VICTOR HUGO

LES MISÉRABLES, V. 4

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Les Misérables, v. 4

Гюго В.

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Содержание

Victor Hugo
Les Misérables, v. 4/5: The Idyll and the Epic

BOOK I
SOME PAGES OF HISTORY

CHAPTER I
WELL CUT OUT

1831 and 1832, the two years immediately attached to the revolution of July, contain the most peculiar and striking moments of history; and these two years, amid those that precede and follow them, stand out like mountains. They possess the true revolutionary grandeur, and precipices may be traced in them. The social masses, the foundations of civilization, the solid group of superimposed and adherent interests, and the secular profiles of the ancient Gallic formations, appear and disappear every moment through the stormy clouds of systems, passions, and theories. These apparitions and disappearances were called resistance and movement, but at intervals truth, the daylight of the human soul, flashes through all.

This remarkable epoch is so circumscribed, and is beginning to become so remote from us, that we are able to seize its principal outlines. We will make the attempt. The Restoration was one of those intermediate phases which are so difficult to define, in which are fatigue, buzzing, murmurs, sleep, and tumult, and which, after all, are nought but the arrival of a great nation at a halting-place. These epochs are peculiar, and deceive the politician who tries to take advantage of them. At the outset the nation only demands repose; there is but one thirst, for peace, and only one ambition, to be small, – which is the translation of keeping quiet. "Great events, great accidents, great adventures, great men, – O Lord! we have had enough of these, and more than enough." Cæsar would be given for Prusias, and Napoleon for the Roi d'Yvetôt, who was "such a merry little king." Folk have been marching since daybreak and arrive at the evening of a long and rough journey; they made their first halt with Mirabeau, the second with Robespierre, and the third with Napoleon, and they are exhausted. Everybody insists on a bed.

Worn-out devotions, crying heroisms, gorged ambitions, and made fortunes, seek, claim, implore, and solicit, – what? A resting-place, and they have it. They take possession of peace, tranquillity, and leisure, and feel satisfied. Still, at the same time certain facts arise, demand recognition, and knock at doors on their side. These facts have emerged from revolutions and wars; they exist, they live, and have the right, – the right of installing themselves in society, which they do; and in the majority of instances facts are the quarter-masters that only prepare a billet for principles.

In such a case, this is what occurs to political philosophers: at the same time as wearied men claim rest, accomplished facts demand guarantees, for guarantees for facts are the same thing as repose for men. It is this that England asked of the Stuart after the Protector, and what France asked of the Bourbons after the Empire. These guarantees are a necessity of the times, and they must be granted. The Princes concede them, but in reality it is the force of things that gives them. This is a profound truth and worth knowing, which the Stuarts did not suspect in 1662, and of which the Bourbons did not even gain a glimpse in 1814.

The predestined family which returned to France when Napoleon collapsed had the fatal simplicity of believing that it gave, and that it could take back what it had once given; that the Bourbon family possessed the right divine, and France possessed nothing, and that the political right conceded

in the charter of Louis XVIII. was nothing else but a branch of the divine right, detached by the House of Bourbon and graciously permitted to the people up to the day when the king thought proper to clutch it again. Still, from the displeasure which the gift caused it, the Bourbon family ought to have felt that it did not emanate from it. It behaved in a grudging way to the 19th century, and looked with an ugly smile at every expansion of the nation. To employ a trivial, that is to say, a popular and true phrase, it was crabbed, and the people noticed it.

The Government believed that it had strength because the Empire had been removed before it, like a stage scene; but it did not perceive that it had been produced in the same way, nor see that it was held in the same hand which had removed Napoleon. It believed that it had roots, because it was the past, and was mistaken: it formed a portion of the past, but the whole of the past was France; and the roots of French society were not in the Bourbons, but in the nation. These obscure and tenacious roots did not constitute the right of a family, but the history of a people, and were everywhere, except under the throne. The House of Bourbon had been for France the illustrious and blood-stained knot of her history, but was no longer the principal element of her destiny or the necessary basis of her policy. She could do without the Bourbons as she had done for two-and-twenty years: there was a solution of continuity, but they did not suspect it. And how could they suspect it, when they imagined that Louis XVII. reigned at the 9th Thermidor, and that Louis XVIII. was reigning at the day of Marengo? Never, since the origin of history, have princes been so blind in the presence of history and that portion of the divine authority which facts contain and promulgate. Never had the nether claim, which is called the right of kings, denied to such a condition the supreme right. It was a capital error that led this family to lay their hand again on the "granted" guarantees in 1814, or on the concessions, as they entitled them. It is a sad thing that what they called their concessions were our conquests, and what they called our encroachments were our rights. When the hour appeared to have arrived, the Restoration, supposing itself victorious over Bonaparte, and rooted in the country, that is to say, believing itself strong and profound, suddenly made up its mind, and risked its stake. One morning it rose in the face of France, and, raising its voice, contested the collective title, and the individual title, the sovereignty of the nation, and the liberty of the citizen. In other terms, it denied the nation what made it a nation, and the citizen what made him a citizen. This is the substratum of those famous decrees which are called the "Ordonnances" of July. The Restoration fell, and fell justly. Still, let us add, it was not absolutely hostile to all the forms of progress, and grand things were accomplished while it stood aloof. During the Restoration the nation had grown accustomed to calm discussion, which the Republic had been deficient in, and to grandeur in peace, which was not known under the Empire. France, strong and free, had been an encouraging example for the other nations of Europe. Under Robespierre the Revolution ruled; under Bonaparte, cannon; while in the reigns of Louis XVIII. and Charles X. the turn arrived for intellect to speak. The wind ceased, and the torch was re-illumined, while a pure mental light played round the serene crests. It was a magnificent, useful, and delightful spectacle; and for fifteen years those great principles, which are so old for the thinker, so new for the statesman, – equality before the law, liberty of conscience, freedom of the press and speech, and the accessibility of all fitting men to office, – could be seen at work in a reign of peace, and publicly. Things went on thus till 1830, and the Bourbons were an instrument of civilization which broke in the hands of Providence.

The fall of the Bourbons was full of grandeur, not on their side, but on that of the nation. They left the throne with gravity, but without authority; their descent into night was not one of those solemn disappearances which impart a sombre emotion to history, and it was neither the spectral calmness of Charles I. nor the eagle cry of Napoleon. They went away, that was all; they deposited the crown and did not retain the glory, and though they were dignified, they were not august, and they were to a certain extent false to the majesty of their misfortune. Charles X., having a round table cut square during the Cherbourg voyage, seemed more anxious about the imperilled etiquette than the crumbling monarchy. This diminution saddened the devoted men who were attached to the Bourbons

personally, and the serious men who honored their race. The people behaved admirably, however, and the nation, attacked one morning by a species of royalist insurrection, felt themselves so strong that they displayed no anger. They defended themselves, restrained themselves, and restored things to their place; the government in the law, the Bourbons in exile, alas! and stopped there. They took the old King Charles X. off the daïs which had sheltered Louis XIV., and gently placed him on the ground, and they only touched the royal persons cautiously and sorrowfully. It was not one man, or a few men, but France, united France, France victorious, and intoxicated by its victory, which appeared to remember, and practised in the eyes of the whole world, the serious remarks of Guillaume du Vair after the day of the Barricades. "It is easy for those who have been accustomed to obtain the favors of the great, and leap like a bird from branch to branch, from a low to a flourishing fortune, to show themselves bold against their prince in his misfortunes; but for my part the fortune of my kings will be ever venerable to me, and principally of those who are in affliction." The Bourbons bore away with them respect, but not regret; as we have said, their misfortune was greater than themselves, and they faded away on the horizon.

The revolution of July at once found friends and enemies in the whole world; the former rushed toward it enthusiastically and joyfully, while the latter turned away, each according to its nature. The princes of Europe, the owls of this dawn, at the first moment closed their eyes, which were hurt and stupefied, and only opened them again to menace, – it is a terror easy to understand and a pardonable anger. This strange revolution had scarcely required a blow, and had not even done conquered royalty the honor of treating it as an enemy and shedding its blood. In the sight of despotic governments which also have an interest in liberty calumniating itself, the revolution of July had the fault of being formidable and remaining gentle, but no attempt was made or prepared against it. The most dissatisfied and irritated persons saluted it; for whatever their selfishness or rancor may be, men feel a mysterious respect issue from events in which they feel the co-operation of some one who labors higher than man. The revolution of July is the triumph of right overthrowing fact, and is a thing full of splendor. Hence came the brilliancy of the revolution of 1830, and at the same time their mildness, for right that triumphs has no need to be violent. Right is justice and truth, and it is the property of right to remain eternally beautiful and pure. Fact, even the most necessary in appearance and best accepted by contemporaries, if it only exist as fact, and contain too little right, is no right at all, and is infallibly destined to become, with the duration of time, misshapen, foul, and perhaps even monstrous. If we wish to discover at one glance what a degree of ugliness fact can attain, when looked at through the distance of centuries, let us regard Machiavelli. He is not an evil genius, a demon, or a cowardly and servile writer: he is nothing but the fact, and not merely the Italian fact, but the European fact, the fact of the sixteenth century. He appears hideous, and is so in the presence of the moral idea of the 19th century. This struggle between right and fact has endured since the origin of societies. It is the task of wise men to terminate the duel, amalgamate the pure idea with human reality, and to make right penetrate fact and fact right pacifically.

CHAPTER II
BADLY STITCHED

But the task of wise men differs greatly from that of clever men, and the revolution of 1830 quickly stopped; for when a revolution has run ashore, the clever men plunder the wreck. Clever men in our century have decreed themselves the title of statesmen, so that the phrase has eventually become a bit of slang. For it must not be forgotten that where there is only cleverness, littleness necessarily exists, and to say "the clever" is much like saying the "mediocrities." In the same way the word "statesman" is often equivalent to saying "traitor." If we believe clever men, then revolutions like that of July are severed arteries, and a rapid ligature is required. Right, if too loudly proclaimed, begins to give way, and hence so soon as right is substantiated the State must be strengthened, and when liberty is injured attention must be turned to power. Here wise men, though they have not yet separated from clever men, begin to distrust them. Power, very good! But, in the first place, what is power; and secondly, whence does it come? The clever men do not appear to hear the muttered objection and continue their manœuvres. According to politicians who ingeniously place a mask of necessity upon profitable fiction, the first want of a people after a revolution, if that people form part of a monarchical continent, is to obtain a dynasty. In this way they say peace is secured after the revolution, that is to say, the necessary time for repairing the house and dressing the wounds. A dynasty hides the scaffolding and covers the hospital. Now, it is not always easy to obtain a dynasty, although the first man of genius or the first adventurer met with is sufficient to make a king. You have in the first case Bonaparte, and in the second Iturbide. But the first family come across is not sufficient to form a dynasty, for there is necessarily a certain amount of antiquity required as a race, and the wrinkle of centuries cannot be improvised.

If we place ourselves at the standpoint of statesmen, with all due reserves of course, what are the qualities of a king who issues from a revolution? He may be, and it is useful that he should be, revolutionary; that is to say, have played a personal part in the revolution, have become either compromised or renowned in it, and have wielded the axe or drawn the sword. What are the qualities of a dynasty? It must be national; that is to say, distantly revolutionary, not through acts done, but through ideas accepted. It must be composed of the past and be historical, and of the future and be sympathetic. All this explains why the first revolutions are satisfied with finding a man, Napoleon or Cromwell, while the second are determined on finding a family, like the House of Brunswick or the House of Orléans. Royal houses resemble those Indian fig-trees, each branch of which bends down, becomes rooted in the ground, and grows into a fig-tree. Each branch of the family may become a dynasty, on the sole condition that it bends down to the people. Such is the theory of clever men.

This, then, is the great art, – to give success the sound of a catastrophe, so that those who profit by it may also tremble at it; to season every step taken with fear; to increase the curve of the transition until progress is checked; to spoil this daybreak, denounce and retrench the roughness of enthusiasm; to cut angles and nails; to pad the triumph, muffle the right, roll the giant people in flannel, and put it to bed at full speed; to place this excess of health under medical treatment, and regard Hercules as a convalescent; to dilute the event in expediency, and offer to minds thirsting for the ideal this weak nectar; to take precautions against extreme success, and provide the revolution with a sunshade. 1830 practised this theory, which had already been applied to England by 1688. 1830 is a revolution arrested half-way, and a moiety of progress is almost right. Now, logic ignores this as absolutely as the sun ignores a rush-light. Who check revolutions half-way? The bourgeoisie. Why? Because the bourgeoisie represent satisfied self-interest. Yesterday appetite was felt, to-day fulness, and to-morrow satiety. The phenomenon of 1814, after Napoleon, was reproduced in 1830 after Charles X. Attempts have been made, though wrongly, to convert the bourgeoisie into a class, but they are merely the contented portion of the population. The bourgeois is a man who has at last time to sit down, and a

chair is not a caste. But through a desire to sit down too soon, the progress of the human race may be arrested, and this has frequently been the fault of the bourgeoisie; and people are not a class because they commit a fault, and selfishness is not one of the divisions of the social order. However, as we must be just even towards selfishness, the condition for which that portion of the nation called the bourgeoisie yearned after the shock of 1830 was not inertness, which is complicated with indifference and sloth, and contains a little shame; nor was it sleep, which presupposes a momentary oblivion accessible to dreams, but it was a halt. This word contains a double, singular, and almost contradictory meaning, for it implies troops on the march, that is to say, movement, and a stop-page, that is to say, rest. A halt is the restoration of strength, it is repose armed and awake, it is the accomplished fact, posting its sentries and standing on guard. A halt presupposes a combat yesterday and a combat to-morrow, – it is the interlude between 1830 and 1848.

What we here call combat may also be called progress. Hence the bourgeoisie as well as the statesmen required a man who expressed the idea of a halt, an "although-because," a composite individuality signifying revolution and stability; in other words, strengthening the present by the evident compatibility of the past with the future. This man was found "ready-made," and his name was Louis Philippe d'Orléans. The 221 made Louis Philippe king, and Lafayette undertook the coronation. He named him "the best of Republics," and the Town Hall of Paris was substituted for the Cathedral of Rheims. This substitution of a half-throne for a complete throne was "the work of 1830." When the clever men had completed their task, the immense fault of their solution was apparent; all this had been done beyond the pale of absolute right, which shouted, "I protest!" and then, formidable thing, receded into the darkness.

CHAPTER III
LOUIS PHILIPPE

Revolutions have a terrible arm and a lucky hand; they hit hard and choose well. Even when incomplete, bastardized, and reduced to the state of a younger revolution, like that of 1830, they nearly always retain sufficient providential light not to fall badly, and their eclipse is never an abdication. Still, we must not boast too loudly, for revolutions themselves are mistaken, and grave errors have been witnessed ere now. Let us return to 1830, which was fortunate in its deviation. In the establishment which was called order after the revolution was cut short, the king was worth more than the Royalty. Louis Philippe was a rare man.

Son of a father to whom history will certainly grant extenuating circumstances, but as worthy of esteem as his father was of blame; possessing all the private virtues and several of the public virtues; careful of his health, his fortune, his person, and his business affairs; knowing the value of a minute, but not always the value of a year; sober, serious, peaceful, and patient; a good man and a good prince; sleeping with his wife, and having in his palace lackeys whose business it was to show the conjugal couch to the cits, – a regular ostentation which had grown useful after the old illegitimate displays of the elder branch; acquainted with all the languages of Europe, and, what is rarer still, with all the languages of all the interests, and speaking them; an admirable representative of the "middle classes," but surpassing them, and in every way greater; possessing the excellent sense, while appreciating the blood from which he sprang, of claiming merit for his personal value, and very particular on the question of his race by declaring himself an Orléans and not a Bourbon; a thorough first prince of the blood, so long as he had only been Most Serene Highness, but a frank bourgeois on the day when he became His Majesty; diffuse in public, and concise in private life; branded as a miser, but not proved to be one; in reality, one of those saving men who are easily prodigal to satisfy their caprices or their duty; well read and caring but little for literature; a gentleman but not a cavalier; simple, calm, and strong; adored by his family and his household; a seductive speaker, a statesman who had lost his illusions, cold-hearted, swayed by the immediate interest, governing from hand to mouth; incapable of rancor and of gratitude; pitilessly employing superiorities upon mediocrities, and clever in confounding by parliamentary majorities those mysterious unanimities which growl hoarsely beneath thrones; expansive, at times imprudent in his expansiveness, but displaying marvellous skill in his imprudence; fertile in expedients, faces, and masks; terrifying France by Europe, and Europe by France; loving his country undeniably, but preferring his family; valuing domination more than authority, and authority more than dignity; a temperament which has this mournful feature about it, that by turning everything to success it admits of craft and does not absolutely repudiate baseness, but at the same time has this advantage, that it preserves politics from violent shocks, the State from fractures, and society from catastrophes; minute, correct, vigilant, attentive, sagacious, and indefatigable; contradicting himself at times, and belying himself; bold against Austria at Ancona, obstinate against England in Spain, bombarding Antwerp and paying Pritchard; singing the Marseillaise with conviction; inaccessible to despondency, to fatigue, to a taste for the beautiful and ideal, to rash generosity, to Utopias, chimeras, anger, vanity, and fear; possessing every form of personal bravery; a general at Valmy, a private at Jemmappes; eight times attacked by regicides, and always smiling; brave as a grenadier, and courageous as a thinker; merely anxious about the chances of a European convulsion, and unfitted for great political adventures; ever ready to risk his life, but not his work; disguising his will in influence for the sake of being obeyed as an intellect rather than as king; gifted with observation and not with divination; paying but slight attention to minds, but a good judge of men, – that is to say, requiring to see ere he could judge; endowed with prompt and penetrating sense, practical wisdom, fluent tongue, and a prodigious memory, and incessantly drawing on that memory, his sole similitude with Cæsar, Alexander, and

Napoleon; knowing facts, details, dates, and proper names, but ignorant of the various passions and tendencies of the crowd, the internal aspirations and concealed agitation of minds, – in one word, of all that may be called the invisible currents of consciences; accepted by the surface, but agreeing little with the lower strata of French society; getting out of scrapes by skill; governing too much and not reigning sufficiently; his own Prime Minister; excellent in the art of setting up the littleness of realities as an obstacle to the immensity of ideas; mingling with a true creative faculty of civilization, order, and organization, I do not know what pettifogging temper and chicanery; the founder of a family and at the same time its man-of-law; having something of Charlemagne and something of an attorney in him; but, on the whole, as a lofty and original figure, as a prince who managed to acquire power in spite of the anxiety of France, and influence in spite of the jealousy of Europe, – Louis Philippe would be ranked among the eminent men of his age, and among the most illustrious governors known in history, if he had loved glory a little, and had a feeling for what is grand to the same extent that he had a feeling for what is useful.

Louis Philippe had been handsome, and when aged, remained graceful: though not always admired by the nation he was always so by the mob, for he had the art of pleasing and the gift of charm. He was deficient in majesty, and neither wore a crown though king, nor displayed white hair though an old man. His manners belonged to the ancient régime, and his habits to the new, – a mixture of the noble and the citizen which suited 1830. Louis Philippe was transition on a throne, and retained the old pronunciation and orthography, which he placed at the service of modern opinions: he was fond of Poland and Hungary, but he wrote "les Polonois," and pronounced, "les Hongrais." He wore the uniform of the National Guard like Charles X., and the ribbon of the Legion of Honor like Napoleon. He went but rarely to Mass, not at all to the chase, and never to the opera: he was incorruptible by priests, whippers-in, and ballet girls, and this formed part of his citizen popularity. He had no Court, and went out with an umbrella under his arm, and this umbrella for a long time formed part of his *nimbus*. He was a bit of a mason, a bit of a gardener, and a bit of a surgeon: he bled a postilion who had fallen from his horse, and no more thought of going out without his lancet than Henry III. would without his dagger. The Royalists ridiculed this absurd king, the first who shed blood in order to cure.

A deduction must be made in the charges which history brings against Louis Philippe, and they formed three different columns, each of which gives a different total, – one accusing royalty, the second the reign, and the third the king. Democratic right confiscated, progress made the second interest, the protests of the streets violently repressed, the military execution of insurrections, revolt made to run the gauntlet, the Rue Transnonain, the councils of war, the absorption of the real country in the legal country, and the government on joint account with three hundred thousand privileged persons – are the deeds of royalty: Belgium refused, Algeria too harshly conquered with more of barbarity than civilization, like India by the English, the breach of faith to Abd-el-Kader, Blaye, Deutz bought and Pritchard paid – are chargeable to the reign; while the policy which cares more for the family than the nation belongs to the king. As we see, when the deductions have been made, the charge against the king is reduced; but his great fault was that he was modest in the name of France. Whence comes this fault?

Louis Philippe was a king who was too much a father, and this incubation of a family which is intended to produce a dynasty is frightened at everything, and does not like to be disturbed. Hence arises excessive timidity, which is offensive to a nation which has July 14th in its civil traditions and Austerlitz in its military annals. However, when we abstract public duties, which should ever be first fulfilled, the family deserved Louis Philippe's profound tenderness for it. This domestic group was admirable, and combined virtue with talent. One of the daughters of Louis Philippe, Marie d'Orléans, placed the name of her race among artists as Charles d'Orléans had done among the poets, and she created from her soul a statue which she called Joan of Arc. Two of Louis Philippe's sons drew from Metternich this demagogic praise: "They are young men whose like can be found nowhere, and such princes as were never seen before." Here is the truth, without extenuating or setting down aught

in malice, about Louis Philippe. It was his good fortune to be in 1830 the Prince Égalité, to bear within him the contradiction between the Restoration and the Revolution, to possess that alarming revolutionary side which becomes reassuring in the governor: and there was never a more complete adaptation of the man to the event, for one entered the other and the incarnation took place. Louis Philippe is 1830 made man, and he had also on his side that great designation to a throne, exile. He had been proscribed, wandering, and poor, and had lived by his own labor. In Switzerland, this heir to the richest princely domains of France was obliged to sell a horse, in order to eat; at Reichenau, he had given mathematical lessons while his sister Adelaide was embroidering and sewing. These souvenirs blended with a king rendered the bourgeoisie enthusiastic. With his own hands he had demolished the last iron cage at Mont St. Michel, erected by Louis XI. and employed by Louis XV. He was the companion of Dumouriez and the friend of Lafayette; he had belonged to the Jacobin Club, and Mirabeau had tapped him on the shoulder, and Danton said to him, "Young man." At the age of twenty-four in '93, when M. de Chartres, he had witnessed from an obscure gallery in the Convention, the trial of Louis XVI., so well named "that poor tyrant." The blind clairvoyance of the revolution breaking royalty in the king, and the king with royalty, while hardly observing the man in the fierce crushing of the idea; the vast storm of the Convention Tribune; Capet not knowing what to answer; the frightful and stupefied vacillation of this royal head before the raging blast; the relative innocence of all mixed up in this catastrophe, of those who condemned as well as of him who was condemned, – he, Louis Philippe, had looked at these things and contemplated these vertigos; he had seen centuries appear at the bar of the Convention; he had seen behind Louis XVI., that unfortunate and responsible victim, the real culprit, monarchy, emerging from the darkness, and he retained in his soul a respectful terror of this immense justice of the people which is almost as impersonal as the justice of God. The traces which the revolution left upon him were prodigious, and his memory was a living imprint of these great years, minute by minute. One day, in the presence of a witness whose statements we cannot doubt, he corrected from memory the entire letter A in the list of the Constituent Assembly.

Louis Philippe was an open-air king; during his reign the press was free, debates were free, conscience and speech were free. The Laws of September had a clear track. Though he knew the corrosive power of light upon privileges, he left his throne exposed to the light, and history will give him credit for this honorable behavior. Louis Philippe, like all historic men who have quitted the stage, is at the present day being tried by the human conscience, but this trial has not yet gone through its first stage. The hour when history speaks with its venerable and free accent has not yet arrived for him; the moment has not yet come for the final judgment. Even the stern and illustrious historian, Louis Blanc, has recently toned down his first verdict. Louis Philippe was elected by the two hundred and twenty-one deputies in 1830, that is to say, by a semi-Parliament and a semi-revolution; and, in any case, we cannot judge him here philosophically, without making some reservations in the name of the absolute democratic principle. In the eyes of the absolute, everything is usurpation which is outside of these two rights, – first, the right of man and in the next place the right of the people; but what we are able to say at present is, that in whatever way we may regard him, Louis Philippe, taken by himself, and looked at from the stand-point of human goodness, will remain, to employ the old language of old history, one of the best princes that ever sat on a throne. What has he against him? This throne; take the king away from Louis Philippe and the man remains. This man is good, at times so good as to be admirable. Often in the midst of the gravest cares, after a day's struggle, after the whole diplomacy of the Continent, he returned to his apartments at night; and then, though exhausted by fatigue and want of sleep, what did he? He would take up a list of sentences and spend the night in revising a criminal trial, considering that it was something to hold his own against Europe, but even greater to tear a culprit from the hands of the executioner. He obstinately resisted his keeper of the seals, and disputed the scaffold inch by inch with his attorney-generals, those "chatterers of the law," as he called them. At times piles of sentences covered his table, and he examined them all, and felt an

agony at the thought of abandoning these wretched condemned heads. One day he said to the witness whom we just now quoted, "I gained seven of them last night." During the earlier years of his reign the penalty of death was, as it were, abolished, and the re-erection of the scaffold was a violence done to the king. As the Grève disappeared with the elder branch, a bourgeois Grève was established under the name of the Barrière St. Jacques, for "practical men" felt the necessity of a quasi-legitimate guillotine. This was one of the victories of Casimir Perier, who represented the narrow side of the bourgeoisie, over Louis Philippe, who represented the liberal side. The king annotated Beccaria with his own hand, and after the Fieschi machine he exclaimed, "What a pity that I was not wounded, for then I could have shown mercy!" Another time, alluding to the resistance offered by his ministers, he wrote with reference to a political culprit, who is one of the most illustrious men of the day, "His pardon is granted, and all that I have to do now is to obtain it." Louis Philippe was as gentle as Louis IX., and as good as Henri IV., and in our opinion, in history, where goodness is the rare pearl, to have been good is almost better than to have been great.

As Louis Philippe has been sternly judged by some, and perhaps harshly by others, it is very simple that a man, himself a phantom at the present day, who knew that king, should offer his testimony for him in the presence of history; this testimony, whatever its value may be, is evidently, and before all, disinterested. An epitaph written by a dead man is sincere; one shadow may console another shadow, for sharing the same darkness gives the right to praise, and there is no fear that it will ever be said of two tombs in exile, – this man flattered the other.

CHAPTER IV
CRACKS IN THE FOUNDATION

At this moment, when the drama we are recounting is about to enter one of those tragic clouds which cover the beginning of the reign of Louis Philippe, it is quite necessary that this book should give an explanation about that king. Louis Philippe had entered upon the royal authority without violence or direct action on his part, through a revolutionary change of wind, which was evidently very distinct from the real object of the revolution, but in which he, the Duc d'Orléans, had no personal initiative. He was born a prince, and believed himself elected king; he had not given himself these functions, nor had he taken them; they were offered to him and he accepted, convinced – wrongly as we think, but still convinced – that the offer was in accordance with right, and the acceptance in harmony with duty. Hence came an honest possession, and we say in all conscience that, as Louis Philippe was honest in the possession, and democracy honest in its attack, the amount of terror disengaged from social struggles cannot be laid either on the king or the democracy. A collision of principles resembles a collision of elements; ocean defends the water and the hurricane the air; the king defends royalty, democracy defends the people; the relative, which is monarchy, resists the absolute, which is the republic; society bleeds from this conflict, but what is its suffering to-day will be its salvation at a later date; and in any case those who struggle must not be blamed, for one party must be mistaken. Right does not stand, like the Colossus of Rhodes, on two shores at once, with one foot in the republic, the other in royalty, but is indivisible, and entirely on one side; those who are mistaken are honestly mistaken, and a blind man is no more a culprit than a Vendean is a brigand. We must, therefore, only impute these formidable collisions to the fatality of things, and, whatever these tempests may be, human irresponsibility is mixed up with them.

Let us finish our statement: The Government of 1830 had a hard life of it from the beginning, and born yesterday it was obliged to combat to-day. Scarce installed, it felt everywhere the vague movements of faction beneath the foundation of July, which had so recently been laid, and was still anything but solid. Resistance sprang up on the morrow, and might, perhaps, have been born on the day before, and from month to month the hostility increased, and instead of being dull became patent. The revolution of July, frowned upon by kings out of France, was diversely interpreted in France. God imparts to men His will visible in events, an obscure text written in a mysterious language. Men at once make themselves translations of it, – hasty, incorrect translations, full of errors, gaps, and misunderstandings. Very few minds comprehend the divine language; the more sagacious, the calmer, and the more profound decipher slowly, and when they arrive with their version, the work has been done long before; there are already twenty translations offered for sale. From each translation springs a party, and from each misunderstanding a failure, and each party believes that it has the only true text, and each faction believes that it possesses the light. Often enough power itself is a faction, and there are in revolutions men who swim against the current; they are the old parties. As revolutions issue from the right to revolt, the old parties that cling to heirdom by grace of God fancy that they have a right to revolt against them; but this is an error, for in revolutions the rebel is not the people but the king. Revolution is precisely the contrary of revolt; every revolution, being a normal accomplishment, contains its legitimacy within itself, which false revolutionists sometimes dishonor, but which endures even when sullied, and survives even when bleeding. Revolutions issue, not from an accident, but a necessity; for they are a return from the factitious to the real, and they take place because they must take place.

The old legitimist parties did not the less assail the revolution of 1830 with all the violence which springs from false reasoning. Errors are excellent projectiles, and they skilfully struck it at the spot where it was vulnerable, – the flaw in its cuirass, its want of logic, – and they attacked this revolution in its royalty. They cried to it, "Revolution, why this king?" Factions are blind men who

aim accurately. This cry the revolutionists also raised, but coming from them it was logical. What was blundering in the legitimists was clear-sightedness in the democrats; 1830 had made the people bankrupt, and indignant democracy reproached it with the deed. The establishment of July struggled between these attacks, made by the past and the future; it represented the minute contending on one side with monarchical ages, on the other with eternal right; and then, again, 1830, no longer a revolution, and becoming a monarchy, was obliged to take precedence of Europe, and it was a further difficulty to maintain peace, for a harmony desired against the grain is often more onerous than a war. From this sullen conflict, ever muzzled but ever grumbling, emerged armed peace, that ruinous expedient of civilization suspecting itself. The royalty of July reared in the team of European cabinets, although Metternich would have liked to put a kicking-strap upon it. Impelled by progress in France, it impelled in its turn the slowly-moving European monarchies, and while towed, it towed too.

At home, however, pauperism, beggary, wages, education, the penal code, prostitution, the fall of woman, wealth, misery, production, consumption, division, exchange, money, capital, the rights of capital, and the rights of labor, – all these questions were multiplied above society, and formed a crushing weight. Outside of political parties, properly so called, another movement became manifest, and a philosophic fermentation responded to the democratic fermentation, and chosen minds felt troubled like the crowd, – differently, but quite as much. Thinking men meditated, while the soil, that is to say, the people, traversed by revolutionary currents, trembled beneath them with vague epileptic shocks. These thinkers, some isolated, but others assembled in families and almost in communities, stirred up social questions peacefully but deeply; they were impassive miners, who quietly hollowed their galleries beneath volcanoes, scarce disturbed by the dull commotions and the fires of which they caught a glimpse. This tranquillity was not the least beautiful spectacle of this agitated epoch, and these men left to political parties the question of rights, to trouble themselves about the question of happiness. What they wished to extract from society was the welfare of man; hence they elevated material questions, and questions about agriculture, trade, and commerce, almost to the dignity of a religion. In civilization, such as it has been constituted a little by God and a great deal by man, instincts are combined, aggregated, and amalgamated so as to form a real hard rock, by virtue of a law of dynamics which is carefully studied by social economists, those geologists of politics. These men, who grouped themselves under different appellations, but who may all be designated by the generic title of socialists, tried to pierce this rock and cause the living waters of human felicity to gush forth; their labors embraced all questions, from that of the scaffold to that of war, and they added to the rights of man as proclaimed by the French revolutions, the rights of the woman and the child.

For various reasons we cannot thoroughly discuss here, from the theoretical point of view, the questions raised by socialism, and we limit ourselves to an indication of them. All the questions which the socialists proposed – laying aside cosmogonic visions, reverie, and mysticism – may be carried back to two original problems, the first of which is, to produce wealth, and the second, to distribute it. The first problem contains the question of labor, the second the question of wages; in the first, the point is the employment of strength, and in the second, the distribution of enjoyments. From a good employment of strength results public power, and from a good distribution of enjoyments individual happiness. By good distribution we mean, not equal, but equitable, distribution, for the first equality is equity. From these two things – combined public power abroad and individual happiness at home – results social prosperity; that is to say, man happy, the citizen free, and the nation great.

England solves the first of these two problems, – she creates wealth admirably, but distributes it badly. This solution, which is completely on one side, fatally leads her to these two extremes, – monstrous opulence and monstrous misery; all the enjoyments belong to the few, all the privations to the rest, that is to say, to the people, and privileges, exceptions, monopoly, and feudalism spring up from labor itself. It is a false and dangerous situation to base public power on private want, and to root the grandeur of the state in the sufferings of the individual; it is a badly composed grandeur, in which all the material elements are combined, in which no moral element enters. Communism and

the agrarian law fancy that they solve the second question, but they are mistaken. Their distribution kills production, and equal division destroys emulation and consequently labor. It is a distribution made by the butcher who slaughters what he divides. Hence it is impossible to be satisfied with these pretended solutions, for killing riches is not distributing them. The two problems must be solved together in order to be properly solved; the two solutions demand to be combined, and only form one. If you solve but the first of these problems you will be Venice, you will be England; you will have, like Venice, an artificial power, like England, a material power, and you will be the wicked rich man; you will perish by violence, as Venice died, or by bankruptcy, as England will fall; and the world will leave you to die and fall, because it allows everything to die and fall which is solely selfishness, and everything which does not represent a virtue or an idea to the human race. Of course it will be understood that by the words Venice and England we do not mean the peoples, but the social constructions; the oligarchies that weigh down the nations, but not the nations themselves. Nations ever have our respect and sympathy. Venice, as a people, will live again; England, as the aristocracy, will fall, but England the nation is immortal. This said, let us continue.

Solve the two problems, encourage the rich and protect the poor, suppress misery, put an end to the unjust exhaustion of the weak by the strong, bridle the iniquitous jealousy which the man still on the road feels for him who has reached the journey's end, adjust mathematically and paternally the wage to the labor, blend gratuitous and enforced education with the growth of childhood and render science the basis of manhood, develop intelligence while occupying the arms, be at once a powerful people and a family of happy men, democratize property, not by abolishing but by universalizing it, so that every citizen without exception may be a land-owner, – an easier task than it may be supposed, – in two words, know how to produce wealth and to distribute it, and you will possess at once material greatness and moral greatness, and be worthy to call yourself France. Such was what socialism, above and beyond a few mistaken sects, said; this is what it sought in facts and stirred up in minds: they were admirable efforts and sacred attempts!

These doctrines, theories, and resistances; the unexpected necessity for the statesman of settling with the philosophers; glimpses caught of confused evidences; a new policy to create, agreeing with the old world, while not disagreeing too greatly from the revolutionary ideal, a situation in which Lafayette must be used to defend Polignac, the intuition of progress apparent behind the riots, the chambers, and the street; the king's faith in the revolution; rivalries to be balanced around him, possibly some eventual resignation sprung from the vague acceptance of a definite and superior right; his wish to remain here, his race, his family affections, his sincere respect for the people, and his own honesty, – all these painfully affected Louis Philippe, and at times, though he was so strong and courageous, crushed him beneath the difficulty of being a king. He felt beneath his feet a formidable disintegration, which, however, was not a crumbling to dust, as France was more France than ever. Dark storm-clouds were collected on the horizon; a strange, gradually increasing shadow was extended over men, things, and ideas; it was a shadow that sprang from anger and systems. Everything that had been hastily suppressed stirred and fermented, and at times the conscience of the honest man held its breath, as there was such an uneasy feeling produced by this atmosphere, in which sophisms were mixed with truths. Minds trembled in the social anxiety, like leaves on the approach of a storm, and the electric tension was such that at some moments the first-comer, a stranger, would produce a flash, but then the twilight obscurity fell over the whole scene again. At intervals, deep and muttered rolling allowed an opinion to be formed of the amount of lightning which the cloud must contain.

Twenty months had scarce elapsed since the revolution of July, and the year 1832 opened with an imminent and menacing appearance. The distress of the people, workmen without bread; the Prince of Condé suddenly departed from the world; Brussels expelling the Nassaus, as Paris had done the Bourbons; Belgium offering itself to a French prince and given to an English prince; the Russian hatred of Nicholas; behind us two demons of the South, Ferdinand in Spain and Miguel

in Portugal; the earth trembling in Italy; Metternich stretching out his hand over Bologna; France confronting Austria at Ancona; in the North the sinister sound of a hammer, enclosing Poland again in its coffin; throughout Europe angry eyes watching France; England, a suspicious ally, prepared to push any one who staggered and to throw herself on him who fell; the Peerage taking refuge behind Beccaria to refuse four heads to the law; the fleurs-de-lys erased from the king's coaches; the cross dragged from Notre Dame; Lafayette enfeebled, Laffitte ruined; Benjamin Constant dead in poverty; Casimir Perier dead in the exhaustion of power; a political and a social disease declaring themselves simultaneously in the two capitals of the kingdom, – one the city of thought, the other the city of toil; in Paris a civil war, in Lyons a servile war; and in both cities the same furnace-glow, a volcanic purple on the brow of the people; the South fanaticized, the West troubled, the Duchesse de Berry in the Vendée; plots, conspiracies, insurrections, and cholera adding to the gloomy rumor of ideas the gloomy tumult of events.

CHAPTER V
FACTS FROM WHICH HISTORY IS DERIVED BUT WHICH HISTORY IGNORES

Toward the end of April matters became aggravated, and the fermentation assumed the proportions of an ebullition. Since 1830 there had been small partial revolts, quickly suppressed, but breaking out again, which were the sign of a vast subjacent conflagration, and of something terrible smouldering. A glimpse could be caught of the lineaments of a possible revolution, though it was still indistinct and badly lighted. France was looking at Paris, and Paris at the Faubourg St. Antoine. The Faubourg St. Antoine, noiselessly heated, had begun to boil. The wine-shops in the Rue de Charonne were grave and stormy, though the conjunction of these two epithets applied to wine-shops appears singular. The Government was purely and simply put upon its trial on this, and men publicly discussed whether "they should fight or remain quiet." There were back-rooms in which workmen swore to go into the streets at the first cry of alarm, "and fight without counting their enemies." Once they had taken the pledge, a man seated in a corner of the wine-shop shouted in a sonorous voice, "You hear! You have sworn!" Sometimes they went up to a private room on the first floor, where scenes almost resembling masonic ceremonies took place, and the novice took oaths, "in order to render a service to himself as well as to the fathers of families," – such was the formula. In the tap-rooms, "subversive" pamphlets were read, and, as a secret report of the day says, "they spurned the Government." Remarks like the following could be heard: "I do not know the names of the chief, we shall not know the day till two hours beforehand." A workman said, "We are three hundred, let us each subscribe ten sous, and we shall have one hundred and fifty francs, with which to manufacture bullets and gunpowder." Another said, "I do not ask for six months, I do not ask for two. Within a fortnight we shall be face to face with the government, for it is possible to do so with twenty-five thousand men." Another said, "I do not go to bed at nights now, for I am making cartridges." From time to time well-dressed men came, feigning embarrassment and having an air of command, and shook hands with the more important and then went away, never staying longer than ten minutes; significant remarks were exchanged in whispers, "The plot is ripe, the thing is ready," – to borrow the remark of one of the audience, "this was buzzed by all present." The excitement was so great that one day a workman said openly in a wine-shop, "But we have no weapons," to which a comrade replied, "The soldiers have them," unconsciously parodying Bonaparte's proclamation to the army of Italy. "When they had any very great secret," a report adds, "they did not communicate it," though we do not understand what they could conceal after what they had said. The meetings were sometimes periodical; at certain ones there were never more than eight or ten members present, and they were always the same, but at others any one who liked went in, and the room was so crowded that they were obliged to stand; some went there through enthusiasm and passion, others "because it was the road to their work." In the same way as during the revolution, there were female patriots in these wine-shops, who kissed the new-comers.

Other expressive facts were collected: thus a man went into a wine-shop, drank, and went away, saying, "Wine-dealer, the revolution will pay what is due." Revolutionary agents were nominated at a wine-shop opposite the Rue de Charonne, and the ballot was made in caps. Workmen assembled at a fencing-master's who gave lessons in the Rue de Cotte. There was a trophy of arms, made of wooden sabres, canes, cudgels, and foils. One day the buttons were removed from the foils, and a workman said, "We are five-and-twenty, but they do not reckon upon me, as they consider me a machine." This man was at a later date Quénisset. Things that were premeditated gradually assumed a strange notoriety; a woman who was sweeping her door said to another woman, "They have been making

cartridges for a long time past." In the open streets proclamations addressed to the National Guards of the departments were read aloud, and one of them was signed, "Burtot, wine-dealer."

One day a man with a large beard and an Italian accent leaped on a bench at the door of a dram-shop in the Marché Lenoir, and began reading a singular document, which seemed to emanate from some occult power. Groups assembled around him and applauded, and the passages which most excited the mob were noted down at the time. "Our doctrines are impeded, our proclamations are torn down, our bill-posters watched and thrown into prison… The collapse in cottons has brought over to us a good many conservatives… The future of the people is being worked out in our obscure ranks… These are the terms laid down, action or reaction, revolution or counter-revolution, for in our age no one still believes in inertia or immobility. For the people, or against the people, that is the question, and there is no other… On the day when we no longer please you, break us, but till then aid us to progress." All this took place in broad daylight. Other facts, of even a more audacious nature, appeared suspicious to the people, owing to their very audacity. On April 4, 1832, a passer-by leaped on the bench at the corner of the Rue Sainte Marguerite, and shouted, "I am a Babouviste," but under Babœuf the people scented Gisquet. Among other things this man said: "Down with property! The opposition of the Left is cowardly and treacherous: when they wish to be in the right, they preach the revolution; they are democratic that they may not be defeated, and royalist so that they need not fight. The republicans are feathered beasts; distrust the republicans, citizen-workmen!" "Silence, citizen-spy!" a workman shouted, and this put an end to the speech.

Mysterious events occurred. At nightfall a workman met a "well-dressed" man near the canal, who said to him, "Where art thou going, citizen?" "Sir," the workman answered, "I have not the honor of knowing you" – "I know thee, though;" and the man added, "Fear nothing, I am the agent of the committee, and it is suspected that thou art not to be trusted. But thou knowest that there is an eye upon thee, if thou darest to reveal anything." Then he shook the workman's hand and went away, saying, "We shall meet again soon." The police, who were listening, overheard singular dialogues, not only in the wine-shops but in the streets. "Get yourself ready soon," said a weaver to a cabinet-maker. "Why so?" "There will be shots to fire." Two passers-by in rags exchanged the following peculiar remarks, which were big with an apparent Jacquerie: "Who governs us?" "It is Monsieur Philippe." "No, the bourgeoisie." It would be an error to suppose that we attach a bad sense to the word "Jacquerie;" the Jacques were the poor. Another time a man was heard saying to his companion, "We have a famous plan of attack." Of a private conversation between four men seated in a ditch near the Barrière du Trône only the following was picked up: "Everything possible will be done to prevent him walking about Paris any longer." "Who is the *he*?" there is a menacing obscurity about it. The "principal chiefs," as they were called in the faubourg, kept aloof, but were supposed to assemble to arrange matters at a wine-shop near the Point St. Eustache. A man of the name of Aug, chief of the society for the relief of tailors, was supposed to act as central intermediary between the chiefs and the Faubourg St. Antoine. Still, a considerable amount of obscurity hangs over these chiefs, and no fact could weaken the singular pride in the answer made at a later date, by a prisoner brought before the Court of Peers.

"Who was your chief?"

"I did not know any, and I did not recognize any."

As yet they were but words, transparent but vague, at times mere rumors and hearsays, but other signs arrived ere long. A carpenter, engaged in the Rue de Rueilly in nailing up a fence round a block of ground on which a house was being built, found on the ground a piece of a torn letter, on which the following lines were still legible: "… The Committee must take measures to prevent recruiting in the sections for the different societies;" and as a postscript, "We have learned that there are guns at No. 5, Rue du Faubourg, Poissonnière, to the number of five or six thousand, at a gunmaker's in the yard. The Section possesses no arms." What startled the carpenter, and induced him to show the thing to his neighbors, was that a few paces farther on he found another paper, also torn, and even

more significant, of which we reproduce the shape, owing to the historic interest of these strange documents.

Q	c	D	E	Apprenez cette liste par caur. Apres vous la dechirerez: Les horames admis en feront autant lorsque vous leur aurez transmis des ordres. Salut et Fraternite. u og a1 fè L.

Persons at that time on the scent of this discovery did not learn till a later date the meaning of the four capitals, —*Quinturions, Centurions, Décurions*, and *Éclaireurs*, or the sense of the letters *u og a¹ fe*, which were a date, and indicated "this 15th April, 1832." Under each capital letter were written names followed by very characteristic remarks. Thus, "Q. Bannerel, 8 guns, 83 cartridges. A safe man. – C. Boubière, 1 pistol, 40 cartridges. – D. Rollet, 1 foil, 1 pistol, 1 lb. gunpowder. – E. Tessin, 1 sabre, 1 cartouche-box. Punctual. – Terreur, 8 guns. Brave," etc. Lastly, this carpenter found in the same enclosure a third paper, on which was written in pencil, but very legibly, this enigmatical list.

Unité. Blanchard: Arbre sec. 6.
Barra. Sixteen. Sall au Comte.
Kosciusko. Aubry the butcher?
J. J. R.
Caius Graccus.
Right of revision. Dufond. Four.
Downfall of the Girondists. Derbac. Maubuée.
Washington. Pinson. 1 pist. 86 cart.
Marseillaise.
Sovereignty of the people. Michel. Quincampoix. Sabre.
Hoche.
Marceau. Plato. Arbre Sec.
Warsaw, Tilly, crier of the *Populaire*.

The honest citizen in whose hands this list remained learned its purport. It seems that the list was the complete nomenclature of the sections of the fourth arrondissement of the Society of the Rights of Man, with the names and addresses of the chiefs of sections. At the present day, when these obscure facts have become historic, they may be published. We may add that the foundation of the Society of the Rights of Man seems to have been posterior to the date on which this paper was found, and so it was possibly only a sketch. After propositions and words and written information, material facts began to pierce through. In the Rue Popincourt, at the shop of a broker, seven pieces of paper, all folded alike, were found in a drawer; these papers contained twenty-six squares of the same gray paper, folded in the shape of cartridges, and a card on which was written: —

Saltpetre… 12 oz.
Sulphur… 2 "
Charcoal… 2 1/2 "
Water..... 2 "

The report of the seizure showed that there was a strong smell of gunpowder in the drawer.

A mason, returning home after his day's work, left a small parcel on the bench near the bridge of Austerlitz. It was carried to the guard-house and opened, and from it were taken two printed dialogues signed "Lahautière," a song called "Workmen, combine!" and a tin box full of cartridges. A workman drinking with his comrade bade him feel how hot he was; and the other noticed a pistol under his jacket. In a ditch on the boulevard between Père Lachaise and the Barrière du Trône, some children, playing at the most deserted spot, discovered under a heap of rubbish a bag containing a bullet mould, a mandrel for making cartridges, a pouch in which there were some grains of gunpowder, and an iron ladle on which were evident signs of melted lead. Some police agents suddenly entering at five A.M.

the room of one Pardon, who was at a later date a sectionist belonging to the Barricade Merry section, found him sitting on his bed with cartridges in his hand, which he was in the act of making. At the hour when workmen are generally resting, two men were noticed to meet between the Picpus and Charenton barrières, in a lane running between two walls. One took a pistol from under his blouse, which he handed to the other; as he gave it him he noticed that the perspiration on his chest had dampened the gunpowder, he therefore filled the pan afresh, and the two men thereupon parted. A man of the name of Gallas, afterwards killed in the April affair in the Rue Beaubourg, used to boast that he had at home seven hundred cartridges and twenty-four gun flints. One day the Government received information that arms and two hundred thousand cartridges had just been distributed in the faubourg, and the next week thirty thousand more cartridges were given out. The remarkable thing was that the police could not seize any of them; but an intercepted letter stated: "The day is not far distant when eighty thousand patriots will be under arms in four hours."

All this fermentation was public, we might almost say calm, and the impending insurrection prepared its storm quietly in the face of the Government. No singularity was lacking in this crisis, which was still subterranean, but already perceptible. The citizens spoke peacefully to the workmen of what was preparing. They said, "How is the revolt going on?" in the same tone as they could have said, "How is your wife?" A furniture broker in the Rue Moreau asked, "Well, when do you attack?" and another shop-keeper said, "They will attack soon, I know it. A month ago there were fifteen thousand of you, and now there are twenty-five thousand." He offered his gun, and a neighbor offered a pocket pistol which was marked for sale at seven francs. The revolutionary fever spread, and no point of Paris or of France escaped it. The artery throbbed everywhere, and the network of secret societies began spreading over the country like the membranes which spring up from certain inflammations, and are formed in the human body. From the Association of the Friends of the People, which was at the same time public and secret, sprang the Society of the Rights of Man, which dated one of its orders of the day, "Pluviose, year 40 of the republican era," which was destined even to survive the decrees of the Court of Assizes pronouncing its dissolution, and did not hesitate to give to its sections significant titles like the following: "Pikes. The Tocsin. The Alarm Gun. The Phrygian Cap. January 21. The Beggars. The Vagrants. March forward. Robespierre. The Level. Ça ira."

The Society of the Rights of Man engendered the Society of Action, composed of impatient men who detached themselves and hurried forward. Other associations tried to recruit themselves in the great mother societies: and the sectionists complained of being tormented. Such were the "Gaulish Society" and the "Organizing Committee of the Municipalities;" such the associations for the "Liberty of the Press," for "Individual Liberty," for the "Instruction of the People," and "Against Indirect Taxes." Next we have the Society of Equalitarian Workmen divided into three fractions, – the Equalitarians, the Communists, and the Reformers. Then, again, the Army of the Bastilles, a cohort possessing military organization, four men being commanded by a corporal, ten by a sergeant, twenty by a sub-lieutenant, and forty by a lieutenant; there were never more than five men who knew each other. This is a creation where precaution is combined with audacity, and which seems to be stamped with the genius of Venice. The central committee which formed the head, had two arms, – the Society of Action and the Army of the Bastilles. A legitimist association, the "Knights of Fidelity," agitated among these republican affiliations, but was denounced and repudiated. The Parisian societies ramified through the principal cities. Lyons, Nantes, Lille, and Marseilles, had their Society of the Rights of Man, The Charbonnière, and the Free Men. Aix had a revolutionary society called the Cougourde. We have already mentioned that name.

At Paris the Faubourg Marceau buzzed no less than the Faubourg St. Antoine, and the schools were quite as excited as the faubourgs. A coffee-shop in the Rue Saint Hyacinthe, and the Estaminet des Sept Billards in the Rue des Mathurins St. Jacques, served as the gathering-place for the students. The Society of the Friends of the A. B. C. affiliated with the Mutualists of Angers, and the Cougourde of Aix assembled, as we have seen, at the Café Musain. The same young men met, as we have also

said, at a wine-shop and eating-house near the Rue Montdétour, called Corinthe. These meetings were secret, but others were as public as possible, and we may judge of their boldness by this fragment from an examination that was held in one of the ulterior trials. "Where was the meeting held?" "In the Rue de la Paix." "At whose house?" "In the street." "What sections were there?" "Only one." "Which one?" "The Manuel section." "Who was the chief?" "Myself." "You are too young to have yourself formed this serious resolve of attacking the Government. Whence came your instructions?" "From the central committee." The army was undermined at the same time as the population, as was proved at a later date by the movements of Béford, Luneville, and Épinal. Hopes were built on the 52d, 5th, 8th, and 37th regiments, and on the 20th light infantry. In Burgundy and the southern towns the tree of liberty was planted, that is to say, a mast surmounted by a red cap.

Such was the situation.

This situation, as we said at the commencement, the Faubourg St. Antoine rendered keen and marked more than any other group of the population. This was the stitch in the side. This old faubourg, peopled like an ant-heap, laborious, courageous, and passionate as a hive of bees, quivered in expectation and the desire of a commotion. All was agitation there, but labor was not suspended on that account. Nothing could give an idea of these sharp and sombre faces; there were in this faubourg crushing distress hidden under the roofs of houses, and also ardent and rare minds. It is especially in the case of distress and intelligence that it is dangerous for extremes to meet. The Faubourg St. Antoine had other causes for excitement, as it received the counter-stroke of commercial crisis, bankruptcies, stoppages, and cessation of work, which are inherent in all political convulsions. In revolutionary times misery is at once the cause and the effect, and the blow which it deals falls upon itself again. This population, full of haughty virtue, capable of the highest amount of latent caloric, ever ready to take up arms, prompt to explode, irritated, profound, and undermined, seemed to be only waiting for the fall of a spark. Whenever certain sparks float about the horizon, driven by the wind of events, we cannot help thinking of the Faubourg St. Antoine and the formidable chance which has placed at the gates of Paris this powder-magazine of sufferings and ideas.

The wine-shops of the Antoine suburb, which have been more than once referred to in this sketch, possess an historic notoriety. In times of trouble people grow intoxicated in them more on words than wine; and a species of prophetic spirit and an effluvium of the future circulates there, swelling hearts and ennobling minds. These wine-shops resemble the taverns on the Mons Aventinus, built over the Sibyl's cave and communicating with the sacred blasts of the depths, – taverns in which the tables were almost tripods, and people drank what Ennius calls the Sibylline wine. The Faubourg St. Antoine is a reservoir of the people, in which the revolutionary earthquake makes fissures, through which the sovereignty of the people flows. This sovereignty can act badly, it deceives itself like other things, but even when led astray it remains grand. We may say of it, as of the blind Cyclops, "Ingens." In '93, according as the idea that floated was good or bad, or according as it was the day of fanaticism or enthusiasm, savage legions or heroic bands issued from this faubourg. Savage, – let us explain that word. What did these bristling men want, who, in the Genesis of the revolutionary chaos, rushed upon old overthrown Paris in rags, yelling and ferocious, with uplifted clubs and raised pikes? They wanted the end of oppression, the end of tyranny, the end of the sword, work for the man, instruction for the child, social gentleness for the woman, liberty, equality, fraternity, bread for all, the idea for all, the Edenization of the world, and progress; and this holy, good, and sweet thing called progress, they, driven to exasperation, claimed terribly with upraised weapons and curses. They were savages, we grant, but the savages of civilization. They proclaimed the right furiously, and wished to force the human race into Paradise, even were it through trembling and horror. They seemed barbarians, and were saviors; they demanded light while wearing the mask of night. Opposite these men, – stern and frightful we admit, but stern and frightful for good, – there are other men, smiling, embroidered, gilded, be-ribboned, in silk stockings, with white feathers, yellow gloves, and kid shoes, who, leaning upon a velvet-covered table near a marble chimney-piece, gently insist on

the maintenance and preservation of the past, of the middle ages; of divine right, of fanaticism, of ignorance, of slavery, of the punishment of death, and of war; and who glorify in a low voice and with great politeness the sabre, the pyre, and the scaffold. For our part, were we compelled to make a choice between the barbarians of civilization and the civilized of barbarism, we would choose the barbarians. But, thanks be to Heaven, another choice is possible; no fall down an abyss is required, either in front or behind, neither despotism nor terrorism. We wish for progress on a gentle incline, and God provides for this. Reducing inclines is the whole policy of God.

CHAPTER VI
ENJOLRAS AND HIS LIEUTENANTS

Shortly after this period, Enjolras made a sort of mysterious census, as if in the view of a possible event. All were assembled in council at the Café Musain. Enjolras spoke, mingling a few half-enigmatical but significant metaphors with his words:

"It behooves us to know where we are, and on whom we can count. If we want combatants we must make them; and there is no harm in having weapons to strike with. Passers-by always run a greater chance of being gored when there are bulls in the road than when there are none. So, suppose we count the herd. How many are there of us? This task must not be deferred till to-morrow, for revolutionists must always be in a hurry, as progress has no time to lose. Let us distrust the unexpected, and not allow ourselves to be taken unawares; we have to go over all the seams which we have sewn, and see whether they hold; and the job must be done to-day. Courfeyrac, you will see the Polytechnic students, for this is their day for going out. Feuilly, you will see those of La Glacière, and Combeferre has promised to go to the Picpus. Bahorel will visit the Estrapade. Prouvaire, the masons are growing lukewarm, so you will obtain us news from the lodge in the Rue de Grenelle St. Honoré. Joly will go to Dupuytren's clinical lecture, and feel the pulse of the medical scholars, while Bossuet will stroll round the courts and talk with the law students. I take the Cougourde myself."

"That is all settled," said Courfeyrac.

"No. There is another very important matter."

"What is it?" Combeferre asked

"The Barrière du Maine."

Enjolras was absorbed in thought for a moment, and then continued, —

"At the Barrière du Maine are stone-cutters and painters, an enthusiastic body, but subject to chills. I do not know what has been the matter with them for some time past, but they are thinking of other things. They are dying out, and they spend their time in playing at dominoes. It is urgent to go and talk to them rather seriously, and they meet at Richefeu's, where they may be found between twelve and one o'clock. Those ashes must be blown up, and I had intended to intrust the task to that absent fellow Marius, who is all right, but no longer comes here. I need some one for the Barrière du Maine, and have no one left."

"Why, I am here," said Grantaire.

"You?"

"I."

"You indoctrinate republicans? you warm up chilled hearts in the name of principles?"

"Why not?"

"Can you possibly be fit for anything?"

"Well, I have a vague ambition to be so."

"You believe in nothing."

"I believe in you."

"Grantaire, will you do a service?"

"Any one; clean your boots."

"Well, do not meddle in our affairs, sleep off your absinthe."

"You are an ungrateful fellow, Enjolras!"

"You be the man capable of going to the Barrière du Maine!"

"I am capable of going down the Rue des Grès, crossing St. Michael's Square, cutting through the Rue Monsieur le Prince, taking the Rue de Vaugirard, passing the Carmelites, turning into the Rue d'Assas, arriving at the Rue Cherche Midi, leaving behind me the Council of War, stepping

across the Rue des Vieilles-Tuileries, following the main road, going through the gate and entering Richefeu's. I am capable of all that, and so are my shoes."

"Do you know the men at Richefeu's?"

"Not much."

"What will you say to them?"

"Talk to them about Robespierre, Danton, and principles."

"You!"

"I. You really do not do me justice, for when I make up my mind to it I am terrible. I have read Prudhomme, I know the social contract, and have by heart my constitution of the year II. 'The liberty of the citizen ends where the liberty of another citizen begins.' Do you take me for a brute? I have an old assignat in my draw, – The Rights of Man, the sovereignty of the people, sapristi! I am a bit of a Hébertist myself. I can discourse splendid things for six hours at a stretch, watch in hand."

"Be serious," said Enjolras.

"I am stern," Grantaire answered.

Enjolras reflected for a few seconds, and then seemed to have made up his mind.

"Grantaire," he said gravely, "I consent to try you. You shall go to the Barrière du Maine.".

Grantaire lodged in a furnished room close to the Café Musain. He went away and returned five minutes after – he had been home to put on a waistcoat of the Robespierre cut.

"Red," he said on entering, and looked intently at Enjolras.

Then he energetically turned back on his chest the two scarlet points of the waistcoat, and, walking up to Enjolras, whispered in his ear, "Never fear!" He boldly cocked his hat, and went out. A quarter of an hour after, the back-room of the Café Musain was deserted, and all the Friends of the A. B. C. were going in various directions about their business. Enjolras, who had reserved the Cougourde for himself, was the last to leave. The Members of the Aix Cougourde who were in Paris assembled at that period on the plain of Issy, in one of the abandoned quarries so numerous on that side of Paris.

Enjolras, while walking toward the meeting-place, took a mental review of the situation. The gravity of the events was visible, for when the facts which are the forerunners of latent social disease move heavily, the slightest complication checks and impedes their action. It is a phenomenon from which collapse and regeneration issue. Enjolras caught a glimpse of a luminous upheaving behind the dark clouds of the future. Who knew whether the moment might not be at hand when the people would seize their rights once again? What a splendid spectacle! the revolution majestically taking possession of France once more, and saying to the world, "To be continued to-morrow!" Enjolras was satisfied, for the furnace was aglow, and he had at that self-same moment a gunpowder train of friends scattered over Paris. He mentally compared Combeferre's philosophic and penetrating eloquence, Feuilly's cosmopolitan enthusiasm, Courfeyrac's humor, Bahorel's laugh, Jean Prouvaire's melancholy, Joly's learning, and Bossuet's sarcasms, to a species of electrical flash, which produced fire everywhere simultaneously. All were at work, and most certainly the result would respond to the effort. That was good, and it made him think of Grantaire. "Ah," he said to himself, "the Barrière du Maine is hardly at all out of my way, so suppose I go on to Richefeu's and see what Grantaire is doing, and how far he has got."

It was striking one by the Vaugirard church when Enjolras reached Richefeu's. He pushed open the door, went in, folded his arms, and looked about the room, which was full of tables, men, and tobacco smoke. A voice was audible in this fog, sharply interrupted by another voice, – it was Grantaire talking with some opponent of his. Grantaire was seated opposite another man, at a marble table covered with sawdust and studded with dominoes. He smote the marble with his fist, and this is what Enjolras heard: —

"Double six."

"A four."

"The pig! I haven't any left."

"You are dead. A two."
"A six."
"A three."
"An ace."
"My set."
"Four points."
"With difficulty."
"It is yours."
"I made an enormous mistake."
"You are getting on all right."
"Fifteen."
"Seven more."
"That makes me twenty-two [pensively]. Twenty-two!"
"You did not expect the double six. Had I played it at first it would have changed the whole game."
"Double two."
"An ace."
"An ace! well, a five!"
"I haven't one."
"You played first, I believe?"
"Yes."
"A blank."
"What luck he has! Ah! you have luck; [a long reverie] a two."
"An ace."
"I've neither a five nor an ace. It is stupid for you."
"Domino!"
"Oh, the deuce!"

BOOK II
ÉPONINE

CHAPTER I
THE LARK'S FIELD

Marius witnessed the unexpected dénouement of the snare upon whose track he had placed Javert, but the Inspector had scarce left the house, taking his prisoners with him in three hackney coaches, ere Marius stepped out of the house in his turn. It was only nine in the evening, and Marius went to call on Courfeyrac, who was no longer the imperturbable inhabitant of the Pays Latin. He had gone to live in the Rue de la Verrière, "for political reasons;" and this district was one of those in which insurrectionists of the day were fond of installing themselves. Marius said to Courfeyrac, "I am going to sleep here," and Courfeyrac pulled off one of his two mattresses, laid it on the ground, and said, "There you are!" At seven o'clock the next morning Marius returned to No. 50-52, paid his quarter's rent, and what he owed to Mame Bougon, had his books, bed, table, chest-of-drawers, and two chairs, placed on a truck, and went away without leaving his address; so that, when Javert returned in the morning to question Marius about the events of the previous evening, he only found Mame Bougon, who said to him, "Gone away." Mame Bougon was convinced that Marius was in some way an accomplice of the robbers arrested the previous evening. "Who would have thought it!" she exclaimed to the portresses of the quarter, "a young man whom you might have taken for a girl!"

Marius had two reasons for moving so promptly, the first was that he now felt a horror of this house, in which he had seen so closely, and in all its most repulsive and ferocious development, a social ugliness more frightful still, perhaps, than the wicked rich man, – the wicked poor man. The second was that he did not wish to figure at the trial, – which would in all probability ensue, – and be obliged to give evidence against Thénardier. Javert believed that the young man, whose name he forgot, had been frightened and had run away, or else had not even returned home; he made some efforts, however, to find him, which were unsuccessful. A month elapsed, then another. Marius was still living with Courfeyrac, and had learned from a young barrister, an habitual walker of the Salle des Pas Perdus, that Thénardier was in solitary confinement, and every Monday he left a five-franc piece for him at the wicket of La Force. Marius, having no money left, borrowed the five francs of Courfeyrac; it was the first time in his life that he borrowed money. These periodical five francs were a double enigma for Courfeyrac who gave them, and for Thénardier who received them. "Where can they go to?" Courfeyrac thought. "Where can they come from?" Thénardier asked himself.

Marius, however, was heart-broken, for everything had disappeared again through a trap-door. He saw nothing ahead of him, and his life was once more plunged into the mystery in which he had been groping. He had seen again momentarily and very closely the girl whom he loved, the old man who appeared her father, – the strange beings who were his only interest and sole hope in this world, – and at the moment when he fancied that he should grasp them, a breath had carried off all these shadows. Not a spark of certainty and truth had flashed even from that most terrific collision, and no conjecture was possible. He no longer knew the name of which he had felt so certain, and it certainly was not Ursule, and the Lark was a nickname; and then, what must he think of the old man? Did he really hide himself from the police? The white-haired workman whom Marius had met in the vicinity of the Invalides reverted to his mind, and it now became probable that this workman and M. Leblanc were one and the same. He disguised himself then, and this man had his heroic side and his equivocal side. Why did he not call for help? why did he fly? was he, yes or no, the father of the girl? and, lastly, was he really the man whom Thénardier fancied he recognized? Thénardier

might have been mistaken. These were all so many insoluble problems. All this, it is true, in no way lessened the angelic charm of the maiden of the Luxembourg. Poignant distress, – Marius had a passion in his heart, and night over his eyes. He was impelled, he was attracted, and he could not stir; all had vanished, except love, and he had lost the sudden instincts and illuminations of even that love. Usually, this flame which burns us enlightens us a little, and casts some useful light without, but Marius no longer even heard the dumb counsel of passion. He never said to himself, Suppose I were to go there, or try this thing or the other? She whom he could no longer call Ursule was evidently somewhere, but nothing advised Marius in what direction he should seek her. All his life was now summed up in two words, – absolute uncertainty, in an impenetrable fog, – and though he still longed to see her, he no longer hoped it. As a climax, want returned, and he felt its icy breath close to him and behind him. In all these torments, and for a long time, he had discontinued his work, and nothing is more dangerous than discontinued work; for it is a habit which a man loses, – a habit easy to give up, but difficult to re-acquire.

A certain amount of reverie is good, like a narcotic taken in discreet doses. It lulls to sleep the at times harsh fevers of the working brain, and produces in the mind a soft and fresh vapor which correct the too sharp outlines of pure thought, fills up gaps and spaces here and there, and rounds the angles of ideas. But excess of reverie submerges and drowns, and woe to the mental workman who allows himself to fall entirely from thinking into reverie! He believes that he can easily rise again, and says that, after all, it is the same thing. Error! Thought is the labor of the intellect, and reverie its voluptuousness; substituting reverie for thought is like confounding a person with his nutriment. Marius, it will be remembered, began with that; passion arrived, and finished by hurling him into objectless and bottomless chimeras. In such a state a man only leaves his home to go and dream, and it is an indolent childishness, a tumultuous and stagnant gulf, and in proportion as work diminishes, necessities increase. This is a law; man in a dreamy state is naturally lavish and easily moved, and the relaxed mind can no longer endure the contracted life. There is, in this mode of existence, good mingled with evil, for if the softening be mournful, the generosity is healthy and good. But the poor, generous, and noble-minded man who does not work is ruined; the resources dry up, and necessity arises. This is a fatal incline, on which the most honest and the strongest men are dragged down like the weakest and the most vicious, and which leads to one of two holes, – suicide or crime. Through going out to dream, a day arrives when a man goes out to throw himself into the water. Excess of dreaminess produces such men as Escousse and Libras. Marius went down this incline slowly, with his eyes fixed upon her whom he no longer saw. What we have just written seems strange, and yet it is true, – the recollection of an absent being is illumined in the gloom of the heart; the more it disappears the more radiant it appears, and the despairing and obscure soul sees this light on its horizon, the star of its inner night. She was Marius's entire thought, he dreamed of nothing else. He felt confusedly that his old coat was becoming an outrageous coat, and that his new coat was growing an old coat, that his boots were wearing out, that his hat was wearing out, that his shirts were wearing out, – that is to say, that his life was wearing out; and he said to himself, Could I but see her again before I die!

One sole sweet idea was left him, and it was that she had loved him, that her glance had told him so; and that she did not know his name but that she knew his soul, and that however mysterious the spot might be where she now was, she loved him still. Might she not be dreaming of him as he was dreaming of her? At times in those inexplicable hours which every loving heart knows, as he had only reason to be sad, and yet felt within him a certain quivering of joy, he said to himself, "Her thoughts are visiting me," and then added, "Perhaps my thoughts also go to her." This illusion, at which he shook his head a moment after, sometimes, however, contrived to cast rays which resembled hope into his soul at intervals. Now and then, especially at that evening hour which most saddens dreamers, he poured out upon virgin paper the pure, impersonal, and ideal reveries with which love filled his brain. He called this "writing to her." We must not suppose, however, that his reason was in disorder, quite the contrary. He had lost the faculty of working and going firmly toward a determined object, but he

retained clear-sightedness and rectitude more fully than ever. Marius saw by a calm and real, though singular, light, all that was taking place before him, even the most indifferent men and facts, and spoke correctly of everything with a sort of honest weariness and candid disinterestedness. His judgment, almost detached from hope, soared far above him. In this state of mind nothing escaped him, nothing deceived him, and he discovered at each moment the bases of life, – humanity and destiny. Happy, even in agony, is the man to whom God has granted a soul worthy of love and misfortune! He who has not seen the things of this world and the heart of man in this double light has seen nothing of the truth and knows nothing.

The soul that loves and suffers is in a sublime state.

Days succeeded each other, and nothing new occurred; it really seemed to him that the gloomy space which he still had to traverse was becoming daily reduced. He fancied that he could already see distinctly the brink of the bottomless abyss.

"What!" he repeated to himself, "shall I not see her again before that takes place?"

After going up the Rue St. Jacques, leaving the barrière on one side, and following for some distance the old inner boulevard, you reach the Rue de la Santé, then the Glacière, and just before coming to the small stream of the Gobelins, you notice a sort of field, the only spot on the long and monotonous belt of Parisian boulevards, where Ruysdael would be tempted to sit down. I know not whence the picturesque aspect is obtained, for you merely see a green field crossed by ropes, on which rags hang to dry; an old house built in the time of Louis XIII., with its high-pitched roof quaintly pierced with garret-windows; broken-down grating; a little water between poplar trees; women's laughter and voices; on the horizon you see the Pantheon, the tree of the Sourds-Muets, the Val de Grâce, black, stunted, fantastic, amusing, and magnificent, and far in the background the stern square towers of Notre Dame. As the place is worth the trouble of visiting, no one goes there; scarce a cart or a wagon passes in a quarter of an hour. It once happened that Marius's solitary rambles led him to this field, and on that day there was a rarity on the boulevard, a passer-by. Marius, really struck by the almost savage grace of the field, asked him: "What is the name of this spot?"

The passer-by answered, "It is the Lark's field;" and added, "It was here that Ulbach killed the shepherdess of Ivry."

But, after the words "the Lark," Marius heard no more, for a word at times suffices to produce a congelation in a man's dreamy condition: the whole thought is condensed round an idea, and is no longer capable of any other perception. The Lark, that was the appellation which had taken the place of Ursule in the depths of Marius's melancholy. "Stay," he said, with that sort of unreasoning stupor peculiar to such mysterious asides, "this is her field, I shall learn here where she lives." This was absurd but irresistible, and he came daily to this Lark's field.

CHAPTER II
CRIMES IN EMBRYO INCUBATED IN PRISONS

Javert's triumph at the Maison Gorbeau had seemed complete, but was not so. In the first place, and that was his chief anxiety. Javert had not been able to make a prisoner of the prisoner; the assassinated man who escapes is more suspicious than the assassin, and it was probable that this personage, such a precious capture for the bandits, might be an equally good prize for the authorities. Next, Montparnasse slipped out of Javert's clutches, and he must wait for another opportunity to lay hands on that "cursed dandy." Montparnasse, in fact, having met Éponine on the boulevard, keeping watch, went off with her, preferring to play the Nemorino with the daughter rather than Schinderhannes with the father, and it was lucky for him that he did so, as he was now free. As for Éponine, Javert "nailed" her, but it was a poor consolation, and sent her to join Azelma at the Madelonnettes. Lastly, in the drive from No. 50-52 to La Force, one of the chief men arrested, Claquesous, had disappeared. No one knew how he did it, and the sergeants and agents did not at all understand it; he had turned into vapor, slipped through the handcuffs, and passed through a crack in the coach; but no one could say anything except that on reaching the prison there was no Claquesous. There was in this either enchantment or a police trick. Had Claquesous melted away in the darkness like a snow-flake in the water? Was there an unavowed connivance on the part of the agents? Did this man belong to the double enigma of disorder and order? Had this Sphynx its front paws in crimes, and its hind paws in the police? Javert did not accept these combinations, and struggled against such compromises; but his squad contained other inspectors besides himself, and though his subordinates, perhaps more thoroughly initiated in the secrets of the Préfecture, and Claquesous was such a villain that he might be a very excellent agent. To be on such intimate juggling relations with the night is excellent for plunder and admirable for the police, and there are double-edged rogues of the sort. However this might be, Claquesous was lost and could not be found, and Javert seemed more irritated than surprised. As for Marius, "that scrub of a lawyer who was probably frightened," and whose name he had forgotten, Javert did not trouble himself much about him, and besides, a lawyer can always be found. But, was he only a lawyer?

The examination began, and the magistrate thought it advisable not to put one of the members of the Patron Minette band in solitary confinement, as it was hoped he might chatter. This was Brujon, the hairy man of the Rue du Petit Banquier; he was turned into the Charlemagne Court, and the eyes of the spies were kept upon him. This name of Brujon is one of the recollections of La Force. In the hideous yard called the Bâtiment Neuf, – which the governor named the Court of St. Bernard, and the robbers christened the Lion's Den, – and on the wall covered with scars and leprosy, that rose on the left to the height of the roof, and close to a rusty old iron gate which led to the old chapel of the ducal house of La Force, converted into a sleeping-ward for prisoners, there might have been seen, twelve years ago, a species of Bastille, clumsily engraved with a nail in the stone, and beneath it this signature, —

BRUJON, 1811

The Brujon of 1811 was the father of the Brujon of 1832. The latter, of whom we could only catch a glimpse in the Gorbeau trap, was a very crafty and artful young fellow, with a downcast and plaintive air. It was in consequence of this air that the magistrate turned him loose, believing him more useful in the Charlemagne yard than in a secret cell. Robbers do not interrupt their labors because they are in the hands of justice, and do not trouble themselves about such a trifle. Being in prison for one crime does not prevent another being commenced. There are artists who have a picture in the

Exhibition, but for all that work at a new one in their studio. Brujon seemed stupefied by prison; he might be seen standing for hours in the yard near the canteen man's stall, contemplating like an idiot the mean tariff of prices of the canteen which began with "garlic, fifty-two centimes," and ended with "cigar, five centimes." Or else he passed his time in trembling, shaking his teeth, declaring he had the fever, and inquiring whether one of the twenty-six beds in the Infirmary were vacant.

All at once, toward the second half of February, 1832, it was discovered that Brujon, the sleepy-looking man, had had three messages delivered, not in his own name, but in those of his comrades, by the prison porters. These messages had cost him fifty sous altogether, an exorbitant sum, which attracted the sergeant's attention. After making inquiries and consulting the tariff of messages hung up in the prisoners' visiting room, this authority found out that the fifty sous were thus divided, – one message to the Panthéon, ten sous; one to Val de Grâce, fifteen sous; and one to the Barrière de Grenelle, twenty-five sous, the latter being the dearest in the whole list. Now at these very places resided these very dangerous prowlers at the barrière, Kruideniers *alias* Bizarro, Glorious an ex-convict, and Stop-the-coach, and the attention of the police was directed to these through this incident. It was assumed that these men belonged to Patron Minette, of which band two chiefs, Babet and Gueulemer, were locked up. It was supposed that Brujon's messages, which were not delivered at the houses, but to persons waiting in the street, contained information about some meditated crime. The three ruffians were arrested, and the police believed they had scented some machination of Brujon's.

A week after these measures had been taken, a night watchman who was inspecting the ground-floor sleeping ward of the Bâtiment Neuf, was just placing his chestnut in the box (this was the method employed to make sure that the watchmen did their duty properly; every hour a chestnut must be dropped into all the boxes nailed on the doors of the sleeping wards), when he saw through the peep-hole Brujon sitting up in bed and writing something. The watchman went in, Brujon was placed in solitary confinement for a month, but what he had written could not be found. Hence the police were just as wise as before. One thing is certain, that on the next day a "postilion" was thrown from Charlemagne into the Lion's Den over the five-storied building that separated the two yards. Prisoners give the name of "postilion" to a ball of artistically moulded bread, which is sent to "Ireland," that is to say, thrown from one yard into another. This ball falls into the yard, the man who picks it up opens it and finds in it a note addressed to some prisoner in the yard. If it be a prisoner who finds the note he delivers it to the right address; if it be a guard, or one of those secretly-bought prisoners, called "sheep" in prisons, and "foxes" at the galleys, the note is carried to the wicket and delivered to the police. This time the postilion reached its address, although the man for whom it was intended was at the time in a separate cell. This person was no other than Babet, one of the four heads of Patron Minette. It contained a rolled-up paper, on which only two lines were written.

"Babet, there's a job to be done in the Rue Plumet, a gate opening on the garden."

It was what Brujon had written during the night. In spite of male and female searchers, Babet contrived to send the note from La Force to the Salpêtrière to a "lady friend" of his locked up there. She in her turn handed the note to a girl she knew, of the name of Magnon, whom the police were actively seeking, but had not yet arrested. This Magnon, of whose name the reader has already caught a glimpse, was closely connected with the Thénardiers, as we shall show presently, and by going to see Éponine was able to serve as a bridge between the Salpêtrière and the Madelonnettes. At this very period Éponine and Azelma were discharged for want of evidence, and when Éponine went out, Magnon, who was watching for her at the gate of the Madelonnettes, handed her the note from Brujon to Babet, with instructions to look into the affair. Éponine went to the Rue Plumet, recognized the grating and the garden, observed the house, watched for some days, and then carried to Magnon a biscuit, which the latter sent to Babet's mistress at the Salpêtrière. A biscuit, in the dark language of prisons, means, "Nothing to be done."

In less than a week from this, Babet and Brujon happened to meet, as one was going before the magistrate, the other returning. "Well," Brujon asked, "the Rue P.?" "Biscuit," Babet answered.

Thus the fœtus of crime engendered by Brujon at La Force became abortive; but this abortion had consequences, for all that, perfectly foreign to Brujon's plans, as will be seen. In fancying we are tying one thread we often tie another.

CHAPTER III
FATHER MABŒUF HAS AN APPARITION

Marius no longer called on any one, but at times he came across Father Mabœuf. While Marius was slowly descending the mournful steps which might be called the cellar stairs, and lead to places without light, on which you hear the footsteps of the prosperous above your head, M. Mabœuf was also descending. The Flora of Cauteretz did not sell at all now, and the indigo experiments had not been successful in the little garden of Austerlitz, which was badly situated. M. Mabœuf could only cultivate in it a few rare plants which are fond of moisture and shade. For all that, though, he was not discouraged; he had obtained a strip of ground at the Jardin des Plantes in a good situation, for making "at his own charge" experiments on indigo. To do this he pledged the plates of his *Flora*, and he reduced his breakfast to two eggs, of which he left one for his old servant, whose wages he had not paid for fifteen months past. And very frequently his breakfast was his sole meal. He no longer laughed with his childish laugh, he had grown morose, and declined to receive visitors, and Marius did well not to call on him. At times, at the hour when M. Mabœuf proceeded to the Jardin des Plantes, the old man and the young man passed each other on the Boulevard de l'Hôpital; they did not speak, and merely shook their heads sorrowfully. It is a sad thing that there comes a moment when misery unknots friendships. There were two friends: there are two passers-by!

Royol the publisher was dead, and now M. Mabœuf knew nothing but his books, his garden, and his indigo; these were the three shapes which happiness, pleasure, and hope had assumed for him. They were sufficient to live for, and he would say to himself: "When I have made my blue-balls, I shall be rich; I will redeem my plates from the Mont de Piété, bring my *Flora* into fashion again with charlatanism, the big drum, and advertisements in the papers, and buy, I know where, a copy of Pierre de Medine's "Art of Navigation," with woodcuts, edition 1539." In the mean while, he toiled all day at his indigo patch, and at night went home to water his garden and read his books. M. Mabœuf at this period was close on eighty years of age.

One evening he had a strange apparition. He had returned home while it was still daylight, and found that Mother Plutarch, whose health was not so good as it might be, had gone to bed. He dined upon a bone on which a little meat remained and a lump of bread which he had found on the kitchen table, and was seated on a stone post which acted as a bench in his garden. Near this bench there was, after the fashion of old kitchen-gardens, a sort of tall building of planks in a very rickety condition, a hutch on the ground-floor, and a store-room on the first floor. There were no rabbits in the hutch, but there were a few apples, the remnant of the winter stock, in the store-room. M. Mabœuf was reading, with the help of his spectacles, two books which interested him greatly, and also, a thing more serious at his age, preoccupied him. His natural timidity rendered him prone to accept superstitions. The first of these books was the celebrated treatise of President Delancre, "On the Inconstancy of Spirits," and the other was the quarto work of Mutor de la Rubaudière, "On the Devils of Vauvert and the Goblins of la Bièvre." The latter book interested him the more, because his garden had been in olden times one of the places haunted by the goblins. Twilight was beginning to whiten what is above and blacken what is below. While reading, M. Mabœuf looked over the book which he held in his hand at his plants, and among others at a magnificent rhododendron which was one of his consolations. Four days of wind and sun had passed without a drop of rain, the stems were bending, the buds drooping, the leaves falling, and they all required watering; this rhododendron especially looked in a very sad way. M. Mabœuf was one of those men for whom plants have souls; he had been at work all day in his indigo patch, and was worn out with fatigue, but for all that he rose, laid his books on the bench, and walked in a bent posture and with tottering steps, up to the well. But when he seized the chain he had not sufficient strength to unhook it; he then turned and took a glance of agony at the sky,

which was glittering with stars. The evening had that serenity which crushes human sorrow under a lugubrious and eternal joy. The night promised to be as dry as the day had been.

"Stars everywhere!" the old man thought, "not the smallest cloud! not a drop of water!"

And his head, which had been raised a moment before, fell again on his chest, then he looked once more at the sky, murmuring, —

"A little dew! a little pity!"

He tried once again to unhook the well-chain, but could not succeed; at this moment he heard a voice, saying, —

"Father Mabœuf, shall I water the garden for you?" At the same time a sound like that of a wild beast breaking through was heard in the hedge, and he saw a tall thin girl emerge, who stood before him, looking at him boldly. She looked less like a human being than some form engendered of the darkness. Before Father Mabœuf, whom, as we said, a trifle terrified, found time to answer a syllable, this creature, whose movements had in the gloom a sort of strange suddenness, had unhooked the chain, let down and drawn up the bucket, and filled the watering-pot; and the old gentleman saw this apparition, which was barefooted and wore a ragged skirt, running along the flower-beds and distributing life around her. The sound of the water pattering on the leaves filled M. Mabœuf's soul with ravishment, and the rhododendron now seemed to him to be happy. The first bucket emptied, the girl drew a second, then a third, and watered the whole garden. To see her moving thus along the walks in which her outline appeared quite black, and waving on her long thin arms her ragged shawl, she bore a striking resemblance to a bat. When she had finished, Father Mabœuf went up to her with tears in his eyes, and laid his hand on her forehead.

"God will bless you," he said, "you are an angel, since you take care of flowers."

"No," she replied, "I am the Devil, but I don't care."

The old man continued, without waiting for or hearing the reply, —

"What a pity that I am so unhappy and so poor, and can do nothing for you!"

"You can do something," she said.

"What is it!"

"Tell me where M. Marius lives."

The old man did not understand.

"What Monsieur Marius?"

He raised his glassy eyes and seemed seeking something which had vanished.

"A young man who used to come here."

"Ah, yes!" he exclaimed, "I know whom you mean. Wait a minute! Monsieur Marius, Baron Marius Pontmercy, pardieu! lives, or rather he does not live – well, I do not know."

While speaking, he had stooped to straighten a rhododendron branch, and continued, —

"Ah yes, I remember now. He passes very frequently along the boulevard, and goes in the direction of the Lark's field in the Rue Croulebarbe. Look for him there, he will not be difficult to find."

When M. Mabœuf raised his head again, he was alone, and the girl had disappeared. He was decidedly a little frightened.

"Really," he thought, "if my garden were not watered, I should fancy that it was a ghost."

An hour after, when he was in bed, this idea returned to him, and while falling asleep, he said to himself confusedly at the disturbed moment when thought gradually assumes the form of dream in order to pass through sleep, like the fabulous bird which metamorphoses itself into a fish to cross the sea, —

"Really now, this affair greatly resembles what La Rubaudière records about the goblins. Could it have been a ghost?"

CHAPTER IV
MARIUS HAS AN APPARITION

A few days after this visit of a ghost to Father Mabœuf, – it was on a Monday, the day of the five-franc piece which Marius borrowed of Courfeyrac for Thénardier, – Marius placed the coin in his pocket, and before carrying it to the prison, resolved to "take a little walk," hoping that on his return this would make him work. It was, however, eternally thus. As soon as he rose, he sat down before a book and paper to set about some translation, and his work at this time was the translation into French of a celebrated German quarrel, the controversy between Gans and Savigny. He took up Gans, he took up Savigny, read four pages, tried to write one but could not, saw a star between his paper and himself, and got up from his chair, saying, "I will go out, that will put me in the humor," and he proceeded to the Lark's field, where he saw the star more than ever, and Gans and Savigny less. He went home, tried to resume his task, and did not succeed; he could not join a single one of the threads broken in his brain, and so said to himself, "I will not go out to-morrow, for it prevents me from working." But he went out every day.

He lived in the Lark's field more than at Courfeyrac's lodging, and his right address was Boulevard de la Santé, at the seventh tree past the Rue Croulebarbe. On this morning he had left the seventh tree and was seated on the parapet of the bridge over the little stream. The merry sunbeams were flashing through the expanded and luminous leaves. He thought of "Her," and his reverie, becoming a reproach, fell back on himself; he thought bitterly of the indolence and mental paralysis which were gaining on him, and of the night which constantly grew denser before him, so that he could no longer even see the sun. Still, through this painful evolution of indistinct ideas which was not even a soliloquy, as action was so weak in him, and he had no longer the strength to try to feel sad; through this melancholy absorption, we say, sensations from without reached him. He heard behind, below, and on both sides of him, the washerwomen of the Gobelins beating their linen, and above him the birds twittering and singing in the elms. On one side the sound of liberty, happy carelessness, and winged leisure, on the other the sound of labor. Two joyous sounds made him think deeply and almost reflect. All at once he heard amid his depressed ecstasy a voice he knew, that said, —

"Ah, here he is!"

He raised his eyes and recognized the unhappy girl who had come to him one morning, Éponine, the elder of Thénardier's daughters; he now knew what her name was. Strange to say, she had grown poorer and more beautiful, two things which he had not thought possible. She had accomplished a double progress, toward light and toward distress. Her feet were bare and her clothes torn, as on the day when she so boldly entered his room, but the tatters were two months older, the holes larger, and the rags filthier. She had the same hoarse voice, the same forehead wrinkled and bronzed by exposure, the same free, absent, and wandering look, but she had, in addition, on her countenance, something startled and lamentable, which passing through prisons adds to misery. She had pieces of straw and hay in her hair, not that, like Ophelia, she had gone mad through contagion with Hamlet's lunacy, but because she had slept in some stable-loft.

And with all that she was beautiful. What a star thou art, O youth!

She had stopped in front of Marius with a little joy on her livid face, and something like a smile, and it was some minutes ere she could speak.

"I have found you!" she said at last. "Father Mabœuf was right, it was in this boulevard! How I have sought you, if you only knew! Do you know that I have been in quod for a fortnight? They let me go as there was no charge against me, and besides I had not attained years of discretion by two months. Oh, how I have looked for you the last six weeks! So you no longer live down there?"

"No," said Marius.

"Ah, I understand, on account of that thing; well, such disturbances are unpleasant, and you moved. Hilloh, why do you wear an old hat like that? A young man like you ought to be handsomely dressed. Do you know, Monsieur Marius, that M. Mabœuf calls you Baron Marius, – I forget what, but you are not a Baron, are you? Barons are old swells, who walk in front of the Luxembourg Palace, where there is the most sun, and read the *Quotidienne* for a sou. I went once with a letter for a Baron who was like that, and more than a hundred years of age. Tell me, where do you live now?"

Marius did not answer.

"Ah," she added, "you have a hole in your shirt-front, I must mend it for you."

Then she continued with an expression which gradually grew gloomier, —

"You do not seem pleased to see me?"

Marius held his tongue. She was also silent for a moment, and then exclaimed, —

"If I liked, I could compel you to look pleased."

"What do you mean?" Marius asked.

She bit her lip, and apparently hesitated, as if suffering from some internal struggle. At length she seemed to make up her mind.

"All the worse, but no matter, you look sad and I wish you to be pleased, only promise me, though, that you will laugh, for I want to see you laugh and hear you say, 'Ah! that is famous!' Poor Monsieur Marius! you know you promised you would give me all I wanted."

"Yes, but speak, can't you?"

She looked at Marius intently and said, "I have the address."

Marius turned pale, and all his blood flowed to his heart.

"What address?"

"The address which you asked me for;" and she added, as if with a great effort, "the address, – you surely understand?"

"Yes," stammered Marius.

"The young lady's."

These words uttered, she heaved a deep sigh. Marius leaped from the parapet on which he was sitting, and wildly seized her hand.

"Oh, lead me to it! Tell me! Ask of me what you please! Where is it?"

"Come with me," she answered; "I don't exactly know the street or the number, and it is quite on the other side of town; but I know the house well, and will take you to it."

She withdrew her hand, and continued in a tone which would have made an observer's heart bleed, but did not at all affect the intoxicated and transported lover, —

"Oh, how pleased you are!"

A cloud passed over Marius's forehead, and he clutched Éponine's arm.

"Swear one thing."

"Swear?" she said. "What do you mean by that? Indeed, you want me to swear?"

And she burst into a laugh.

"Your father! Promise me, Éponine, – swear to me that you will never tell your father that address."

She turned to him with an air of stupefaction. "Éponine! how do you know that is my name?"

"Promise me what I ask you."

But she did not seem to hear him.

"That is nice! You called me Éponine!"

Marius seized both her arms.

"Answer me in Heaven's name! Pay attention to what I am saying, – swear to me that you will not tell your father the address which you know."

"My father?" she remarked, "oh, yes, my father. He's all right in a secret cell. Besides, what do I care for my father?"

"But you have not promised!" Marius exclaimed.

"Let me go!" she said, as she burst into a laugh; "how you are shaking me! Yes, yes, I promise it; I swear it! How does it concern me? I will not tell my father the address. There, does that suit you; is that it?"

"And no one else?" said Marius.

"And no one else."

"Now," Marius continued, "lead me there."

"At once?"

"Yes."

"Come on! Oh, how glad he is!" she said.

A few yards farther on she stopped.

"You are following me too closely, Monsieur Marius; let me go on in front and do you follow me, as if you were not doing so. A respectable young man like you must not be seen with such a woman as I am."

No language could render all that was contained in the word "woman," thus pronounced by this child. She went a dozen paces and stopped again. Marius rejoined her, and she said to him aside without turning to him, —

"By the bye, you know that you promised me something?"

Marius felt in his pocket; he had nothing in the world but the five-franc piece destined for Father Thénardier, but he laid the coin in Éponine's hand. She let it slip through her fingers on the ground, and looking at him frowningly said, —

"I do not want your money."

BOOK III
THE HOUSE OF THE RUE PLUMET

CHAPTER I
THE MYSTERIOUS HOUSE

About the middle of the last century a president of the Parliament of Paris who kept a mistress under the rose – for at that day the nobility displayed their mistresses and the bourgeois concealed theirs – had "une petite maison" built in the Faubourg St. Germain, in the deserted Rue Blomet, which is now called Rue Plumet, and not far from the spot which was formerly known as the "Combat des Animaux." This house consisted of a pavilion only one story in height, there were two sitting-rooms on the ground-floor, two bedrooms on the first, a kitchen below, a boudoir above, an attic beneath the roof, and the whole was surrounded by a large garden with railings looking out on the street. This was all that passers-by could see. But behind the pavilion was a narrow yard, with an outhouse containing two rooms, where a nurse and a child could be concealed if necessary. In the back of this outhouse was a secret door leading into a long, paved, winding passage, open to the sky, and bordered by two lofty walls. This passage, concealed with prodigious art, and, as it were, lost between the garden walls, whose every turn and winding it followed, led to another secret door, which opened about a quarter of a mile off almost in another quarter, at the solitary end of the Rue de Babylone. The president went in by this door, so that even those who might have watched him, and observed that he mysteriously went somewhere every day, could not have suspected that going to the Rue de Babylone was going to the Rue Blomet. By clever purchases of ground, the ingenious magistrate had been enabled to make this hidden road upon his own land, and consequently uncontrolled. At a later date he sold the land bordering the passage in small lots for gardens, and the owners of these gardens on either side believed that they had a parting-wall before them, and did not even suspect the existence of this long strip of pavement winding between two walls among their flower-beds and orchards. The birds alone saw this curiosity, and it is probable that the linnets and tomtits of the last century gossiped a good deal about the President.

The pavilion, built of stone, in the Mansard taste, and panelled and furnished in the Watteau style, rock-work outside, old-fashioned within, and begirt by a triple hedge of flowers, had something discreet, coquettish, and solemn about it, befitting the caprices of love and a magistrate. This house and this passage, which have now disappeared, still existed fifteen years ago. In 1793 a brazier bought the house for the purpose of demolishing it, but as he could not pay, the nation made him bankrupt, and thus it was the house that demolished the brazier. Since then the house bad remained uninhabited, and fell slowly into ruins, like every residence to which the presence of man no longer communicates life. The old furniture was left in it, and the ten or twelve persons who pass along the Rue Plumet were informed that it was for sale or lease by a yellow and illegible placard which had been fastened to the garden gate since 1810. Toward the end of the Restoration the same passers-by might have noticed that the bill had disappeared, and even that the first-floor shutters were open. The house was really occupied, and there were short curtains at the windows, a sign that there was a lady in the house. In October, 1829, a middle-aged man presented himself and took the house as it stood, including of course the outhouse and the passage leading to the Rue de Babylone, and he had the two secret doors of this passage put in repair. The house was still furnished much as the president had left it, so the new tenant merely ordered a few necessary articles, had the paving of the yard put to rights, new stairs put in, and the windows mended, and eventually installed himself there with a young girl and

an old woman, without any disturbance, and rather like a man slipping in than one entering his own house. The neighbors, however, did not chatter, for the simple reason that he had none.

The tenant was in reality Jean Valjean, and the girl was Cosette. The domestic was a female of the name of Toussaint, whom Jean Valjean had saved from the hospital and wretchedness, and who was old, rustic, and stammered, – three qualities which determined Jean Valjean on taking her with him. He hired the house in the name of M. Fauchelevent, annuitant. In all we have recently recorded, the reader will have doubtless recognized Valjean even sooner than Thénardier did. Why had he left the convent of the Little Picpus, and what had occurred there? Nothing had occurred. It will be borne in mind that Jean Valjean was happy in the convent, so happy that his conscience at last became disturbed by it. He saw Cosette daily, he felt paternity springing up and being developed in him more and more; he set his whole soul on the girl; he said to himself that she was his, that no power on earth could rob him of her, that it would be so indefinitely, that she would certainly become a nun, as she was daily gently urged to it, that henceforth the convent was the world for him as for her, that he would grow old in it and she grow up, that she would grow old and he die there; and that, finally, no separation was possible. While reflecting on this, he began falling into perplexities: he asked himself if all this happiness were really his, if it were not composed of the happiness of this child, which he confiscated and deprived her of, and whether this were not a robbery? He said to himself that this child had the right to know life before renouncing it, that depriving her beforehand, and without consulting her, of all joys under the pretext of saving her from all trials, and profiting by her ignorance and isolation to make an artificial vocation spring up in her, was denaturalizing a human creature and being false to God. And who knew whether Cosette, some day meditating on this, and feeling herself a reluctant nun, might not grow to hate him? It was a last thought, almost selfish and less heroic than the others, but it was insupportable to him. He resolved to leave the convent.

He resolved, and recognized with a breaking heart that he must do so. As for objections, there were none, for six years of residence between these walls, and of disappearance, had necessarily destroyed or dispersed the element of fear. He could return to human society at his ease, for he had grown old and all had changed. Who would recognize him now? And then, looking at the worst, there was only danger for himself, and he had not the right to condemn Cosette to a cloister, for the reason that he had been condemned to the galleys; besides, what is danger in the presence of duty? Lastly, nothing prevented him from being prudent and taking precautions; and as for Cosette's education, it was almost completed and terminated. Once the resolution was formed, he awaited the opportunity, which soon offered: old Fauchelevent died. Jean Valjean requested an audience of the reverend prioress, and told her that as he had inherited a small property by his brother's death, which would enable him to live without working, he was going to leave the convent, and take his daughter with him; but as it was not fair that Cosette, who was not going to profess, should have been educated gratuitously, he implored the reverend prioress to allow him to offer the community, for the five years which Cosette had passed among them, the sum of five thousand francs. It was thus that Jean Valjean quitted the Convent of the Perpetual Adoration.

On leaving it he carried with his own hands, and would not intrust to any porter, the small valise, of which he always had the key about him. This valise perplexed Cosette, owing to the aromatic smell which issued from it. Let us say at once that this trunk never quitted him again, he always had it in his bed-room, and it was the first and at times the only thing which he carried away in his removals. Cosette laughed, called this valise "the inseparable," and said, "I am jealous of it." Jean Valjean, however, felt a profound anxiety when he returned to the outer air. He discovered the house in the Rue Plumet, and hid himself in it, henceforth remaining in possession of the name of Ultime Fauchelevent. At the same time he hired two other lodgings in Paris, so that he might attract less attention than if he had always remained in the same quarter; that he might, if necessary, absent himself for a while if anything alarmed him; and, lastly, that he might not be taken unaware, as on the night when he so miraculously escaped from Javert. These two lodgings were of a very mean

appearance, and in two quarters very distant from each other, one being in the Rue de l'Ouest, the other in the Rue de l'Homme-armé. He spent a few weeks now and then at one or the other of these lodgings, taking Cosette with him and leaving Toussaint behind. He was waited on by the porters, and represented himself as a person living in the country, who had a lodging in town. This lofty virtue had three domiciles in Paris in order to escape the police.

CHAPTER II
JEAN VALJEAN A NATIONAL GUARD

Properly speaking, however, Jean Valjean's house was at the Rue Plumet, and he had arranged his existence there in the following fashion: Cosette and the servant occupied the pavilion, she had the best bedroom, with the painted press, the boudoir with the gilt beading, the president's drawing-room with its hangings and vast easy chairs, and the garden. Jean Valjean placed in Cosette's room a bed with a canopy of old damask in three colors, and an old and handsome Persian carpet, purchased at Mother Gaucher's in the Rue Figuier St. Paul; while, to correct the sternness of these old splendors, he added all the light gay furniture of girls, an étagère, bookshelves with gilt books, a desk and blotting-case, a work-table inlaid with mother-of-pearl, a silver dressing-case, and toilet articles of Japanese porcelain. Long damask curtains of three colors, like those on the bed, festooned the first-floor windows, while on the ground-floor they were of tapestry. All through the winter Cosette's small house was warmed from top to bottom, while Jean Valjean himself lived in the sort of porter's lodge at the end of the back yard, which was furnished with a mattress and common bedstead, a deal table, two straw-bottomed chairs, an earthenware water-jug, a few books on a plank, and his dear valise in a corner, but he never had any fire. He dined with Cosette, and black bread was put on the table for him; and he had said to Toussaint, when she came, "This young lady is mistress of the house." "And you, sir?" Toussaint replied, quite stupefied. "Oh! I am much better than the master, – I am the father."

Cosette had been taught house-keeping in the convent, and checked the expenses, which were very small. Daily Jean Valjean took Cosette for a walk, leading to the most sequestered path of the Luxembourg, and every Sunday they attended Mass at the Church of St. Jacques du Haut-pas, because it was a long distance off. As it is a very poor district, he gave away a considerable amount of alms, and the wretched flocked around him in the church, which produced the letter from Thénardier, "To the Benevolent Gentleman of the Church of St. Jacques du Haut-pas." He was fond of taking Cosette to visit the indigent and the sick, but no stranger ever entered the house in the Rue Plumet. Toussaint bought the provision, and Jean Valjean himself fetched the water from a fountain close by, on the boulevard. The wood and wine were kept in a semi-subterranean building covered with rock-work, near the door in the Rue de Babylone, which had formerly served the president as a grotto, for in the age of Follies and Petites Maisons, love was not possible without a grotto. In the door opening on the Rue de Babylone there was a letter-box, but, as the inhabitants of the house in the Rue Plumet received no letters, this box, once on a time the go-between in amourettes, and the confidant of a love-sick lawyer, was now only of service to receive the tax-papers and the guard-notices. For M. Fauchelevent, annuitant, belonged to the National Guard, and had been unable to escape the close meshes of the census of 1831. The municipal inquiries made at that period extended even to the convent of the Little Picpus, whence Jean Valjean emerged venerable in the eyes of the mayoralty, and consequently worthy of mounting guard. Three or four times a year Jean Valjean donned his uniform and went on duty, and did so readily enough, for it was a disguise which enabled him to mix with everybody, while himself remaining solitary. Jean Valjean had attained his sixtieth year, or the age of legal exemption; but he did not look more than fifty; besides, he had no wish to escape his sergeant-major and cheat Count Lobau. He had no civil status, hid his name, his identity, his age, everything, and, as we just said, he was a willing National Guard, – all his ambition was to resemble the first-comer who pays taxes. The ideal of this man was internally an angel, externally a bourgeois.

Let us mention one fact, by the way. When Jean Valjean went out with Cosette he dressed himself in the way we have seen, and looked like a retired officer; but when he went out alone, and he did so usually at night, he was attired in a workman's jacket and trousers, and a cap whose peak was pulled deep over his eyes. Was this precaution or humility? Both at once. Cosette was accustomed to the enigmatical side of her destiny, and hardly noticed her father's singularities; as for Toussaint,

she revered Jean Valjean, and considered everything he did right. One day her butcher, who got a glimpse of her master, said, "He's a queer looking stick," and she replied, "He's a – a – a – saint." All three never left the house except by the gate in the Rue de Babylone; and unless they were noticed through the garden gate it would be difficult to guess that they lived in the Rue Plumet. This gate was always locked, and Jean Valjean left the garden untended that it might not be noticed. In this, perhaps, he deceived himself.

CHAPTER III
FOLIIS AC FRONDIBUS

This garden, left to itself for more than half a century, had become extraordinary and charming: passers-by forty years ago stopped in the street to gaze at it, without suspecting the secrets which it hid behind its fresh green screen. More than one dreamer at that day allowed his eyes and thoughts indiscreetly to penetrate the bars of the old locked, twisted, shaky gate, which hung from two mould-covered pillars and was surmounted by a pediment covered with undecipherable arabesques. There was a stone bank in a corner, there were one or two mouldering statues, and some trellis-work, unnailed by time, was rotting against the walls; there was no turf or walk left, but there was dog's-grass everywhere. The artificiality of gardening had departed, and nature had returned; weeds were abundant, and the festival of the gilly-flowers was splendid there. Nothing in this garden impeded the sacred efforts of things toward life, and growth was at home there and held high holiday. The trees had bent down to the briars, the briars had mounted toward the trees; the plants had clambered up, the branches had bent down. What crawls on the ground bad gone to meet what expands in the air, and what floats in the wind stooped down to what drags along the moss; brambles, branches, leaves, fibres, tufts, twigs, tendrils, and thorns were mixed together, wedded and confounded; vegetation had celebrated and accomplished here, in a close and profound embrace, and beneath the satisfied eye of the Creator, the holy mystery of its fraternity, which is a symbol of human paternity. This garden was no longer a garden, but a colossal thicket; that is to say, something which is as impenetrable as a forest, as populous as a city, as rustling as a nest, as dark as a cathedral, as fragrant as a bouquet, as solitary as a tomb, and as lively as a crowd.

In spring this enormous thicket, at liberty within its four walls, played its part in the dull task of universal germination, and quivered in the rising sun almost like an animal that inhales the effluvia of cosmic love and feels the sap of April ascending and boiling in its veins, and shaking in the wind its prodigious green foliage, scattered over the damp ground, over the weather-beaten statues, over the crumbling steps of the pavilion, and even over the pavement of the deserted street, constellations of flowers, pearls of dew, fecundity, beauty, life, joy, and perfumes. At midday thousands of white butterflies took refuge in it, and it was a divine sight to watch this living snow of summer falling in flakes through the shadows. In the pleasant gloom of the foliage a multitude of soft voices gently addressed the soul, and what the twittering forgot to say, the buzzing completed. At night a dreamy vapor rose from the garden and enveloped it; a cere-cloth of mist, a celestial and calm melancholy, covered it; the intoxicating smell of the honeysuckle and the bind-weed ascended from all sides like an exquisite and subtle poison; the last appeals of the woodpeckers and the goldfinches could be heard, ere they fell asleep under the branches, and the sacred intimacy between the bird and the trees was felt, for by day, wings gladden the leaves, and at night the leaves protect the wings. In winter, the thicket was black, dank, bristling, and shivering, and allowed a glimpse at the house to be taken. Instead of flowers among the stalks and dew upon the flowers, the long silvery trail of the snails could be seen on the cold thick bed of yellow leaves; but in any case, under any aspect, and at all seasons, spring, summer, autumn, and winter, this little enclosure exhaled melancholy contemplation, solitude, liberty, the absence of man and the presence of God, and the old rusty railings had an air of saying, "This garden is mine."

Although the pavement of Paris was all around, the classical and splendid mansions of the Rue de Varennes two yards off, the dome of the Invalides close by, and the Chamber of Deputies at no great distance, although the carriages from the Rues de Bourgogne and St. Dominique rolled along luxuriously in the vicinity, and yellow, brown, white, and red omnibuses crossed the adjoining square, – the Rue Plumet was a desert; and the death of the old proprietors, a revolution which had passed, the overthrow of old fortunes, absence, forgetfulness, and forty years of desertion and

widowhood, had sufficed to bring back to this privileged spot ferns, torch-weeds, hemlock, ragwort, tall grass, dock-leaves, lizards, beetles, and restless and rapid insects. A savage and stern grandeur had re-appeared between these four walls, and nature, who disconcerts all the paltry arrangements of man, and is as perfect in the ant as in the man, had displayed herself in a poor little Parisian garden with as much roughness and majesty as in a virgin forest of the New World. Nothing, in fact, is small, and any one who is affected by the profound penetrations of nature is aware of this fact. Although no absolute satisfaction is granted to philosophy, and though it can no more circumscribe the cause than limit the effect, the contemplator falls into unfathomable ecstasy when he watches all those decompositions of force which result in unity. Everything labors for everything; algebra is applied to the clouds, the irradiation of the planet benefits the rose, and no thinker would dare to say that the perfume of the hawthorn is useless to the constellations. Who can calculate the passage of a molecule? Who among us knows whether the creations of worlds are not determined by the fall of grains of sand? Who is acquainted with the reciprocal ebb and flow of the infinitely great and the infinitely little? A maggot is of importance, the little is great and the great little, all is in a state of equilibrium in nature. This is a terrific vision for the mind. There are prodigious relations between beings and things; and in this inexhaustible total, from the flea to the sun, nothing despises the other, for all have need of each other. Light does not bear into the sky terrestrial perfumes without knowing what to do with them, and night distributes the planetary essence to the sleepy flowers. Every bird that flies has round its foot the thread of infinity; germination is equally displayed in the outburst of a meteor and the peck of the swallow breaking the egg, and it places the birth of a worm and the advent of Socrates in the same parallel. Where the telescope ends the microscope begins, and which of the two has the grandest sight? you can choose. A patch of green mould is a pleiad of flowers, and a nebula is an ant-hill of stars. There is the same and even a more extraordinary promiscuity of the things of the intellect and the facts of the substance; elements and principles are mingled, combined, wedded together, and multiply each other till they lead both the moral and the material world into the same light. In the vast cosmic exchanges universal life comes and goes in unknown quantities, revolving everything in the invisible mystery of effluvia, employing everything, losing not a single dream of a sleep, sowing an animalcule here, crumbling away a star there, oscillating and winding, making of light a force, and of thought an element, disseminated and invisible, and dissolving everything save that geometrical point, the *Ego*; bringing back everything to the atom soul, expanding everything in God; entangling all activities from the highest to the lowest in the obscurity of a vertiginous mechanism; attaching the flight of an insect to the movement of the earth, and subordinating, perhaps, if only through the identity of the law, the evolution of the comet in the firmament to the rotary movement of the Infusoria in the drop of water, – a machine made of soul; an enormous gearing of which the prime mover is the gnat, and the last wheel is the Zodiac.

CHAPTER IV
CHANGE OF GRATING

It seemed as if this garden, created in former times to conceal libertine mysteries, had been transformed and become fitting to shelter chaste mysteries. There were no longer any cradles, bowling-greens, covered walks, or grottos; but there was a magnificent tangled obscurity which fell all around, and Paphos was changed into Eden. A penitent feeling had refreshed this retreat, and the coquettish garden, once on a time so compromised, had returned to virginity and modesty. A president assisted by a gardener, a good fellow who believed himself the successor of Lamoignon, and another good fellow who fancied himself the successor of Lenôtre, had turned it about, clipped it, and prepared it for purposes of gallantry, but nature had seized it again, filled it with shadow, and prepared it for love. There was, too, in this solitude a heart which was quite ready, and love had only to show itself; for there were here a temple composed of verdure, grass, moss, the sighs of birds, gentle shadows, waving branches, and a soul formed of gentleness, faith, candor, hope, aspirations, and illusions.

Cosette left the convent while still almost a child. She was but little more than fourteen, and at the "unpromising age," as we have said. With the exception of her eyes, she seemed rather ugly than pretty; still she had no ungraceful feature, but she was awkward, thin, timid and bold at the same time, in short, a grown-up little girl. Her education was finished, that is to say, she had been taught religion, and more especially devotion, also "history," that is to say, the thing so called in a convent; geography, grammar, the participles, the kings of France, and a little music, drawing, etc.; but in other respects she was ignorant of everything, which is at once a charm and a peril. The mind of a young girl ought not to be left in darkness, for at a later date, mirages too sudden and vivid are produced in it as in a camera obscura. She should be gently and discreetly enlightened, rather by the reflection of realities than by their direct and harsh light; for this is a useful and gracefully obscure semi-light which dissipates childish fears and prevents falls. There is only the maternal instinct, – that admirable intuition into which the recollections of the virgin and the experience of the wife enter, – that knows how or of what this semi-light should be composed. Nothing can take the place of this instinct, and in forming a girl's mind, all the nuns in the world are not equal to one mother. Cosette had had no mother, she had only had a great many mothers: as for Jean Valjean, he had within him every possible tenderness and every possible anxiety; but he was only an old man who knew nothing at all. Now, in this work of education, in this serious matter of preparing a woman for life, what knowledge is needed to contend against the other great ignorance which is called innocence! Nothing prepares a girl for passions like the convent, for it directs her thoughts to the unknown. The heart is driven back on itself, and hence come visions, suppositions, conjectures, romances sketched, adventures longed for, fantastic constructions, and edifices built entirely on the inner darkness of the mind, – gloomy and secret dwellings in which the passions alone find a lodging so soon as passing through the convent gate allows it. The convent is a compression which must last the whole life, if it is to triumph over the human heart. On leaving the convent, Cosette could not have found anything sweeter or more dangerous than the house in the Rue Plumet. It was the commencement of solitude with the commencement of liberty, a closed garden, but a sharp, kind, rich, voluptuous, and odorous nature; there were the same dreams as in the convent, but glimpses could be caught of young men, – it was a grating, but it looked on the street. Still, we repeat, when Cosette first came here, she was but a child. Jean Valjean gave over to her this uncultivated garden, and said to her, "Do what you like with it." This amused Cosette, she moved all the tufts and all the stones in search of "beasts;" she played about while waiting till the time came to think, and she loved this garden for the sake of the insects which she found in the grass under her feet, while waiting till she should love it for the sake of the stars she could see through the branches above her head.

And then, too, she loved her father, that is to say, Jean Valjean, with all her soul, with a simple filial passion, which rendered the worthy man a desired and delightful companion to her. Our readers will remember that M. Madeleine was fond of reading, and Jean Valjean continued in the same track; he had learned to speak well, and he possessed the secret wealth and the eloquence of a humble, true, and self-cultivated intellect. He had retained just sufficient roughness to season his kindness, and he had a rough mind and a soft heart. During their *tête-à-têtes* in the Luxembourg garden he gave her long explanations about all sorts of things, deriving his information from what he had read, and also from what he had suffered. While Cosette was listening to him, her eyes vaguely wandered around. This simple man was sufficient for Cosette's, thoughts, in the same way as the wild garden was for her eyes. When she had chased the butterflies for a while she would run up to him panting, and say, "Oh! how tired I am!" and he would kiss her forehead. Cosette adored this good man, and she was ever at his heels, for wherever Jean Valjean was, happiness was. As he did not live either in the pavilion or the garden, she was more attached to the paved back-yard than to the flower-laden garden, and preferred the little outhouse with the straw chairs to the large drawing-room hung with tapestry, along which silk-covered chairs were arranged. Jean Valjean at times said to her with a smile of a man who is delighted to be annoyed: "Come, go to your own rooms! leave me at peace for a little while."

She scolded him in that charming tender way which is so graceful when addressed by a daughter to a parent.

"Father, I feel very cold in your room; why don't you have a carpet and a stove?"

"My dear child, there are so many persons more deserving than myself who have not even a roof to cover them."

"Then, why is there fire in my room and everything that I want?"

"Because you are a woman and a child."

"Nonsense! then men must be cold and hungry?"

"Some men."

"Very good! I'll come here so often that you will be obliged to have a fire."

Or else it was, —

"Father, why do you eat such wretched bread as that?"

"Because I do, my daughter."

"Well, if you eat it I shall eat it too."

And so to prevent Cosette from eating black bread Jean Valjean ate white. Cosette remembered her childhood but confusedly, and she prayed night and morning for the mother whom she had never known. The Thénardiers were like two hideous beings seen in a dream, and she merely remembered that she had gone "one day at night" to fetch water in a wood, – she thought that it was a long distance from Paris. It seemed to her as if she had commenced life in an abyss, and that Jean Valjean had drawn her out of it, and her childhood produced on her the effect of a time when she had had nought but centipedes, spiders, and snakes around her. When she thought at night before she fell asleep, as she had no very clear idea of being Jean Valjean's daughter, she imagined that her mother's soul had passed into this good man, and had come to dwell near her. When he was sitting down she rested her cheek on his white hair, and silently dropped a tear, while saying to herself, "Perhaps this man is my mother!" Cosette, strange though it is to say, in her profound ignorance as a girl educated in a convent, and as, too, maternity is absolutely unintelligible to virginity, eventually imagined that she had had as little of a mother as was possible. This mother's name she did not know, and whenever it happened that she spoke to Jean Valjean on the subject he held his tongue. If she repeated her question he answered by a smile, and once, when she pressed him, the smile terminated in a tear. This silence on his part cast a night over Fantine. Was it through prudence? Was it through respect? Or was it through a fear of intrusting this name to the chances of another memory besides his own?

So long as Cosette was young Jean Valjean readily talked to her about her mother; but when she grew up it was impossible for him to do so, – he felt as if he dared not do it. Was it on account

of Cosette or of Fantine? He felt a species of religious horror at making this shadow enter Cosette's thoughts, and rendering a dead woman a third person in their society. The more sacred this shade was to him, the more formidable was it. He thought of Fantine, and felt himself overwhelmed by the silence. He saw vaguely in the darkness something that resembled a finger laid on a lip. Had all the modesty which was in Fantine, and which during her life quitted her with violence, returned after her death, to watch indignantly over the dead woman's peace, and sternly guard her in the tomb? Was Jean Valjean himself unconsciously oppressed by it? We who believe in death are not prepared to reject this mysterious explanation, and hence arose the impossibility of pronouncing, even to Cosette, the name of Fantine. One day Cosette said to him, —

"Father, I saw my mother last night in a dream. She had two large wings, and in life she must have been a sainted woman."

"Through martyrdom," Jean Valjean replied. Altogether, though, he was happy; when Cosette went out with him she leaned on his arm, proudly and happily, in the fulness of her heart. Jean Valjean felt his thoughts melt into delight at all these marks of a tenderness so exclusive and so satisfied with himself alone. The poor wretch, inundated with an angelic joy, trembled; he assured himself with transport that this would last his whole life; he said to himself that he had not really suffered enough to deserve such radiant happiness, and he thanked God in the depths of his soul for having allowed him – the wretched – to be thus loved by this innocent being.

CHAPTER V
THE ROSE PERCEIVES THAT SHE IS AN IMPLEMENT OF WAR

One day Cosette happened to look at herself in the glass, and said, "Good gracious!" She fancied that she was almost pretty, and this threw her into a singular trouble. Up to this moment she had not thought of her face, and though she saw herself in the mirror she did not look at herself. And, then, she had often been told that she was ugly; Jean Valjean alone would say gently, "Oh, no, oh, no!" However this might be, Cosette had always believed herself ugly, and had grown up in this idea with the facile resignation of childhood. And now all at once her looking-glass said to her, as Jean Valjean had done, "Oh, no!" She did not sleep that night. "Suppose I were pretty," she thought, "how droll it would be if I were pretty!" and she remembered those of her companions whose beauty produced an effect in the convent, and said to herself, "What! I might be like Mademoiselle So-and-so!"

On the next day she looked at herself, but not accidentally, and doubted. "Where was my sense?" she said; "No, I am ugly." She had simply slept badly, her eyes were heavy and her cheeks pale. She had not felt very joyous on the previous day when she fancied herself pretty; but was sad at no longer believing it. She did not look at herself again, and for upwards of a fortnight tried to dress her hair with her back to the glass. In the evening, after dinner, she usually worked at her embroidery in the drawing-room, while Jean Valjean read by her side. Once she raised her eyes from her work, and was greatly surprised by the anxious way in which her father was gazing at her. Another time she was walking along the street, and fancied she heard some one behind her, whom she did not see, say, "A pretty woman, but badly dressed." "Nonsense," she thought, "it is not I, for I am well-dressed and ugly." At that time she wore her plush bonnet and merino dress. One day, at last, she was in the garden, and heard poor old Toussaint saying, "Master, do you notice how pretty our young lady is growing?" Cosette did not hear her father's answer, for Toussaint's words produced a sort of commotion in her. She ran out of the garden up to her room, looked in the glass, which she had not done for three months, and uttered a cry, – she dazzled herself.

She was beautiful and pretty, and could not refrain from being of the same opinion as Toussaint and her glass. Her figure was formed, her skin had grown white, her hair was glossy, and an unknown splendor was kindled in her blue eyes. The consciousness of her beauty came to her fully in a minute, like the sudden dawn of day; others, besides, noticed her, Toussaint said so; it was evidently to her that the passer-by alluded, and doubt was no longer possible. She returned to the garden, believing herself a queen, hearing the birds sing, though it was winter, seeing the golden sky, the sun amid the trees, flowers on the shrubs; she was wild, distraught, and in a state of ineffable ravishment. On his side, Jean Valjean experienced a profound and inexplicable contraction of the heart; for some time past, in truth, he had contemplated with terror the beauty which daily appeared more radiant in Cosette's sweet face. It was a laughing dawn for all, but most mournful for him.

Cosette had been for a long time beautiful ere she perceived the fact, but, from the first day, this unexpected light which slowly rose and gradually enveloped the girl's entire person hurt Jean Valjean's sombre eyes. He felt that it was a change in a happy life, so happy that he did not dare stir in it, for fear of deranging it somewhere. This man, who had passed through every possible distress, who was still bleeding from the wounds dealt him by his destiny, who had been almost wicked, and had become almost a saint, who, after dragging the galley chain, was now dragging the invisible but weighty chain of indefinite infamy; this man whom the law had not liberated, and who might at any moment be recaptured and taken from the obscurity of virtue to the broad daylight of further opprobrium, – this man accepted everything, excused everything, pardoned everything, blessed everything, wished everything well, and only asked one thing of Providence, of men, of the laws, of society, of nature, of

the world, – that Cosette should love him, that Cosette might continue to love him; that God would not prevent the heart of this child turning to him and remaining with him! Loved by Cosette he felt cured, at rest, appeased, overwhelmed, rewarded, and crowned. With Cosette's love all was well, and he asked no more. Had any one said to him, "Would you like to be better off?" he would have answered, "No." Had God said to him, "Do you wish for heaven?" he would have answered, "I should lose by it." All that could affect this situation, even on the surface, appeared to him the beginning of something else. He had never known thoroughly what a woman's beauty was, but he understood instinctively that it was terrible. This beauty, which continually expanded more triumphantly and superbly by his side upon the ingenuous and formidable brow of the child, from the depths of his ugliness, old age, misery, reprobation, and despondency, terrified him, and he said to himself, "How beautiful she is! what will become of me?" Here lay the difference between his tenderness and that of a mother, – what he saw with agony a mother would have seen with joy.

The first symptoms speedily manifested themselves. From the day when Cosette said to herself, "I am decidedly good-looking," she paid attention to her toilet. She remembered the remark of the passer-by, – pretty, but badly dressed, – a blast of the oracle which passed by her and died out, after depositing in her heart one of those two germs which are destined at a later period to occupy a woman's entire life, – coquettishness. The other is love. With faith in her beauty, all her feminine soul was expanded within her; she had a horror of merinos, and felt ashamed of plush. Her father never refused her anything, and she knew at once the whole science of the hat, the dress, the mantle, the slipper, and the sleeve, of the fabric that suits, and the color that is becoming, – the science which makes the Parisian woman something so charming, profound, and dangerous. The expression "femme capiteuse" was invented for the Parisian. In less than a month little Cosette was in this Thebaïs of the Rue de Babylone, not only one of the prettiest women, which is something, but one of the best dressed in Paris, which is a great deal more. She would have liked to meet her "passer-by," to see what he would say, and teach him a lesson. The fact is, that she was in every respect ravishing, and could admirably distinguish a bonnet of Gerard's from one of Herbaut's. Jean Valjean regarded these ravages with anxiety, and while feeling that he could never do more than crawl or walk at the most, he could see Cosette's wings growing. However, by the simple inspection of Cosette's toilet, a woman would have seen that she had no mother. Certain small proprieties and social conventionalisms were not observed by Cosette; a mother, for instance, would have told her that an unmarried girl does not wear brocade.

The first day that Cosette went out in her dress and cloak of black brocade, and her white crape bonnet, she took Jean Valjean's arm, gay, radiant, blushing, proud, and striking. "Father," she said, "how do you think I look?" Jean Valjean replied, in a voice which resembled the bitter voice of an envious person, "Charming." During the walk he was as usual, but when he returned home he asked Cosette, —

"Will you not put on that dress and bonnet, you know which, again?"

This took place in Cosette's room; she returned to the wardrobe in which her boarding-school dress was hanging.

"That disguise?" she said, "how can you expect it, father? Oh, no, indeed, I shall never put on those horrors again; with that thing on my head I look like a regular dowdy."

Jean Valjean heaved a deep sigh.

From that moment he noticed that Cosette, who hitherto had wished to stay at home, saying, "Father, I amuse myself much better here with you," now constantly asked to go out. In truth, what good is it for a girl to have a pretty face and a delicious toilet if she does not show them? He also noticed that Cosette no longer had the same liking for the back-yard, and at present preferred remaining in the garden, where she walked, without displeasure, near the railings. Jean Valjean never set foot in the garden, but remained in the back-yard, like the dog. Cosette, knowing herself to be beautiful, lost the grace of being ignorant of the fact, an exquisite grace, for beauty heightened by

simplicity is ineffable, and nothing is so adorable as a beauteous innocent maiden who walks along unconsciously, holding in her hand the key of a Paradise. Rut what she lost in ingenuous grace she regained in a pensive and serious charm. Her whole person, impregnated with the joys of youth, innocence, and beauty, exhaled a splendid melancholy. It was at this period that Marius saw her again at the Luxembourg, after an interval of six months.

CHAPTER VI
THE BATTLE BEGINS

Cosette was in her shadow, as Marius was in his, all ready to be kindled. Destiny, with its mysterious and fatal patience, brought slowly together these two beings, all charged with, and pining in, the stormy electricity of passion, – these two souls which bore love as the clouds bore thunder, and were destined to come together and be blended in a glance like the clouds in a storm. The power of a glance has been so abused in love-romances that it has been discredited in the end, and a writer dares hardly assert nowadays that two beings fell in love because they looked at each other. And yet, that is the way, and the sole way, in which people fall in love; the rest is merely the rest, and comes afterwards. Nothing is more real than the mighty shocks which two souls give each other by exchanging this spark. At the hour when Cosette unconsciously gave that glance which troubled Marius, Marius did not suspect that he too gave a glance which troubled Cosette. For a long time she had seen and examined him in the way girls see and examine, while looking elsewhere. Marius was still thinking Cosette ugly, when Cosette had already considered Marius handsome, but as the young man paid no attention to her he was an object of indifference. Still she could not refrain from saying to herself that he had silky hair, fine eyes, regular teeth, an agreeable voice, when she heard him talking with his companions; that he perhaps walked badly, but with a grace of his own, that he did not appear at all silly, that his whole person was noble, gentle, simple, and proud; and, lastly, that though he seemed poor, he had the bearing of a gentleman.

On the day when their eyes met, and at length suddenly said to each other the first obscure and ineffable things which the eye stammers, Cosette did not understand it at first. She returned pensively to the house in the Rue de l'Ouest, where Jean Valjean was spending six weeks, according to his wont. When she awoke the next morning she thought of the young stranger, so long indifferent and cold, who now seemed to pay attention to her, and this attention did not appear at all agreeable to her; on the contrary, she felt a little angry with the handsome disdainful man. A warlike feeling was aroused, and she felt a very childish joy at the thought that she was at length about to be avenged; knowing herself to be lovely, she felt, though in an indistinct way, that she had a weapon. Women play with their beauty as lads do with their knife, and cut themselves with it. Our readers will remember Marius's hesitations, palpitations, and terrors; he remained on his bench, and did not approach, and this vexed Cosette. One day she said to Jean Valjean, "Father, suppose we take a walk in that direction?" Seeing that Marius did not come to her, she went to him, for in such cases, every woman resembles Mahomet. And then, strange it is, the first symptom of true love in a young man is timidity; in a girl it is boldness. This will surprise, and yet nothing is more simple; the two sexes have a tendency to approach, and each assumes the qualities of the other. On this day Cosette's glance drove Marius mad, while his glance made Cosette tremble. Marius went away confiding, and Cosette restless. Now they adored each other. The first thing that Cosette experienced was a confused and deep sorrow; it seemed to her that her soul had become black in one day, and she no longer recognized herself. The whiteness of the soul of maidens, which is composed of coldness and gayety, resembles snow; it melts before love, which is its sun.

Cosette knew not what love was, and she had never heard the word uttered in its earthly sense. In the books of profane music which entered the convent, *tambour* or *pandour* was substituted for *amour*. This produced enigmas, which exercised the imagination of the big girls, such as: "Ah! how agreeable the drummer is!" or, "Pity is not a pandour!" But Cosette left the convent at too early an age to trouble herself much about the "drummer," and hence did not know what name to give to that which now troubled her. But are we the less ill through being ignorant of the name of our disease? She loved with the more passion, because she loved in ignorance; she did not know whether it was good or bad, useful or dangerous, necessary or mortal, eternal or transient, permitted or prohibited, –

she loved. She would have been greatly surprised had any one said to her, "You do not sleep? that is forbidden. You do not eat? that is very wrong. You have an oppression and beating of the heart? that cannot be tolerated. You blush and turn pale when a certain person dressed in black appears at the end of a certain green walk? why, that is abominable!" She would not have understood, and would have replied, "How can I be to blame in a matter in which I can do nothing, and of which I know nothing?"

It happened that the love which presented itself was the one most in harmony with the state of her soul; it was a sort of distant adoration, a dumb contemplation, the deification of an unknown man. It was the apparition of youth to youth, the dream of nights become a romance and remaining a dream, the wished-for phantom at length realized and incarnated, but as yet having no name, or wrong, or flaw, or claim, or defect; in a word, the distant lover who remained idealized, a chimera which assumed a shape. Any more palpable and nearer meeting would at this first stage have startled Cosette, who was still half plunged in the magnifying fog of the cloister. She had all the fears of children and all the fears of nuns blended together, and the essence of the convent, with which she had been impregnated for five years, was still slowly evaporating from her whole person, and making everything tremble around her. In this situation, it was not a lover she wanted, not even an admirer, but a vision, and she began adoring Marius as something charming, luminous, and impossible.

As extreme simplicity trenches on extreme coquetry, she smiled upon him most frankly. She daily awaited impatiently the hour for the walk; she saw Marius, she felt indescribably happy, and sincerely believed that she was expressing her entire thoughts when she said to Jean Valjean, "What a delicious garden the Luxembourg is!" Marius and Cosette existed for one another in the night: they did not speak, they did not bow, they did not know each other, but they met; and like the stars in the heavens, which are millions of leagues separate, they lived by looking at each other. It is thus that Cosette gradually became a woman, and was developed into a beautiful and loving woman, conscious of her beauty and ignorant of her love. She was a coquette into the bargain, through her innocence.

CHAPTER VII
JEAN VALJEAN IS VERY SAD

All situations have their instincts, and old and eternal mother Nature warned Jean Valjean darkly of the presence of Marius. Jean Valjean trembled in the depth of his mind; he saw nothing, knew nothing, and yet regarded with obstinate attention the darkness in which he was, as if he felt on one side something being built up, on the other something crumbling away. Marius, who was also warned by the same mother Nature, did all in his power to conceal himself from the father, but for all that, Jean Valjean sometimes perceived him. Marius's manner was no longer wise; he displayed clumsy prudence and awkward temerity. He no longer came quite close to them, as he had formerly done, he sat down at a distance, and remained in an ecstasy: he had a book, and pretended to read it; why did he pretend? Formerly he came in an old coat, and now he came every day in his new one. Jean Valjean was not quite sure whether he did not have his hair dressed; he had a strange way of rolling his eyes, and wore gloves, – in short, Jean Valjean cordially detested the young man. Cosette did not allow anything to be guessed. Without knowing exactly what was the matter with her, she had a feeling that it was something which must be hidden. There was a parallelism which annoyed Jean Valjean between the taste for dress which had come to Cosette, and the habit of wearing new clothes displayed by this stranger. It was an accident, perhaps, – of course it was, – but a menacing accident.

He never opened his mouth to Cosette about this stranger. One day, however, he could not refrain, and said, with that vague despair which suddenly thrusts the probe into its own misfortune, "That young man looks like a pedant." Cosette, a year previously, when still a careless little girl, would have answered, "Oh, no, he is very good-looking." Ten years later, with the love of Marius in her heart, she would have replied, "An insufferable pedant, you are quite right." At the present moment of her life and heart, she restricted herself to saying, with supreme calmness, "That young man!" as if she looked at him for the first time in her life. "How stupid I am," Jean Valjean thought, "she had not even noticed him, and now I have pointed him out to her." Oh, simplicity of old people! oh, depth of children! It is another law of these first years of suffering and care, of these sharp struggles of first love with first obstacles, that the maiden cannot be caught in any snare, while the young man falls into all. Jean Valjean had begun a secret war against Marius, which Marius, in the sublime stupidity of his passion and his age, did not guess. Jean Valjean laid all sorts of snares for him. He changed his hours, he changed his bench, he left his handkerchief, he went alone to the Luxembourg: and Marius went headlong into the trap, and to all these notes of interrogation which Jean Valjean planted in the road, ingenuously answered, "Yes." Cosette, however, remained immured in her apparent carelessness and imperturbable tranquillity, so that Jean Valjean arrived at this conclusion: "That humbug is madly in love with Cosette, but Cosette does not even know that he exists."

For all that, though, he had a painful tremor in his heart, for the minute when Cosette would love might arrive at any instant. Does not all this commence with indifference? Only once did Cosette commit an error and startle him; he arose from his bench to go home after three hours' sitting, and she said, "What, already?" Jean Valjean did not give up his walks at the Luxembourg, as he did not wish to do anything singular, or arouse Cosette's attention; but during the hours so sweet for the two lovers, while Cosette was sending her smile to the intoxicated Marius, who only perceived this, and now saw nothing more in the world than a radiant adored face, Jean Valjean fixed on Marius flashing and terrible eyes. He who had ended by no longer believing himself capable of a malevolent feeling, had moments when he felt, if Marius were present, as if he were growing savage and ferocious; and those old depths of his soul which had formerly contained so much anger opened again against this young man. It seemed to him as if unknown craters were again being formed within him. What! the fellow was there! What did he come to do? he came to sniff, examine, and attempt; he came to say, Well, why not? he came to prowl round his, Jean Valjean's, life, to prowl round his happiness, and carry

it away from him. Jean Valjean added, "Yes, that is it! What does he come to seek? An adventure. What does he want? A love-affair. A love-affair? and I! What? I was first the most wretched of men, and then the most unhappy. I have spent sixty years on my knees, I have suffered all that a man can suffer, I have grown old without ever having been young. I have lived without family, parents, friends, children, or wife. I have left some of my blood on every stone, on every bramble, on every wall. I have been gentle, though men were harsh to me, and good though they were wicked. I have become an honest man again, in spite of everything; I have repented of the evil I did, and pardoned the evil done to me, and at the moment when I am rewarded, when all is finished, when I touched my object, when I have what I wish, – and it is but fair as I have paid for it and earned it, – all this is to fade away, and I am to lose Cosette, my love, my joy, my soul, because it has pleased a long-legged ass to saunter about the Luxembourg garden!"

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.