz trout were baking in the ovens. The landlord, on hearing the door open and a stranger enter, said, without raising his eyes from his stew-pans, —

"What do you want, sir?"

"Supper and a bed," the man replied.

"Nothing easier," said mine host. At this moment he looked up, took in the stranger's appearance at a glance, and added, "On paying."

The man drew a heavy leathern purse from the pocket of his blouse, and replied, —

"I have money."

"In that case I am at your service," said the host.

The man returned the purse to his pocket, took off his knapsack, placed it on the ground near the door, kept his stick in his hand, and sat down on a low stool near the fire. D — is in the mountains, and the evenings there are cold in October. While going backwards and forwards the landlord still inspected his guest.

"Will supper be ready soon?" the man asked.

"Directly."

While the new-comer had his back turned to warm himself, the worthy landlord took a pencil from his pocket, and then tore off the corner of an old newspaper which lay on a small table near the window. On the white margin he wrote a line or two, folded up the paper, and handed it to a lad who seemed to serve both as turnspit and page. The landlord whispered a word in the boy's ear, and he ran off in the direction of the Mayor's house. The traveller had seen nothing of all this, and he asked again whether supper would be ready soon. The boy came back with the paper in his hand, and the landlord eagerly unfolded it, like

a man who is expecting an answer. He read it carefully, then shook his head, and remained thoughtful for a moment. At last he walked up to the traveller, who seemed plunged in anything but a pleasant reverie.

"I cannot make room for you, sir," he said.

The man half turned on his stool.

"What do you mean? Are you afraid I shall bilk you? Do you want me to pay you in advance? I have money, I tell you."

"It is not that"

"What is it, then?"

"You have money."

"Yes," said the man.

"But I have not a spare bed-room."

The man continued quietly: "Put me in the stables."

"I cannot."

"Why?"

"The horses take up all the room."

"Well," the man continued, "a corner in the loft and a truss of straw: we will see to that after supper."

"I cannot give you any supper."

This declaration, made in a measured but firm tone, seemed to the stranger serious. He rose.

"Nonsense, I am dying of hunger. I have been on my legs since sunrise, and have walked twelve leagues. I can pay, and demand food."

"I have none," said the landlord.

The man burst into a laugh, and turned to the chimney and the oven.

"Nothing! Why, what is all this?"

"All this is ordered."

"By whom?"

"By the carriers."

"How many are there of them?"

"Twelve."

"There is enough food here for twenty."

The man sat down again, and said without raising his voice, —

"I am at an inn, I am hungry, and so shall remain."

The landlord then stooped down, and whispered with an accent which made him start, "Be off with you!"

The stranger at this moment was thrusting some logs into the fire with the ferule of his stick, but he turned quickly, and as he was opening his mouth to reply, the landlord continued in the same low voice: "Come, enough of this. Do you wish me to tell you your name? It is Jean Valjean. Now, do you wish me to tell you who you are? On seeing you come in I suspected something, so I sent to the police office, and this is the answer I received. Can you read?"

While saying this, he handed the stranger the paper which had travelled from the inn to the office and back again. The man took a glance at it, and mine host continued after a moment's silence,

—  
"I am accustomed to be polite with everybody. Be off."

The man stooped, picked up his knapsack, and went off. He walked along the high street hap-hazard, keeping close to the houses like a sad and humiliated man. He did not look back once; had he done so he would have seen the landlord of the Cross of Colbas in his doorway surrounded by all his guests and the passers-by, talking eagerly and pointing to him: and judging from the looks of suspicion and terror, he might have guessed that ere long his arrival would be the event of the whole town. He saw nothing of all this, for men who are oppressed do not look back, as they know only too well that an evil destiny is following them.

He walked on thus for a long time, turning down streets he did not know, and forgetting his fatigue, as happens in sorrow. All at once he was sharply assailed by hunger: night was approaching, and he looked round to see whether he could not discover a shelter. The best inn was closed against him, and he sought some very humble pot-house, some wretched den. At this moment a lamp was lit at the end of the street, and a fir-branch hanging from an iron bar stood out on the white twilight sky. He went towards it: it was really a pot-house. The stranger stopped for a moment and looked through the window into the low tap-room, which was lighted up by a small lamp on the table and a large fire on the hearth. Some men were drinking, and the landlord was warming himself; over the flames bubbled a caldron hanging from an iron hook. This pot-house, which is also a sort of inn, has two entrances, one on the street, the other opening on a small yard full of manure. The traveller did not dare enter by

the street door: he slipped into the yard, stopped once again, and then timidly raised the latch and opened the door.

"Who's there?" the landlord asked.

"Some one who wants a supper and bed."

"Very good. They are to be had here."

He went in, and all the toppers turned to look at him; they examined him for some time while he was taking off his knapsack. Said the landlord to him, "Here is a fire; supper is boiling in the pot: come and warm yourself, comrade."

He sat down in the ingle and stretched out his feet, which were swollen with fatigue. A pleasant smell issued from the caldron. All that could be distinguished of his face under his cap-peak assumed a vague appearance of comfort blended with the other wretched appearance which the habit of suffering produces. It was, moreover, a firm, energetic, and sad profile; the face was strangely composed, for it began by appearing humble and ended by becoming severe. His eyes gleamed under his brows, like a fire under brushwood. One of the men seated at the table was a fishmonger, who, before entering the pot-house, had gone to put up his horse in Labarre's stables. Accident willed it, that on the same morning he had met this ill-looking stranger walking between Bras d'Asse and – (I have forgotten the name, but I fancy it is Escoublon). Now, on meeting him, the man, who appeared very fatigued, had asked the fishmonger to give him a lift, which had only made him go the faster. This fishmonger had been half an hour previously one of the party surrounding Jacquin Labarre,

and had told his unpleasant encounter in the morning to the people at the Cross of Colbas. He made an imperceptible sign to the landlord from his seat, and the latter went up to him, and they exchanged a few whispered words. The man had fallen back into his reverie.

The landlord went up to the chimney, laid his hand sharply on the man's shoulder, and said to him, —

"You must be off from here."

The stranger turned and replied gently, "Ah, you know?"

"Yes."

"I was turned out of the other inn."

"And so you will be out of this."

"Where would you have me go?"

"Somewhere else."

The man took his knapsack and stick and went away. As he stepped out, some boys who had followed him from the Cross of Colbas, and seemed to have been waiting for him, threw stones at him. He turned savagely, and threatened them with his stick, and the boys dispersed like a flock of birds. He passed in front of the prison, and pulled the iron bell-handle; a wicket was opened.

"Mr. Jailer," he said, as he humbly doffed his cap, "would you be kind enough to open the door and give me a nights lodging?"

A voice answered, "A prison is not an inn; get yourself arrested, and then I will open the door."

The man entered a small street, in which there are numerous gardens, some of them being merely enclosed with hedges, which

enliven the street. Among these gardens and hedges he saw a single-storeyed house, whose window was illuminated, and he looked through the panes as he had done at the pot-house. It was a large white-washed room, with a bed with printed chintz curtains, and a cradle in a corner, a few chairs, and a double-barrelled gun hanging on the wall. A table was laid for supper in the middle of the room; a copper lamp lit up the coarse white cloth, the tin mug glistening like silver and full of wine, and the brown smoking soup-tureen. At this table was seated a man of about forty years of age, with a hearty, open face, who was riding a child on his knee. By his side a woman, still young, was suckling another child. The father was laughing, the children were laughing, and the mother was smiling. The stranger stood for a moment pensively before this gentle and calming spectacle; what was going on within him? It would be impossible to say, but it is probable that he thought that this joyous house would prove hospitable, and that where he saw so much happiness he might find a little pity. He tapped very slightly on a window pane, but was not heard; he tapped a second time, and he heard the woman say, "Husband, I fancy I can hear some one knocking."

"No," the husband answered.

He tapped a third time. The husband rose, took the lamp, and walked to the front door. He was a tall man, half peasant, half artisan; he wore a huge, leathern apron, which came up to his left shoulder, and on which he carried a hammer, a red handkerchief, a powder-flask, and all sorts of things, which his belt held like a

pocket. As he threw back his head, his turned-down shirt-collar displayed his full neck, white and bare. He had thick eye-brows, enormous black whiskers, eyes flush with his head, a bull-dog lower jaw, and over all this that air of being at home, which is inexpressible.

"I beg your pardon, sir," the traveller said, "but would you, for payment, give me a plateful of soup and a corner to sleep in in your garden outhouse?"

"Who are you?" the owner of the cottage asked.

The man answered, "I have come from Puy Moisson, I have walked the whole day. Could you do it, — for payment of course?"

"I would not refuse," the peasant answered, "to lodge any respectable person who paid. But why do you not go to the inn?"

"There is no room there."

"Nonsense! that is impossible; it is neither market nor fair day. Have you been to Labarre's?"

"Yes."

"Well?"

The traveller continued, with some hesitation, "I do not know why, but he refused to take me in."

"Have you been to what is his name, in the Rue de Chauffaut?"

The stranger's embarrassment increased; he stammered, "He would not take me in either."

The peasant's face assumed a suspicious look, he surveyed the new comer from head to foot, and all at once exclaimed with a sort of shudder, —

"Can you be the man?.."

He took another look at the stranger, placed the lamp on the table, and took down his gun. On hearing the peasant say "Can you be the man?" his wife had risen, taken her two children in her arms, and hurriedly sought refuge behind her husband, and looked in horror at the stranger as she muttered, "The villain!" All this took place in less time than is needed to imagine it. After examining the man for some minutes as if he had been a viper, the peasant returned to the door and said: "Be off!"

"For mercy's sake," the man continued, – "a glass of water."

"A charge of shot!" the peasant said.

Then he violently closed the door, and the stranger heard two bolts fastened. A moment after the window shutters were closed, and the sound of the iron bar being put in reached his ear. Night was coming on apace: the cold wind of the Alps was blowing. By the light of the expiring day the stranger noticed in one of the gardens a sort of hut which seemed to him to be made of sods of turf. He boldly clambered over a railing and found himself in the garden; he approached the hut, which had as entrance a narrow, extremely low door, and resembled the tenements which road-menders construct by the side of the highway. He doubtless thought it was such: he was suffering from cold and hunger, and though he had made up his mind to starve, it was at any rate a shelter against the cold. As this sort of residence is not usually occupied at night, he lay down on his stomach and crawled into the hut: it was warm, and he found a rather good straw litter in

it. He lay for a moment motionless on this bed as his fatigue was so great: but as his knapsack hurt his back and was a ready-made pillow, he began unbuckling one of the thongs. At this moment a hoarse growl was audible: he raised his eyes, and the head of an enormous mastiff stood out in the shadow at the opening of the hut, which was its kennel. The dog itself was strong and formidable, hence he raised his stick, employed his knapsack as a shield, and left the kennel as he best could, though not without enlarging the rents in his rags.

He also left the garden, but backwards, and compelled to twirl his stick in order to keep the dog at a respectful distance. When he, not without difficulty, had leaped the fence again, and found himself once more in the street, alone, without a bed, roof, or shelter, and expelled even from the bed of straw and the kennel, he fell rather than sat on a stone, and a passer-by heard him exclaim, "I am not even a dog." He soon rose and recommenced his walk. He left the town hoping to find some tree or mill in the fields which would afford him shelter. He walked on thus for some time with hanging head; when he found himself far from all human habitations, he raised his eyes and looked around him. He was in a field, and had in front of him one of those low hills with close-cut stubble, which after harvest resemble cropped heads. The horizon was perfectly black, but it was not solely the gloom of night, but low clouds, which seemed to be resting on the hill itself, rose and filled the whole sky. Still, as the moon was about to rise shortly, and a remnant of twilight still hovered in

the zenith, these clouds formed a species of whitish vault whence a gleam of light was thrown on the earth.

The ground was therefore more illumined than the sky, which produces a peculiarly sinister effect, and the hill with its paltry outlines stood out vaguely and dully on the gloomy horizon. The whole scene was hideous, mean, mournful, and confined; there was nothing in the field or on the hill but a stunted tree, which writhed and trembled a few yards from the traveller. This man was evidently far from possessing those delicate habits of mind which render persons sensible of the mysterious aspects of things, still there was in the sky, this hill, this plain, and this tree, something so profoundly desolate, that after standing motionless and thoughtful for a while he suddenly turned back. There are instants in which nature seems to be hostile.

He went back and found the gates of the town closed. D — , which sustained sieges in the religious wars, was still begirt in 1815 by old walls flanked by square towers, which have since been demolished. He passed through a breach, and re-entered the town. It might be about eight o'clock in the evening, and as he did not know the streets he wandered about without purpose. He thus reached the prefecture and then the seminary; on passing through the Cathedral Square he shook his fist at the church. There is at the corner of this Square a printing-office, where the proclamations of the Emperor and the Imperial Guard to the army, brought from Elba, and drawn up by Napoleon himself, were first printed. Worn out with fatigue, and hopeless, he sat

down on the stone bench at the door of this printing-office. An old lady who was leaving the church at the moment saw the man stretched out in the darkness.

"What are you doing there, my friend?" she said.

He answered, harshly and savagely, "You can see, my good woman, that I am going to sleep."

The good woman, who was really worthy of the name, was the Marchioness de R – .

"On that bench?" she continued.

"I have had for nineteen years a wooden mattress," the man said, "and now I have a stone one."

"Have you been a soldier?"

"Yes, my good woman."

"Why do you not go to the inn?"

"Because I have no money."

"Alas!" said Madame de R – , "I have only two-pence in my purse."

"You can give them to me all the same."

The man took the money, and Madame de R – continued, "You cannot lodge at an inn for so small a sum, still you should make the attempt, for you cannot possibly spend the night here. Doubtless you are cold and hungry, and some one might take you in for charity."

"I have knocked at every door."

"Well?"

"And was turned away at all."

The "good woman" touched the man's arm and pointed to a small house next to the Bishop's Palace.

"You have," she continued, "knocked at every door. Have you done so there?"

"No."

"Then do it."

## CHAPTER II

# PRUDENCE RECOMMENDED TO WISDOM

On this evening, the Bishop of D — , after his walk in the town, had remained in his bed-room till a late hour. He was engaged on a heavy work on the "duties," which he unfortunately has left incomplete. He was still working at eight o'clock, writing rather uncomfortably on small squares of paper, with a large book open on his knees, when Madame Magloire came in as usual to fetch the plate from the wall-cupboard near the bed. A moment after, the Bishop, feeling that supper was ready, and that his sister might be waiting, closed his book, rose from the table, and walked into the dining-room. It was an oblong apartment, as we have said, with a door opening on the street, and a window looking on the garden. Madame Magloire had laid the table, and while attending to her duties, was chatting with Mademoiselle Baptistine. A lamp was on the table, which was close to the chimney, in which a tolerable fire was lighted.

We can easily figure to ourselves the two females, who had both passed their sixtieth year: Madame Magloire, short, stout, and quick: Mademoiselle Baptistine, gentle, thin, and frail, somewhat taller than her brother, dressed in a puce-colored silk gown, the fashionable color in 1806, which she had bought in

Paris in that year and which still held out. Madame Magloire wore a white cap, on her neck a gold *jeannette*, the only piece of feminine jewelry in the house, a very white handkerchief emerging from a black stuff gown with wide and short sleeves, a calico red and puce checked apron, fastened round the waist with a green ribbon, with a stomacher of the same stuff fastened with two pins at the top corners, heavy shoes and yellow stockings, like the Marseilles women. Mademoiselle Baptistine's gown was cut after the fashion of 1806, short-waisted, with epaulettes on the sleeves, flaps and buttons, and she concealed her gray hair by a curling front called *à l'enfant*. Madame Magloire had an intelligent, quick, and kindly air, though the unevenly raised corners of her mouth and the upper lip, thicker than the lower, gave her a somewhat rough and imperious air. So long as Monseigneur was silent, she spoke to him boldly with a mingled respect and liberty, but so soon as he spoke she passively obeyed, like Mademoiselle, who no longer replied, but restricted herself to obeying and enduring. Even when she was young the latter was not pretty; she had large blue eyes, flush with her head, and a long peaked nose; but all her face, all her person, as we said at the outset, breathed ineffable kindness. She had always been predestined to gentleness, but faith, hope, and charity, those three virtues that softly warm the soul, had gradually elevated that gentleness to sanctity. Nature had only made her a lamb, and religion had made her an angel. Poor holy woman! sweet departed recollection!

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