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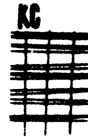

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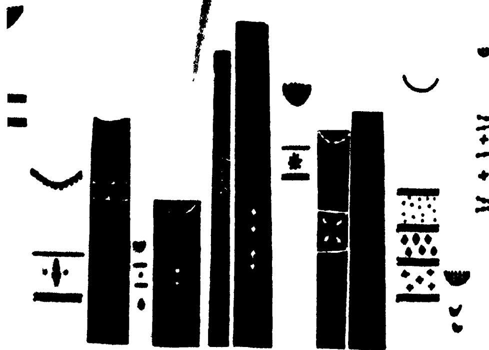

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[*NOTE.*]

THE readers of Les Misérables will be astonished to find what a flood of light is thrown upon that masterwork by this charming life-history of its great author. Its wonderful descriptions cease to be fictions and become actual life. Marius is but a free variation of Victor Hugo himself. Circumstances are considerably changed, yet the man and his formation are substantially the same. The fairy spot which saw the loves of Cosette and Marius, is the actual scene of the child courtship between the subject and the author of this biography. As the garden of Marius and Cosette was the hiding-place of Jean Valjean, so the garden of Victor and Adèle concealed General Lahorie. In Joly, the old schoolmate of the Pension Cordier, the author of Jean Valjean becomes closely acquainted with a real galley-slave. Familiar names and things perpetually recur: Chateaubriand, Lamennais, François de Neufchateau, Édon, Lafitte, Loyson, Talma, Louis Philippe, John Brown, the Thieves' Court, the Republican tribes and their leaders, the Academy, the Rue Plumet, émeutes, Saint Merry; a boy even is seen bound to a tree by soldiers to be shot, as Javert was in the barricade of Corinthe; a vivandiere suffers in a quicksand the terrible fate of enlizement which Jean Valjean so narrowly escaped in the sewer. In short, the Great Romance is a part of the life of Victor Hugo, and cannot be fully understood without this—its completion.

VICTOR HUGO

BY A

WITNESS OF HIS LIFE:

[MADAME HUGO.]

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL FRENCH, BY
CHARLES EDWIN WILBOUR,
TRANSLATOR OF LES MISERABLES.

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The translator has omitted some portions of the original, which are dependent for their interest upon an intimate acquaintance with the author's poems and plays, as well as a few speeches and letters which are inserted in the original, because they had not been given in the Complete Edition of his works.

VICTOR HUGO.

BY A WITNESS OF HIS LIFE.

I.

LA VENDÉE.

THE first Hugo of whom there is any trace, the earlier archives having been lost in the sack of Nancy by the troops of Marshal De Créqui in 1670, is one Pierre Antoine Hugo, who was born in 1532, was a privy councillor of the Grand Duke of Lorraine, and married the daughter of the Seigneur de Bioncourt. Among the descendants of Pierre Antoine, I notice, in the sixteenth century, Anne Marie, canoness of Remiremont; in the seventeenth, Charles Louis, abbé of Étival, bishop of Ptolémaïde, author of a valued collection, *Sacræ antiquitatis monumenta;* in the eighteenth, Joseph Antoine, an officer under Marshal De Montesquiou, killed at the battle of Denain; Michel Pierre, lieutenant-colonel in the Tuscan service; and Louis Antoine, whom M. Abel Hugo used to call the Conventionist Hugo, executed for Moderatism.

The father of M. Victor Hugo, Joseph Léopold Sigisbert, enlisted as a volunteer in 1788, at the age of fourteen. His seven brothers entered the service at about the same time. Five were killed in the very beginning of the war, at the lines of Weissembourg. Two survived, Francis Juste, who became major of infantry, and Louis Joseph, who died ten years ago, a brigadier-general.

The Revolution came, and promotion was rapid; at first on account of the Emigration of the officers, a great number of whom made haste to escape the hatred of the soldiers. Children who had earned their rank by dancing the minuet, commanded old soldiers who had been tried with balls, and governed them with the impertinence of a caste which considered itself superior. Under their spurred boot the red heel could be felt. For slight faults, upon the faith of a report often imperfect, they lavished the odious and humiliating punishment of the time, blows with the flat of the sword. The Revolution found the regiments in a state of effervescence, which contributed not a little to the Emigration.

Within three years of entering the service, Léopold Hugo had become quartermaster, and was attached to the general staff. There he made the acquaintance of Kléber and Desaix, who continued his friends until their death. The chief of the general staff, Gen. Alexandre Beauharnais, conceived a friendship for him and made him his secretary. One evening, after he had directed him to draw up, from his notes, a memorial to the government proposing to sell the holy vase of Rheims to the Empress of Russia, who would give two millions for it, instead of breaking it, the general returned about midnight very much absorbed, and finding his secretary still at work: "Hugo,"

said he, "I am offered the Ministry of War, shall I accept?" Many would have seen in this their own interest, and the advantage of being the secretary of a minister; the young soldier saw only the interest of his general; this was in '92, close upon '93; these lofty positions were most exposed to the thunderbolt; he advised a refusal. On the morrow, Alexandre Beauharnais breakfasted with the general-in-chief, the Duke de Biron; the Duke complimented the Minister: "Minister!" said Beauharnais, "I am so no longer." And, when Biron expressed his astonishment, he pointed to his secretary, and said: "It was Hugo who declined it."

Alexandre Beauharnais had such confidence in Hugo, that he entrusted him with writing for him to Pétion to ask if, in the stormy condition of Paris, he would not do well to send Eugène to England to pursue his studies. Shortly afterwards he received the command in chief of the army of the Rhine, and appointed Hugo his aide-de-camp. But the latter had an intimate friend whom he was unwilling to leave; he thanked the general, and went to La Vendée with his friend Muscar, in the capacity of adjutant with the rank of captain.

His battalion quickly crossed France, passed the Loire at Pont de Cé, and took part in the battle of Martigné Briant and the two fights at Vihiers. At the second, Hugo received an order to cover a movement of his brigade with a detachment; this detachment, exposed to a terrible fire, did not give way, but sacrificed itself at its post; all perished with the exception of a few of the wounded who could not be brought away, among whom was the adjutant, who came off with seventeen grapeshot and a ball which had shattered his foot.

He did not wait till he could walk before rejoining his battalion; he had no need of legs, as he had those of his horse. But at the rout at Montaigu he had two horses killed under him; and, incapable of walking a step, would have been killed, had it not been for an officer of the Black Hussars, who, at the risk of his life, saved him, by hoisting him upon one of his horses.

Such devotion he easily inspired, being himself devotion and goodness. To know him, was to be attached to him. He was humane even to tenderness. In that implacable war in which no prisoners were taken, and in which one must kill in order not to die, he had the good fortune several times to save lives. At the attack upon Chevrolière, Muscar, who commanded the expedition, having been disabled by seven musket wounds, gave him the command. The Chouans, briskly attacked, took flight across the heath, leaving to the enemy their old men, their wives, and their children. Hugo took them, knowing that they would be in greater safety with himself than elsewhere; seeing a five months' babe whom a nurse, for she could not have been its mother, had thrown down in her flight, he picked it up, and straightway found a nurse for it among the prisoners. The expedition over, he set this grateful population at liberty, and gave them provisions for several days.

Two Vendéens, an uncle and a nephew, taken with arms in their hands, were sentenced to be shot; the uncle had already been shot, and the nephew, a child of nine or ten, was about to be. Hugo threw himself before the muskets, saved the child, whose name was Jean Prin, took care of him, and kept him with him for seven years, until he found a good place for him.

His goodness was contagious. A little girl, two years old, abandoned at Pont Saint Martin, was picked up by his adjutant, Vogt, who afterwards, having become a captain, adopted her.

Every detachment which went from the Chateau d'O to Nantes was attacked on its passage through the village of Bonquenay. A squadron, provoked by a discharge of musketry,

rushed upon the village, and returned with two hundred and ninety-two prisoners, twenty-two of whom were women. Taken prisoner then meant dead. Muscar, however, dismayed by their numbers, asked for instructions from Nantes. The answer was a special commission, who came to try, or rather to sentence them. They began with the men. Hugo ventured to present himself before the tribunal to ask, not their pardon, but that they should be sent to work in the mines in the interior of France until the return of peace. The judges would not be moved, and the two hundred and seventy men were sentenced and executed. The women were about to be, when the tribunal was called back to Nantes, and returned precipitately, ordering Muscar to turn them over to a military commission. Hugo obtained the presidency of this commission; he feared an old sous-lieutenant, named Fleury, a silent, gloomy man, who, on account of his age, would give his opinion first; before questioning him, he said to the commission that they were not to follow anybody's lead, but that they ought, by their own consciences alone, to pass upon these unfortunate women who had taken no part in the hostilities, and who had already been severely punished by the execution of their fathers, brothers, husbands, and sons, whom they had heard shot. Then he called upon the old sous-lieutenant, who with his blunt look and his harsh voice, said: "I became a soldier to fight men, and not to assassinate women. I vote for setting the twenty-two women at liberty, and returning them immediately to their homes." He having commenced, all followed. The vote was unanimous.

In thirty years of service, he was punished but once. The occasion was this: Muscar, recovered from his seven gunshot wounds, was ordered to take position at Vue; he committed the task to Captain Mercadier, who, received by a force tenfold his own, fell back. Muscar had precise instructions, he blamed Mercadier and directed him to return immediately. The captain, very brave, but certain of failure, asked for reinforcements, which were refused him. He set out at daybreak; at eleven o'clock, a peasant of Saint Jean de Boizeau ran in, saying that the detachment was being overwhelmed. Muscar and the other superior officers were not there at the moment; Hugo took it upon himself to go to the relief of his comrades. When he arrived, Mercadier, all his officers, and a hundred and twenty-three soldiers out of two hundred had been killed or captured; seventy men remained, whom he rescued and brought back to camp. Muscar, who had refused reinforcements, reprimanded Hugo; the seventy rescued men murmured, and their murmurs resulted in sending Hugo to prison. Thereupon they immediately rose, and with drums beating marched to force the prison. Muscar came in haste, and found Hugo haranguing them and energetically enjoining upon them submission to discipline. Muscar opened the prison, gave his hand to his prisoner, and threw himself into his arms, with tears in his eyes.

Hugo was then chief of staff. He took part in the Quiberon expedition. He came to Chateaubriant, where Muscar was in command. There he was almost a witness of a horrible scene. A soldier, convalescent from a wound received in the Army of the Rhine, was going to his father's house to recover; he had been advised not to go in advance of the escort of the diligence; but, at the sight of his native village, he could not wait, and ventured on alone; a peasant who was tilling the ground, seeing him coming, took a musket hidden in a hedge, aimed it, hit him full in the face, then went to despoil the dead. The explosion was heard, the escort of the diligence hurried forward, the peasant fled with the haversack and a pocket-book, in which there was a passport; as neither he nor his wife knew how to read, they

begged a neighbor to tell them what was in the paper, and they learned that the dead man was their son. The mother killed herself with a knife, and the father gave himself up to justice.

General Hoche put an end to all these atrocities. He was so well satisfied with Muscar and his chief of staff, that he appointed Muscar general and Hugo adjutant-general of a brigade which he was getting ready for Ireland. But Muscar, learning that the expedition would be commanded by General Humbert, with whom he had had a very sharp altercation, thanked Hoche and returned him his appointment; Hugo did the same, in order not to be separated from his friend.

But they were very soon separated in spite of themselves. Their corps, reduced by the losses of war, and by detachments to Ireland and elsewhere, was ordered to Paris and amalgamated with the remnants of seventeen other corps. The whole formed a regiment, of which Muscar was not old enough to be a major, he who had refused to be a general. It was only through special favor that he was sent to Ostend with a rank which no longer gave him a staff to appoint, and he could not take Hugo, who remained at Paris as adjutant of the second battalion.

II.

MARRIAGE.

During that war in La Vendée, Captain Hugo had had occasion to go to Nantes frequently, and he had established relations there, principally with a shipper, called Trébuchet.

This Trébuchet was one of those honest bourgeois who never depart from their town nor their opinion. He had continued a royalist and a catholic, and in his religion confounded God with the King. How had the soldier of the Convention obtained entrance to the house of the faithful subject of Louis XVI.? And what brought him there? I do not know; but I know very well what led to his return, and what led to his recall.

The shipper, a widower, had three daughters, one of whom, Sophie, but half accepted the ideas of her father. She had that independence of mind, and that decided personality peculiar to motherless girls, who are obliged to be women earlier than others. She had her father's zeal only in politics, and she was a devotee only to the throne. This would still have been too much for the captain; but he had been humane in the war, he had had pity upon women and children. And then, he was a tall and spirited fellow, well formed and full of life, and had in the expression of his countenance that superior beauty, goodness. This is what led to the captain's recall. Sophie, on her part, was small, delicate, with the hands and feet of a child; she had some traces of the small-pox, but these were lost in the extreme fineness of her physiognomy and in the intelligence of her expression. This is what led to the captain's return.

Intelligence and goodness are made to understand each other. They had understood each other so well that there was a promise of marriage. Hoche prevented the performance of the promise by ending the war too soon; the captain had to go to Paris, but he did not go without leaving and taking with him an oath to do everything possible to hasten the desired union.

Paris did not make him forget Nantes. After the formation and institution of the regiment, he was appointed reporter of the first court-martial, the clerk of which was of the same age as himself. Both young, both living under the same roof (the court-martial was then in the Hotel de Ville), Léopold Hugo and Pierre Foucher, the one the reporter, and the other the clerk, were very soon friends, and intimate friends when Hugo knew that Foucher was from Nantes, and that he knew the Tré-

buchet family. Another bond of fellowship was that Foucher also was in love, and on the eve of marriage.

One thing alone divided the two friends, politics. The reporter was a republican, and the clerk a royalist. Fatherless and motherless from infancy, Foucher had been brought up by an uncle, a canon, at Mans, who had put him to school with the Oratoriens of Nantes. All these priests had not inspired him with any great enthusiasm for the Revolution. He had seen the murder of a friend of his uncle, an Abbé Briant, a man of two passions, the composition of sermons, and fishing with a hook and line. Having nobody to whom to preach all the sermons that he wrote, they used to joke him by saying that he preached to the fishes, and that he fished for hearers. The war had been a godsend to him; he had abandoned perch for peasants; he mounted upon the trees to be heard the further, and preached to whomsoever would hear. He was heard too far; a republican detachment surprised him, and brought him down with a musket-shot.

"I was there," said the clerk to the reporter in relating to him this shot against the republic.

"And I was there also," answered the other, "for I commanded the detachment."

It was not he, however, it was the lieutenant of his vanguard who had given the order to fire, and he had blamed him for it, thinking that they might have surrounded the assembly without killing anybody. He had even rescued the preacher's body from some National Guards who were insulting it, and had had it buried.

For the rest, the clerk's royalism was in no wise impassioned, and had not even hindered him from joining in the capture of the Chateau of Nantes, out of a student's idleness, and an antiquarian curiosity. One night, in July, 1789, hearing the tocsin sounded from all the bells of the city, he had dressed himself hurriedly, and gone into the street. He heard a noble haranguing the multitude against the nobles, and saying that they must get possession of the Chateau. The multitude rushed forward, and he followed the multitude. The Chateau was guarded by a single company and a few invalides who offered no resistance. The expected combat ended in a breakfast; men went for bread, ham, and casks of wine, and sat down at table joyously. But the student of the Oratoriens had soon risen from the table to satisfy his archæological hunger and thirst by roaming through the former residence of the Dukes of Brittany.

When, on the completion of his studies, he came to Paris to seek his fortune, he had seen Louis XVI., and the royal family. This was in '92; the king was at that time no longer at home in the Tuileries, and the palace belonged to the people; one had only to go to the Pavillon de l'Horloge at noon on Sunday, and he would see the royal family pass by on their way to mass. It was thus that he had seen them, and he was but slightly dazzled, as is attested by these lines, which I find in some papers left by him:

"I was very much astonished at seeing the King, and could not get over his rocking gait, his fat face colored with a swarthy red, his wretched coat of grey camlet, and his white silk stockings drawn up over his breeches with red woollen garters above his knees. The Queen, who, however, was not yet forty, had her hair fast turning grey. The smiles that she bestowed upon her guards showed her teeth, which were in very bad condition; she wore a silk dress striped red and white, and her sister-in-law, Madame Elizabeth, with her great chubby cheeks, wore one of the same stuff, white and blue."

Léopold Hugo was reporter two years. He had to do with the band of Chauffeurs, whom the civil judges dared not pursue, and whom the

military judges annihilated. To make amends, he established the innocence of prisoners accused on insufficient grounds, some even already condemned, among others an old captain, named Fontaine, sentenced to the chains several years before. He established the justice, since lost out of sight, of making the penalty date from the day of arrest, and not from the day of sentence. He said justly that the preliminary imprisonment was an imprisonment, and that in not counting it the judge was more severe than the legislator.

While he was reporting the suits of others at Paris, his own suit was being tried at Nantes. The shipper hesitated greatly at giving his daughter to a soldier, obliged to travel about the world and to leave his wife alone, or to drag her with him over every road. He objected, also, to the opinions of the captain, which would be an incongruity in the family, and which might become a source of trouble in the househould. But there is no better advocate than love, and Sophie pleaded so well that judgment was given in favor of the marriage.

The bridegroom could not go to Nantes, the bride came to Paris with her father and brother, but without her sisters, who, out of much devotion, had become Ursulines.

The two young people were married with civil rites in the Hotel de Ville itself. There was no religious marriage. The churches were closed at the time, the priests fled or concealed, the young folks did not take the trouble to find one. The wife cared but little for the blessing of the curé, the husband not at all.

The clerk was not slow to follow the example of the captain, and the Hotel de Ville sheltered two young households. The clerk, having no family, begged the captain to be his witness. At dinner, the captain, who had naturally a full flow of spirits, added to it the gaiety and exhilaration of a newly-married man. He filled a glass, and, extending it to his friend, he said:

"Have a girl, I will have a boy, and we will marry them. I drink to the health of their family."

The singularity of this wish is, tha it was realized.

III.

CAMPAIGN OF THE RHINE.

Children did not keep them waiting. Less than a year afterwards, Madame Hugo held in her arms a fine boy who did not yet answer to the name of Abel, and who was soon to have a brother, when the young father met Lahorie. He had known Lahorie as a simple private in 1793, being himself adjutant with rank of captain at that time; and he had been able to render him some service. Lahorie, who had become adjutant-general, and was surprised to find him still at the same point, desired to pay the debt, and advised him to join him at Basle, whither he was going, as chief of Moreau's staff.

The captain asked consent of his adjutant-general, who gave it with regret; of his young wife, who said yes through tears; and of his babe, who did not say no, and set out. When he arrived at Basle, Lahorie was going the round; knowing none but him of all the staff, he walked up and down in front of the quarters of the commanding general, while waiting for him; a man with an overcoat on and a pipe in his mouth, asked him if he had not heard a shot.

"No, Monsieur."

At this word "monsieur," the man looked at him. His captain's coat led him to ask where he had served. They entered into conversation. Hugo spoke of the campaigns against the Vendéens and the Chouans in a manner which seemed to strike his questioner. Then the man with the pipe left him and went into the house.

A moment afterwards, an orderly came to say to the listener that the general-in-chief was about to sit down

to dinner, and was waiting for him. He answered that there must be some mistake, as he had not the honor of the general's acquaintance.

"What? He does not know you? You have been talking with him nearly an hour, and he is delighted with you."

The man with the pipe was Moreau.

Lahorie found no difficulty in placing his friend on the staff, and Moreau attached him specially to his person. In this capacity he took part in the passage of the Rhine, and the battles of Engen, Moeskirch, Biberach, Memmingen, etc. I have the letters which he wrote to his wife at night after the engagements, in which he gives in detail the movements of troops, the gains and the losses; he forgets nothing but himself. He was so truly modest that at Moeskirch, Moreau desiring to give him a battalion, he begged him to wait till he should better deserve it. But at the passage of the Danube, his conduct was such, and a timber having been thrown across a broken arch he so bravely set the example of passing it regardless of the grape, that the general-in-chief did not consult him again, but appointed him major upon the field of battle.

He talked with La Tour d'Auvergne two hours before his death. Moreau had given him the order at Neubourg for the support of Montrichard's division by that of General Leclerc. The 46th of the line, in which La Tour d'Auvergne served, was in one of the corps which Leclerc detached. Hugo saw him advancing at a gallop. La Tour d'Auvergne, who knew him and who thought him a Breton, turned his little black horse towards him:

"Well, neighbor," said he to him, "how goes the battle?"

"Pretty well," answered Hugo; "one more lift, and it will be over."

La Tour d'Auvergne went to give the lift. The next day Hugo saw him again, on a bier covered with boughs, borne by grenadiers, preceded by drums and music. They were going to bury him.

The Danube passed, Moreau established his head-quarters at Munich, whither the Austrians sent to ask a suspension of hostilities. There were conferences at the hamlet of Parsdorf, between Lahorie, on the part of France, and Count Dietrichstein, on the part of Austria; Colonel Count Colloredo accompanied Dietrichstein, and Hugo accompanied Lahorie. France obtained all that she desired, hostilities ceased, and arrangements were made for the Congress of Luneville. Hugo had the command of the place under Generals Clarke and Bellavesne. The plenipotentiaries arrived, and the young commander made the acquaintance of Joseph Bonaparte. The procrastinations of Austrian diplomacy wearied the First Consul, and the war re-commenced. Moreau, who had been to Paris, and passed through Luneville on his return to his head-quarters, wished to take Hugo with him; but Joseph Bonaparte begged him to leave him with him, saying that he would charge himself with his future. Moreau consented from affection for his major, and, although separated, they remained such friends that Moreau wrote to him whatever he did of importance, and Hugo knew of the victory of Hohenlinden twelve hours earlier than Joseph Bonaparte.

The battle of Hohenlinden convinced Austria that she gained nothing by chicanery, and she yielded everything. The treaty was signed, and the Army of the Rhine returned to France. Joseph Bonaparte kept his promise to Moreau, and asked that the major should be made chief of brigade. He wrote the following letter:

"1st Floreal, Year IX.

"C . . . * Minister,

"The c . . . Hugo, commandant ex

* In the autograph letter before me, the word *citizen* has only its initial. I preserve the orthography as characteristic of a period w en

traordinary, is a very distinguished officer, full of talent. I very greatly desire that you may employ him in the Army of the Gironde, as chief of brigade.

"General Moreau expressed, on his passage through Luneville, a desire to take him with him. He highly appreciated his bravery, his activity, and his intelligence.

"I begged the general to leave him at Luneville, and I am proud of having done so. The c... Hugo was very useful.

"Understand, c... Minister, that my interest in him is well founded, and that I ask of you, as a personal matter, the rank of chief of brigade for the c... Hugo.

"J. BONAPARTE."

Brother of the First Consul as he was, Joseph Bonaparte obtained nothing. The First Consul and Moreau had already secretly commenced their quarrel, and having pleased the one was a poor recommendation with the other. The major remained a major.

IV.

BIRTH.

Some friends, without consulting him, procured for him the fourth battalion of the 20th regiment, in garrison at Besançon, whither he repaired, and whither he brought his wife and his two children, Abel and Eugéne. Abel had large blue eyes and the complexion of a girl; Eugéne had broad shoulders and good fat fists, he delighted the eye with his robust health, he was one of those of whom people say, "Don't trouble yourself, he will bury us all."

They lived in the Place Saint Quentin, in a house known to-day under the name of *Maison Barette.* In this house a third child was soon announced.

This time, the father, having now two boys, wished for a girl. Boy or girl, they sought a godfather for it; the godmother was already found; there was at Besançon an aide-de-camp of Moreau who had a young wife. Madame Delelée asked nothing better than to hold the child of a companion in arms of her husband. The godfather was yet to be found; they bethought themselves of General Lahorie. He was at Paris. They wrote to him the two following letters, which were afterwards found at the Ministry of War among the papers of his trial:

"CITIZEN GENERAL,

"You have always shown so much kindness to Hugo, and given so many caresses to my children, that I regretted very much that you could not name the last. Soon to become the mother of a third child, it would be very agreeable to me if you would be its godfather. This is but a slight expression of your friendship toward us.

"Notwithstanding all the pleasure which we should have in seeing you here, we dare not ask you to undertake so long a journey, in a season so severe as the month of Ventose, about the middle of which I expect my confinement. I shall beg Madame Delelée to do us the same service that we ask of you; we have no doubt that she will be very much flattered at being your partner. In case we should be deprived of the satisfaction of having you with us, the citizen Delelée, our mutual friend, would certainly have the kindness to represent you, and to give the child a name which you have not belied, and which you have so well illustrated: Victor or Victorine will be the name of the child we expect.

"Your consent will be a testimonial of your friendship for us.

"Please accept, citizen General,

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the word was already beginning to be tiresome, and people did not even take the trouble to write it in full.

the assurance of our sincere attachment.

"FEMME HUGO."

About six weeks after the letter of the wife, Lahorie received one from the husband:

"BESANÇON, 14 VENTOSE, Year X.

"WE have received, my wife and myself, my dear General, the letter which you personally addressed to us to inform us that you accepted the part which we requested of you. We have felt very deeply the expressions of which you made use, and we are very grateful for this testimonial of friendship.

"On the 6th the chief of brigade Delelée received your letter; on the 7th, those which you addressed to us reached us. The same day my wife was brought to bed of a son. Her delivery was more comfortable than she expected, as she had been singularly afflicted during her pregnancy. I should have written to you sooner, my dear General, but I wished to tell you how mother and child are. It is a week now, and both are doing as well as we could desire.

"We have named the child Victor Marie, this last name being that of Madame Delelée. Your intentions and our own are fulfilled. My wife will thank you for all your kind words to her. She is sure, as well as myself, of the interest which you take in my children, from that which you exhibit on all occasions for me. What you have now done is a new title to my gratitude, and must bind still closer the ties of friendship which unite us. I shall neglect nothing to continue to render myself worthy of it, and I hope to preserve unchanged all the sentiments of regard which you have declared for me.

"I, as well as my family, embrace you, from the very bottom of my heart.

"HUGO."

Victorine was expected,—Victor came. But to see him, one would have said that he knew it was not he they expected; he seemed to hesitate about coming; he had nothing of the fine appearance of his brothers; he was so small, so delicate, and so puny, that the physician declared he would not live.

I have many times heard his mother describe his coming into the world. She used to say that he was not longer than a case-knife. When he was dressed, they put him in an arm-chair, where he took up so little room that they might have put in a dozen like him. They called his brothers to see him; he was so ugly, said the mother, and looked so little like a human being, that the big Eugène, who was only eighteen months old, and who could hardly talk, exclaimed on perceiving him: "Oh! the bebeast?"

Dying though he was, they carried the child to the mairie. The registers of the first section of Besançon record the presentation of a boy born at half-past ten o'clock at night, Septidi, Ventose, year X of the Republic (February 26, 1802), under the name of Victor-Marie Hugo.

The dying did not die. He himself has told, "What pure milk; what cares; what vows; what love" made him, "twice the child of his obstinate mother." When he saw that he was not chided for not being Victorine, and that instead of being sent away he was energetically retained, he decided to live. And, six weeks after the prophecy of the physician, he went bravely through the difficult journey from Besançon to Marseilles.

The father had had troubles. His chief of brigade, having received from the minister an order to give absolute dismissals to all entitled to half-pay, found it more advantageous to sell them. This traffic was noised about; the major thought it his duty to inform the chief of brigade of the injurious rumors which were circulating concerning him. Others

were less friendly, and, instead of notifying the chief of brigade, notified the general-in-chief. The chief of brigade, not knowing to whom to attribute the denunciation, accused the only one who had spoken to him of his traffic; hence a hatred, from which the subordinate, after long persecutions, desired to escape. He sent his wife to Paris, to solicit of Joseph Bonaparte a change of brigade.

Madame Hugo, at Paris, lodged with her old friends of the Hotel de Ville, who no longer lived at the Hotel de Ville, for the court-martials had moved away, and Pierre Foucher, still clerk, had followed them to the Hotel Toulouse, Rue du Cherche-Midi. Madame Foucher received her friend with open heart.

The children, too small for this long journey, had remained with the father, who tried to console them for their absent mother by a double supply of sweetmeats, especially Victor, then twenty-two months old, to whom his mother was life itself.

"Your Abel," wrote he, "your Eugene, and your Victor speak your name every day. Never have I given them so many bonbons, because they, as well as myself, have never had any privation so painful as that which they are now suffering. Victor very often calls his mamma, and that poor mamma cannot hear him....

".... Your Victor comes in, he kisses me, I embrace him for you, and make him kiss this place (*here is a blank in the letter*), so that you may receive something from him at least in your separation. I have just given him some bonbons, of which I always take care to have a supply in my drawer. He is going away sadly sucking them."

The mother's absence was prolonged. She obtained nothing, notwithstanding the active intervention of the brother of the First Consul. Joseph Bonaparte did not succeed in making the protégé of Moreau acceptable. Instead of a favor, the major received an exile. They culled from his regiment all that were well disciplined and well equipped for the expedition to San Domingo, and when there remained nothing but ill-dressed conscripts, they gave them to him to take to Corsica, then to the island of Elba. Seeing that solicitations aggravated his disgrace, he wrote to his wife to return.

The family remained together until the end of the year XIII., going and coming from one island to the other, now at Porto Ferrajo, now at Bastia. All these journeyings wearied the children very much, especially the little Victor, who was still feeble, and this gave him a sadness rare at his age; he would be found in corners, weeping silently, nobody knew what for. The father, having received an order to embark his battalion for Genoa, and to join the Army of Italy at the Adige by forced marches, felt that that would be an impossible life for this poor suffering being, and sent his wife and the three little ones to instal themselves at Paris.

The mother made their nest in the Rue de Clichy, No. 24.

To this time M. Victor Hugo's earliest memories reach. He remembers that there was a court to the house, in the court a well, by the well a trough, and above the trough a willow; that his mother sent him to school in the Rue du Mont Blanc; that, as he was very small, they took more care of him than of the other children; that he was taken, in the morning, into the chamber of Mademoiselle Rose, the schoolmaster's daughter; that Mademoiselle Rose, generally still in bed, would set him on the bed beside her, and that, when she got up, he would watch her while she put on her stockings.

Another reminiscence. Once in the school-room, the instruction which they gave him was to seat him before a window, from which he watched the building of Cardinal Fesch's house One day, when a hewn stone with a workman upon it was being hoisted by a capstan, the rope broke and the workman was crushed by the stone.

An event which made a deep im-

pression upon him was a rain, so violent that the Rue de Clichy and the Rue Saint Lazare were flooded, and nobody came for him till nine o'clock at night.

He also remembers a play, given on the schoolmaster's birth-day. The school-room was divided in two by a curtain. *Geneviève de Brabant* was played. Mademoiselle Rose acted Geneviève, and he, being the smallest in the school, was the babe. They dressed him in long clothes and a sheep-skin, from which hung an iron claw. He understood nothing of the drama, which seemed long to him. He relieved himself from the tedium of the representation by thrusting his claw into Mademoiselle Rose's legs, so that at the most pathetic moment the spectators were surprised to hear Geneviève de Brabant say to her son: "Will you stop, little rascal!"

V.

FRA DIAVOLO.

At the battle of Caldiero, the French lines gave way, and the order had already been given to recross the Adige; Major Hugo was determined to hold the village of Caldiero; for three hours he sustained the shock of the enemy, and that so well that Massena said to him: "Well done, my friend, you shall be colonel and officer of the Legion of Honor." The Adige was not recrossed, and the major was named three times in the Marshal's report; but Massena's report had no more effect than Joseph Bonaparte's recommendation.

We should say that the major did not give much aid to his patrons. On the occasion of Moreau's conspiracy, all the corps had addressed felicitations to the First Consul, which were naturally spiced with insults to his adversary. Hugo, to whom one of these addresses was presented to sign, replied that he would never sign anything against his benefactor; it was useless to represent to him the consequences of his refusal, his gratitude was obstinate. The First Consul knew it, and the Emperor remembered it.

Moreau's debtor had a decisive proof of the imprudence of gratitude. His regiment, being one of those which had conquered the kingdom of Naples, was one from which the new King chose his Guard; moreover, the new King was Joseph Bonaparte; Hugo had two reasons, therefore, for being admitted; he made his request and was refused. The Captain-General answered, that *the King was not the master.* This time, he considered it settled, and resolved to quit military life.

The announcement of his resignation made the minister reflect. Moreover, Joseph Bonaparte complained, inquiring what sort of king they were making of him, if he could not even choose his guards. He was not allowed to put his protégé into his Guard, because the Emperor had said no at first, and if he had now said yes, this would have implied that emperors may be mistaken, but the King was authorized to employ him in his army. Hugo then received from Count Mathieu Dumas, the King's Minister of War, a very pressing invitation to pass into the army of Naples: "The King has particular intentions in regard to you, and wishes to give you immediate proofs of his confidence and esteem."

The first proof of confidence and esteem which the King gave him, was to intrust to him the capture of Fra Diavolo.

The forcible occupation of the Kingdom of Naples had raised bands of intrepid men in the mountains, half patriots, half brigands. The principal chief of these bands was Michael Pezza, surnamed Fra Diavolo from his diabolic cunning in escaping all pursuit. The adventures of Fra Diavolo have left a legendary reputation, which has inspired operas and romances, among others M. Charles Nodier's *Jean Sbogar.* A highway

robber and a defender of his native soil, mingling justice and assassination, he was in fact one of those figures over which history hesitates, and which she abandons to the imagination of romancers. At that time Fra Diavolo personified that type which reappears in every country that is a prey to the foreigner, the legitimate bandit in conflict with conquest. He was in Italy, what El Empecinado has since been in Spain, Canaris in Greece, and Abd-el-Kader in Africa.

Before attacking the French, Michael Pezza had attacked travellers; he had been nothing more nor less than a brigand, and a price had been set upon his head. Which had not prevented Ferdinand IV., when he had use for the robber, from making him a colonel and Duke of Cassano.

It was, therefore, to bring back Ferdinand, but it was still more to drive away the foreigner, that Fra Diavolo guarded the defiles, swooped down into the plain, surprised cantonments, captured convoys, and disappeared in his mountains. They began by surrounding him; General Duhesme barred him out of the Patrimony of St. Peter, General Goulet from the Val di Sora, and General Valentin from the district of Gaëta. When he was thus cooped up in the Apennines by three generals, eight hundred and fifty men were given to Major Hugo, and the hunt began.

It was a hard and a bloody chase. Fra Diavolo had fifteen hundred men, but the trouble was not the difference in number; the difficulty was not in fighting him, it was in finding him. His mountains were better known to him than to his hunters; he had his own passes; they saw him, they touched him, they had him; suddenly nobody was there. Nature took part in it; enormous showers fell every day, and when it did not rain, there was such a fog that they lost their way at every step. Almost immediately it became necessary to send back the artillery and dragoons, which were useless in such steep acclivities and such narrow paths. After six days of exhausting march and countermarch, there had not been a single engagement.

At last the column pressed him so closely, that they were just on the point of reaching him. But the spies came in, saying that he had escaped again. Whither? One of them had seen him at five o'clock in the morning on the right bank of the Biferno; another had seen him at the same hour in the Abruzzi; another, going towards Apulia; another, entering the kingdom of Naples. It was discovered that in order to baffle pursuit, the partisans had been divided into several detachments, the leaders of which all gave themselves out for Fra Diavolo. Which was the true one? Not knowing which to pursue, they pursued all, drove them in the same direction, and succeeded in bringing them together in the valley of Bojano. There, Fra Diavolo, brought to bay, was compelled to fight.

The struggle was fierce. It rained, for it always rained, but so severely that the muskets, being full of water, would not go off; they gave up firing, and it became a horrible hand to hand combat; the butts and bayonets made such butchery that not more than five hundred men remained to Fra Diavolo.

Thus crippled he endeavored to throw himself into Benevento by the valley of Tamaro. He could get there only by the bridge of Vinchiatura, which should have been held by the National Guard; but the National Guard did not concern itself, thinking that nobody could even think of escaping in such a terrible storm. On the other side, the reduced and exhausted French column, drenched and barefoot, were obliged to stop a few hours at Bajano, to rest, and provide themselves with shoes. These few hours, and the neglect of the National Guards, per-

mitted Fra Diavolo to escape once more.

The hunt recommenced. At Morcone there was a storm such as the inhabitants had never seen; the lightning struck the column more than once, and killed several soldiers; it rained so furiously that although the ground was a gentle slope, the water was half knee-deep; the hurricane not being enough, there came an earthquake in addition; they had to halt again, and borrow dry clothing from the inhabitants. As soon as the storm abated a little, they resumed their route. But all this water had swelled the Calore fifteen or sixteen feet, while Fra Diavolo had passed before the rise. This was a gain of twenty-four hours for him. Still these twenty-four hours might be regained should they go by the Caudine Forks, and scale La Vergine, which, it is true, had never yet been climbed except by goats.

The scaling seemed a matter of course to Hugo, but the soldiers were not of his opinion; they said that they could do no more, and that they must have rest; the officers in vain gave the order to march, nobody obeyed. This was serious from every point of view; it was discipline lost as well as Fra Diavolo; with the start he had already the least delay would give him time to embark for Caprea, which the English still held; vessels were known even then to be skirting the coast, sent by Governor Hudson Lowe (him of St. Helena), whose forbidding face is startled at having favored an escape.

Hugo made no terms with insubordination. Generous and kind as we have seen him, capable of almost feminine tenderness, he was inflexible in his command. Sanguine, moreover, and in the prime of life, his anger was aroused. He went straight to the mutineers, determined to run his sword through the first who should not obey. On seeing him, some were overawed and others were ashamed, and he had to say but few words before the troops put themselves in motion.

He no longer had men enough to divide his forces; he took all with him and attacked the steep ascent. The slope was so sharp and so slippery that they advanced slowly, only by clinging to the branches of the shrubs. A dense fog bewildered the guides. Suddenly the fog rose like a curtain, and they saw before them the magnificent spectacle of the Gulf of Naples. The beautiful is always so powerful over men, that these exhausted soldiers felt their spirits return. They joyously descended, but Hugo made them repress their admiration, as they were approaching Atella, where he hoped to surprise Fra Diavolo. In fact, a sharp musketry fire announced that he was there.

Fra Diavolo escaped again, with thirty of his men only; that beautiful country is covered with trees which aided his flight; but suddenly he found in his front a regiment of light cavalry which was guarding the high road from Apulia. Caught between this regiment and the column which was on his track, there was no hope of escape. The vanguard of the regiment met a score of very triumphant National Guards, who were dragging along and insulting a man with a downcast look, whose hands were tied behind his back. They were asked who this man was; they answered noisily that it was Fra Diavolo, whom they had made prisoner and were taking to Naples. The cavalry would have taken him from them and conducted him themselves; but the National Guards strenuously claimed their prize, saying that there was a reward, and that they would give the man up only in exchange for the six thousand ducats. The cavalry acknowledged the justice of this, and allowed them to proceed. They passed through the regiment, abusing and striking their bandit. When they were beyond the rearguard, they entered a cross road which led to the coast. Sud-

denly the last ranks of the rearguard received a volley of musketry from behind. They turned, and saw the National Guards running away and laughing with their prisoner, whose hands were tied no longer. The arrest was a ruse of Fra Diavolo.

The cavalry could not pursue him in the forest. They contented themselves with pointing out to the column of infantry, which came up, the direction he had taken. Hugo overtook him in the neighborhood of Castellamare, killed nearly all his men, and wounded him. The few men whom he still had, being now of no use but to betray him, he dismissed them. Still he was surrounded on all sides; the promise of six thousand ducats raised bands of peasants upon his track; he was met at Campana by some National Guards, who did not take him, but who wounded him again.

This was in October; the nights were very cold; one night, when it was snowing, worn out, bleeding from his two wounds, having eaten nothing since leaving Atella, he came to a shepherd's cabin in the mountains; he looked through a window and saw the shepherd warming himself by an expiring fire. The shepherd was alone; he entered, and asked him for food and a bed. The shepherd showed him some potatoes which were cooking in the ashes, and a bundle of straw in a corner. Fra Diavolo laid aside his arms, ate and stretched himself upon the straw, which seemed an excellent bed to him after his recent nights. He was suddenly wakened by two armed men, who held him beneath their knees, while they were searching his pockets; two others were doing the same to the shepherd. When these four men, who were brigands of the Cilento, had emptied their pockets, they emptied the cabin, and took possession of the arms. Then, disdaining the shepherd, who was old, they took Fra Diavolo away with them. The unfortunate man not following them fast enough, as one of his wounds was in the foot, they beat him; he did not dare to tell them his name, for fear they might be tempted by the six thousand ducats; finally seeing that he did not get on, and that day was breaking, they beat him again and left him half dead in the snow.

He knew not where he was. He got up and dragged himself along as well as he could. At last, he perceived a faint light in the distance; he crawled towards it rather than walked. Very soon he saw a cluster of houses; it was Baronisi. As he came in, an apothecary was opening his shop. Perceiving this torn and bleeding man, leaning against a post that he might not fall, the apothecary asked him what he was doing there, motionless in the snow and in the darkness. The wounded man replied that he came from Calabria, and was going to Naples, and that he was waiting for some comrades, who had stopped behind. The apothecary, who did not recognise the Calabrian accent, looked at him attentively, and invited him to come and wait in his shop where he could warm himself. He seated him before a good fire, and went after a bottle of brandy for him. While Fra Diavolo was drinking and thanking him, the apothecary's servant came in with some National Guards, whom she had been after, who asked the stranger for his papers. Upon his reply that they had been stolen from him, they arrested him and took him to Salerno.

He still hoped that they would not know his name. It was one of Hugo's sappers who recognised him. This sapper, a Neapolitan, who had been in the service of Ferdinand IV., had often seen the Duke of Cassano. Chance led him into the quarters of the Commandant of Salerno, just as he was examining the prisoner.

"What," he exclaimed, "Fra Diavolo!" There was great astonishment. Fra Diavolo attempted to deny, but the sapper had present-

ed arms to him too often to have a doubt.

Hugo, whose mission was ended, turned his column towards Naples, and went to render an account of the affair to the King. As the reward of his success, he asked the King to treat Fra Diavolo as a prisoner of war, and to try the Duke of Cassano, and not Michael Pezza. But he did not obtain this from the King, or the King did not obtain it from the Emperor; the new royalty had too much interest in degrading the old, to miss the opportunity of treating its defenders as bandits; Michael Pezza was condemned to death as an assassin.

Hugo went to see him in his prison. He had no difficulty in recognising him, having seen him distinctly at the fight at Bojano. Fra Diavolo was small; his most remarkable feature was his eyes, which were sharp and penetrating. He did not recognise his opponent; but when he was told his name, he gazed long at him, and said that he never should have been taken by any other man.

VI.

JOURNEY TO ITALY.

The emotions of the struggle had prevented Hugo from feeling his excessive fatigue; at Naples he found that he had been thirty-one days without bed or sleep. He also perceived that he had been wounded at Bojano. A violent fever kept him on his bed, but he had caught Fra Diavolo too well to be allowed to be sick. Apulia also had its bands, but here patriotism was only a pretext, it was genuine brigandage. The destroyer of Fra Diavolo had little trouble in crushing these wretches. The pursuit, this time, was a promenade. On their route, the French column observed landscapes and costumes.

The commander was struck with the sepulchres of Sant'Agata de Goti. Visitors descended by a double staircase through two hedges of erect corpses, dried and dressed. A long subterranean court continued indefinitely these two rows of dead bodies clad in their best, and hither the inhabitants came to see their relatives and friends.

An earthquake, at Pomarico, occasioned a singular incident. It was at night. In Italian villages, it is the custom to sleep without a chemise. The French column saw running towards them a throng of nude women and girls, whom the earthquake had driven out of their houses. It was a superb moonlight night. The Velites and the Polish Lancers had the modesty to lend them their cloaks.

This was not the only time that the French army contributed to the chastity of the Italians. In the Basilicate, the monastery of Banzo prohibited its vassals from building; it huddled them into a few houses adjoining the convent; one of these houses alone contained more than seven hundred, of all ages and sexes, pell-mell, twenty households in the same room, the whole family, father, mother, grown up sons and daughters, all in the same bed. Hugo made a report to the King, who forced the monks into decency.

The last of the brigands being slain or dispersed, the column returned. The King was not ungrateful towards the commander of the expedition; he gave him a regiment and a province. He appointed him Colonel of the regiment, Royal-Corsee and Governor of Avellino.

The Governor's first care was to write to his wife to come and join him. It was more than two years now that he had been separated from her and his children. Now that Italy was restored to peace, he might be a husband and father.

The mother set out at the end of October, 1807. M. Victor Hugo, who was only five years old, remembers scarcely anything of the whole

journey through France, except a driving rain, which, at the moment of setting out, beat against the windows of the diligence.

Mont Cenis, to him, was a sledge in which he ascended with his mother, while Abel and Eugène, who were larger, rode on mules. He was much interested in the thin sheets of horn which the sledge had for windows. A further subject of contemplation to him on this mountain was the stubbornness of Eugène, on whom they had put woollen stockings because of the snow, and who, in spite of injunctions and threats, obstinately pulled them off as often as they were put on.

He still remembers the impression made upon him by the grey roofs of Suza, and a dinner in the Apennines. The mountain air had sharpened the appetites of the children, and they did not want to wait for the relay. But they had not taken any provisions, and there was no hope of an inn. A goatherd whom they met offered his cabin, but he had nothing in it, except an eagle which he had just killed. "Let us eat the eagle!" cried the children. The goatherd roasted its thighs, and they devoured them.

A freshet flooded the environs of Parma. The city, which they saw from a distance, seemed to rise out of a lake. The peasants of the neighborhood, for fear of wetting their shoes, wore them at their necks and went barefoot. Victor said to Eugène:

"See, how funny! they'd rather wear out their feet than their shoes."

They resumed diligences. Imprisoned in the interior, the children amused themselves by making little crosses with the spears of straw under their feet, which they hung in the windows. As they hung them up, they saw, at intervals, human bodies on the trees by the roadside. They were bandits who had been hung to intimidate the rest. The three children were not aware of the protest which they were making against the death penalty, by hanging in front of all those gibbets the gibbet of Christ.

This file of spectres haunted the little Victor, and filled him with terror. But his great fear was of being overturned. He was anxious about that through the whole journey. At every jolt, at the slightest pebble, he thought he was down. They told him that wagons were never overturned in Italy, but, he forgets where, a carriage in attempting to pass the diligence caught and upset almost upon the children. A cardinal caught in the carriage, shook his arms furiously from the door, at which Abel and Eugène laughed heartily, but little Victor scolded them severely.

He was charmed with the "silver spangles" of the Adriatic. The arrival at Rome was a delightful thing to the children. They were bewildered by the bridge of San Angelo and the statues. It was a grand holiday; the streets were filled with a dense throng going to kiss the big toe of the statue of St. Peter. The three brothers wanted to go too. This statue in pontifical costume, with the tiara on its head, filled them with admiration. They knelt down and kissed the saint's toe. They noticed that this big toe, worn away by lips, had become a little toe.

Naples, shining in the sun, and bounded by the azure of its sea, seemed to them to have a white dress fringed with blue.

Madame Hugo rested for some days at Naples. She had suffered much more than she had enjoyed in the journey. Rather insensible to the charms of nature, she had been excited during the whole time, by but two things: the uncertainty of the beds, and the certainty of the fleas. The children did not see much of the city, because their mother, who had but little curiosity, remained in her room the whole day, and waited till the sun went down to take them to the sea-shore in a carriage.

At last they reached Avellino, where their father, impatient and

delighted, had dressed himself in full uniform to receive them. After the embraces, they visited the house. It was a marble palace, thoroughly cracked by time and by earthquakes. But the heat of the climate dispensed with a hermetical inclosure. There was all the room they could wish to play in, which was all that was necessary. The fissures made hiding-places in the body of the walls. Outside of the palace, a deep ravine, densely shaded with hazels, completed the happiness of the children. From the first day, they passed their life in it, rolling down the slope, or climbing the trees.

The place suited them. And the life also: no more school, entire liberty. But this vacation had lasted only for a few months, when the King of Naples became King of Spain. Immediately on his arrival at Madrid, Joseph wrote to the Governor of Avellino that he would not be angry with him if he remained in Italy, but that he would be grateful to him if he would come to Spain. The Governor owed everything to Joseph, who, a little before his new royalty, had made him Commander of his order and Marshal of his palace; he did not hesitate to follow him. But it was easy to foresee that Spain would, no more than Italy, resign herself at once to the foreign king; there would be disturbances and conflicts to which a woman and children could not be exposed; and besides, the education of the children was not consistent with all these goings and comings; it was therefore decided that the three brothers should return to Paris, and remain there with their mother until Spain should be quiet enough for them.

Sadly they left that life made up of sunshine and independence, and that beautiful marble palace which was to be exchanged for a school-room.

There was one sadder than the children—the father. The babble of the rosy lips was hushed. The poor Governor had nobody now to climb upon his knees, to make great eyes at the embroidery of his uniform, and to bury little hands in his epaulettes.

His children filled his heart with tenderness and regret. He wrote to his mother, who lived in Burgundy:

" . . . Abel is one of the most amiable of children. He is large, polite, more sedate than is usual at his age. His progress is encouraging. He is endowed with an excellent character, as well as his two brothers.

"Eugène is the one whom you received on his coming into the world. He has the finest face in the world. He is as quick as powder. He has less inclination for study, I think, than his brothers, but no bad qualities.

"Victor, the youngest, shows great aptitude for study. He is as sedate as his oldest brother, and very thoughtful. He talks but little, and always to the purpose. His reflections have struck me many times. He has a very sweet face.

"All three are good children. They love each other very much; the two elder ones love their little brother extremely. I am sad not to have them longer. But the means of education is wanting here, and they must go to Paris."

VII.

THE FEUILLANTINES.

Returning to Paris for the education of her children, Madame Hugo took lodgings in the educational quarter; she looked for a house in the vicinity of the church of Saint Jacques du Haut Pas; she found one that had a garden. I have said that she was indifferent to the grand aspects of nature; she attached no importance to mountains but she worshipped gardens. Thus, seeing the garden, she did not look at the house, but packed

her little family into it. No sooner, however, was she there, than she perceived that there were trees for the birds, but no rooms for the children. It was of no use to send Abel to the Lyceum, there was not even room for two; she had to look elsewhere.

One day she came home radiant. She had found it!

She talked so much about her discovery that she had to show it. The next day, early in the morning, Eugène and Victor went with her to see it. It was only a few steps; they went into the Cul de sac of the Feuillantines; at Number 12 a gate opened, they crossed a court-yard, and found themselves in the house. That was the place. Their mother wished them to admire the dining-room and the salon, large, high ceilings, high windows full of light, and the song of birds, but she could not keep them in the house, they had seen the garden.

It was not a garden, it was a park, a wood, a region of country. They took possession of it on the very instant, running, calling to each other, losing sight of one another, thinking themselves lost, enraptured? Their eyes were not large enough nor their legs long enough. They made discoveries every moment. "Do you know what I have found?" "You haven't seen anything?" "Here! here!" There was an alley of chestnuts, where a swing could be set up. There was a dry cistern, which would be admirable for playing war and giving assaults. There were as many flowers as one could dream of, but above all there were corners which had not been cultivated for a long time, and where everything grew that would: herbs, plants, bushes, shrubs, a virgin forest for a child. There was so much fruit that they could not gather what fell from the branches. It was the season of the grape; the landlord allowed the boys to pillage the arbors, and they came back intoxicated.

The proprietor was a man named Lalande, who had bought the convent of the Feuillantines, when the Revolution took it from the nuns. He occupied one part of it, and let the other.

The festival re-commenced on Abel's holiday. His two brothers presented him this paradise, which he would have but one day in the week. But the real celebration was the moving. The preceding days had been employed in wrapping up the leaden soldiers and cannons, in packing away the balls and tops, in squeezing images into pasteboard boxes, in forgetting nothing, so as not to have to go back. At last they started, they arrived, they were at home in this place of delights, they went to bed there, they awoke there. What boundless joy!

The first days belonged to the two brothers, without let or hindrance. They had nothing else to do but to take possession of their new world, to make a thorough study of the hiding-places and the shrubbery, to learn the geography of their garden. But they had not come to Paris for this geography; the mother very soon became anxious to begin their instruction.

They were not, Victor particularly, old enough for college; she sent them at first to a school in the Rue Saint Jacques, where a worthy man and a worthy woman taught working men's sons reading, writing, and a little arithmetic. Father and Mother Larivière, so the scholars called them, merited that appellation by the paternity and maternity of their teaching. It went on like a family. The wife did not hesitate, after school had commenced, to bring her husband his cup of coffee, to take out of his hands the task which he was dictating, and to dictate in his place while he breakfasted.

This Larivière, moreover, was an educated man, and might have been more than a schoolmaster. He was very well able, when it was necessary, to teach the two brothers Latin and Greek. He had been an old priest of the Oratory. The Revolu-

tion had frightened him, and he imagined that he would be guillotined if he did not marry; he had preferred to give his hand rather than his head. In his precipitation, he did not go far to look for a wife; he took the first whom he found at hand, his servant.

When they began to teach Victor to read, it was found that he knew how. He had learned all alone, merely by looking at the letters. Writing went off quickly, and spelling also, and "Mother Larivière" has often boasted of a chapter which she dictated to him in the first half-year, in which he made but a single mistake, spelling *beuf* with an *e*.

This school did not keep them out of the garden. It occupied the two brothers only a part of the day, and let them loose, morning and evening, in the walks. Winter came, less amusing than summer, but still it has snow-balls, which boys throw into each other's faces; then spring returned, and the immortelles, for which they had a respectful adoration, and which they feared to crush almost as much as the lady-birds. But what they thought still more beautiful in the garden was, what was not there. It was what was put there by their childish imagination, as indefatigable as the imagination of man in creating chimæras and fairy tales. How many things there were to them in the dry cistern, where was nothing!

Above all there was the "deaf thing." The author of *Les Misérables* has not forgotten the deaf thing, "that fabulous monster which has scales on its belly, and yet is not a lizard; has warts on its back, and yet is not a toad; which lives in the crevices of old lime-kilns and dry cisterns, a black, velvety, slimy, crawling creature, sometimes swift and sometimes slow of motion, emitting no cry, but which stares at you, and is so terrible that nobody has ever seen it." Hardly had they returned from school when Victor would say to Eugène: "Let's go after the deaf thing!" and quickly, throwing down their copy-books, without giving their mother time to kiss them, they would rush out, tumble into the cistern, put aside the briers, pull out the bricks, fumble in the holes: "I've got it!" "Here it is!"—and were very much disappointed when, after an hour of eager search, they had not found this animal which they knew did not exist.

On Sunday, Abel had a holiday and added himself to their joy. But it was fully complete only when Madame Foucher brought her children.

The toast at the Hotel de Ville was on the way to be realized. After two boys, the first of which had not lived, the clerk of the court-martial had had a daughter, and there was no lack of a husband for her, since instead of one boy the colonel had three.

Often, on summer evenings, Madame Foucher came to see her friend at the Feuillantines. She brought her son Victor and her daughter Adèle, already old enough to trot about, amuse herself, and mingle her little prattle with the uproar of the boys.

The swing projected by Victor on the day of his first visit was installed in the very place which his sure glance had assigned it. It belonged to anybody who would use it or abuse it. Nobody abused it more than Victor; once seated in it he could not be made to get out; standing on the seat, he would exert all his strength and all his ambition in throwing it as high as possible, and would disappear in the foliage of the trees, which shook as with the wind. Sometimes they condescended to offer the place to the little girl, who let them toss her up, proud and trembling, and constantly begging them not to swing her so high.

The swing had a rival; this was an old, limping wheelbarrow. They would put Mademoiselle Adèle into the barrow and bandage her eyes. Then the boys would wheel her about the walks, and she had to tell where she was, and there was an explosion

of joy and laughter when she was mistaken, and was lost in the garden. Occasionally she would tell correctly, but they would look at the bandage, and discover that she had cheated them. Then the boys would get angry; that was nonsense, they must begin again; they would tie the handkerchief so tightly as to blacken her face, wheel her a long distance, and stern voices would ask her: "Where are you?" She would be mistaken, and bursts of laughter would follow.

When these gentlemen had had enough of playing with a little girl, they passed to something more serious. They would pull up the gardener's stakes, and make their way to the rabbit-hutch. This hutch had three stories; they would draw lots to see who would take position on the upper story; the others remained below, and straightway the assault commenced. Madame Hugo was not long in discovering that the stakes were too good an imitation of lances, and the two armies fought with their fists, but it was much less amusing when they could no longer put out each other's eyes.

Madame was full of tyrannical requirements. Thus she scolded when they returned from the war with dirty shirts and torn trowsers. In vain did she dress her sons in good thick maroon in winter, and in strong duck in summer; there was neither woollen nor linen which could stand before the fury of their games. One day when one of them came in with a terrible rent, she said that the first one who should tear his trowsers again, she would treat to a pair like the dragon's.

The next day, on returning from school, the children met a troop of men on horseback who glistened in the sun. Victor, who thought them magnificent, asked who they were.

"*Dragons*," [dragoons] answered the nurse.

An hour afterwards, Madame Hugo, who did not hear Victor running and shouting according to his habit, went to see what had become of him, and found him hidden behind a clump, busily enlarging the rents in his trowsers, and seriously reducing them to rags.

"What are you doing there?" cried she, angrily.

The child looked quietly up at her:

"'Tis to have a pair like the *Dragons*."

VIII.

THE ARREST OF LAHORIE.

Towards the middle of 1809 the band was increased by a friend. But this one was not a child.

One day, Eugène and Victor were called to the drawing-room and presented by their mother to a man of medium height, marked with the small-pox, with black hair and whiskers, with a friendly and gentle countenance, a relative, she told them.

This relative dined with them that day. On the morrow they saw him again, and again the next day, and every following day.

Acquaintance was soon made. In less than twenty-four hours he and they were old friends. Although he was a man, he was a "good boy." He understood games. And he had one of his own which would have been difficult for others; he would lift Victor, for whom he had a particular affection, from the ground at arm's length; he would throw him up high into the air and catch him in his hands, to the great terror of the mother, but to the great joy of the child.

As soon as the two brothers returned from school, he would come to them. He closed the Tacitus or the Polybius which he was reading while walking in the paths, and he belonged to them. This was their dinner hour; in summer, their dining room was the garden stairs; the stoop was the table, and the steps the chairs. Their big friend carved

and served, and, whatever hurry they were in to go and play, they would remain sometimes a long time after dinner was over, because he was telling pretty stories. In the evening—but this did not amuse them as much as the stories—he had them show him their tasks, examined them, approved them or corrected them. The following year, when the children were put into Latin, he made Victor, who was only eight years old, construe Tacitus.

He did not lodge in the house, but in the garden, where he had established himself in the remains of a chapel. There was, at the back end of the garden, behind the shrubbery, a half-abandoned building, divided into two rooms, one of which still preserved a fragment of an altar, while the other had been a sacristy. This ruin was now the domicile of the spades, watering-pots, and rakes. The sacristy, which was less ruinous and less open than the other compartment, had been cleared of garden tools, swept, scrubbed, and washed. A bed, a table, a toilet stand, and two chairs were carried into it, and the relative was suited to a charm.

One thing, which very soon astonished the children, was that, when they happened to go to walk in the street, or to play at the court-martial with their friend Victor Foucher, their big friend always had some business which could not be laid aside. He never went out of the garden, and did not even come into the court. Besides, he, sociable and communicative as he was with them, was not so with others. He would see nobody. Madame Hugo lived very retired, and received hardly any visitors save the Foucher family; if by chance another visitor happened to call, at the first touch of the bell, the relative stole away and shut himself up in his sacristy. The children did not know how to reconcile this wild unsociality with his habitual good-fellowship, and his readiness at all amusements. When they asked him why he fled thus from all visits, he answered that he detested the world, and loved nothing but books, gardens, and children.

This "relative" was General Lahorie.

He had sought concealment at the Feuillantines in this wise. Madame Hugo was acquainted with General Bellavesne. One day when dining at his house in company with General Fririon, the two generals began to speak of Lahorie, their common friend, about whom they were anxious.

Lahorie was involved in Moreau's conspiracy. He was even, in a certain sense, the author of it, having been the cause and the object of the first conflict between Moreau and Bonaparte. Victor's father was a witness of an act which was the origin of Moreau's dissatisfaction. It was in the Army of the Rhine. The order had been given to all the divisions to take position upon the Iser on a given day, and all obeyed, except that of General Leclerc, who, seeing Freysingen too strongly occupied, deemed it prudent not to venture so far. Leclerc sent his adjutant-general to inform Moreau, but, at the first words, Lahorie, Moreau's chief of staff, interrupted the adjutant, saying that the division was wrong in not executing the order given, and that Freysingen must be occupied that very night. Moreau endorsed Lahorie, and the Adjutant General returned to Leclerc, who attacked and took Freysingen. But, dissatisfied at having been openly blamed, and that by a mere chief of staff, he came next day to ask a leave of absence of Moreau; Moreau refused; but Leclerc, who was brother-in-law of the First Consul, obtained it through his wife, went to Paris, and so damaged Lahorie there that after the peace of Luneville a single one of the promotions of the campaign was not ratified by the First Consul, that of Lahorie, whom Moreau had made major-general on the battle-field of Hohenlinden. In vain did Moreau, on his return, protest

against this disregard of his word, remonstrate earnestly with the Minister of War, go to the First Consul. He obtained nothing. He was even told that a remark had escaped the First Consul that Lahorie should never be a major-general. Moreau felt himself personally offended, and was from that time turned against Bonaparte. When the quarrel broke out, Lahorie had naturally taken Moreau's part, from spite and from gratitude.

They did not succeed; Moreau left France; Lahorie, condemned to death for contumacy, had been in concealment for several years, sometimes with one friend, sometimes with another; but the police were on his track, and his retreats were not long in being discovered; once he had been obliged, although sick and in a high fever, to be carried out on a litter. So often had he changed his retreat, that he had exhausted all his friends, and now knew not to whom to apply. General Fririon and General Bellavesne had houses too much exposed. They were considering where their friend would be in safety.

"With me," said Madame Hugo.

She had two reasons for being hospitable to him; he was proscribed and he was a friend. He had been of good service to her husband in the army of the Rhine; he was the godfather of one of her children. She thought of her house lost in the cul de sac, and of the chapel buried in the foliage, and she offered them. The two generals said that it was indeed the best hiding-place in the world; the next morning Madame Hugo told the proprietor and the servants that she was expecting that day a relative from the country, an original, a sort of bear who was coming to Paris in order not to know anybody, and in the evening the sacristy was inhabited.

For eighteen months Lahorie lived at the Feuillantines, unknown, invisible, quiet; he there awaited the moment when time, which effaces all things, should restore him to liberty. That moment could not be delayed much longer; the Emperor, at the summit of victory and power, on the eve of espousing an Archduchess, had other business than to avenge one of the First Consul's old quarrels.

And, indeed, one morning General Bellavesne hurried in with an air of triumph. He had dined on the previous evening with the Minister of Police. After dinner, * * * had taken him aside and said to him:

"You know where Lahorie is. It is a long time now that he has been in concealment. I understood for the first few months that he did well at that time to withdraw himself from justice, the government was not yet settled, and could not allow itself to be attacked. But now the empire is strong, it is master of France and of Europe, it is espoused by the old monarchies, of what should we be afraid? His Majesty is happy and has no grudge against anybody. Say, therefore, to Lahorie that he has nothing more to fear, and that he can go where he likes."

The General answered that he knew nothing of Lahorie's place of concealment, nor even whether he was concealed, that he believed him to be in England.

"He is not in England," replied * * *. "He is in Paris. I know it. And you know it also. I don't ask you where. Shouldn't I know in an hour, if I wished? If I speak of it to you it is merely from friendship for him, who must be suffering from all this useless restraint. Repeat to him what I have said, and let him do as he likes."

General Bellavesne reported this conversation to Madame Hugo, whose first reply was that it was a snare, and that it must not even be spoken of to Lahorie, whom the fatigue of his long captivity had rendered credulous. But the General said that Lahorie was not a child that he should not even be consulted about his own affairs, and insisted upon seeing him.

When Lahorie heard Bellavesne, he was very anxious to have confidence; but Madame Hugo advised him so strongly not to deliver himself up, that he put it off until his friend should go again to the Ministry of Police and bring him new assurances.

Bellavesne went again the next week. Alone with * * * he was seeking some means of turning the conversation upon the prisoner, when his interlocutor did so himself: "Do you know whom I have been expecting all the week? Lahorie. I supposed that he would come out immediately, and that his first visit would be to me. I have expected him every day since our conversation. Well, he does not come out, then? Have you advised him not to come out? Are you children, to be afraid? So you imagine that the Emperor troubles himself about Lahorie? What should Lahorie do to him? For my own part, I am interested in Lahorie because we have been comrades; we have fought together; you know, Bellavesne, we never forget these things. I put myself in his place, I feel how the life which he leads must weigh upon him. It is not pleasant and it is not fitting. It is not the act of a soldier thus to play at hide-and-seek, and live in a hole like a fox. This horseman needs air. Come, tell him now that he has nothing more to fear, and that I expect him."

When General Bellavesne had transmitted * * *'s new invitation, Lahorie said nothing. Bellavesne asking him what he intended to do, he answered that he would see. Madame Hugo cried out against it, and conjured him not to be simple enough to believe in the word of an officer of police; he made no answer.

The next morning, at breakfast time, the servant whose duty it was to call Lahorie went as usual, and rapped at the door of the sacristy. Nobody answering, the servant supposed that he was in the garden; but he sought for him there in vain, and came back and told Madame Hugo that he did not know where to find him. Madame Hugo, seized with a sudden suspicion, went herself and rapped at the door; no answer; she listened; no sound or movement; she went in; the room was empty.

She returned to the house. As she entered she heard a cabriolet stop at the gate of the court. She looked out at the window and saw Lahorie leap from the vehicle.

He ran to her with a beaming countenance and caught her hands in a transport:

"Congratulate me," said he, "I am free. I can go, come, live; I have become a man again, I am recalled to life."

He acknowledged to her that he had not been able to contain himself, that sweet as her hospitality had made his prison, it was none the less a prison, and that he had been to * * *'s. The usher asked his name; of course, he did not give it: then they made objections to introducing him, but he insisted, saying that he had something important to communicate. * * *, on perceiving him, sprang upon his neck, made him sit down, recalled their old campaigns, scolded him for having remained so long in a cage, reiterated that there was no longer the slightest danger for him, that the past was forgotten, that he could show himself anywhere, and, when he got up after full three-quarters of an hour, gave him a vigorous shake of the hand, saying: "Come again soon!"

They sat down, and Lahorie breakfasted with a fine appetite. Just as he had finished the cook entered in a fright; she had seen some men of a suspicious appearance crossing the yard on their way towards the house. At the same instant, there was a ring.

The general rose from table and went and opened the door himself.

"General Lahorie?" said one of the men.

"I am he."

"I arrest you!"

They hardly gave him time to say farewell to Madame Hugo; he was dragged away and thrown into prison.

IX.

A GLIMPSE OF NAPOLEON.

PERSONALLY, King Joseph was not hated in Spain, but he was a foreigner, and that was a sufficient reason for the Spaniards to wish him away. For himself, being of a wise and moderate mind, recognising the impossibility of overcoming the resistance, he was quite ready to renounce that unstable throne, but his brother would not permit him to leave it. So that Spain presented the spectacle, probably unique in history, of a nation governed in spite of itself by a king in spite of himself.

However, Napoleon, angry that they had not rallied to his brother more quickly, had threatened the Spaniards that he would come govern them himself. "If all efforts are in vain and you do not respond to my confidence, it only remains for me to place my brother upon another throne: I will then set the crown of Spain upon my own head." This threat produced so great an effect that forthwith twenty-seven thousand heads of families at Madrid, alone, inscribed their oaths of allegiance in the registers prepared for that purpose. But this allegiance, extorted from fear, did not prevent the Spaniards from rising at the first opportunity, and, when Colonel Hugo reached Burgos, King Joseph, who had already lost Madrid by the capitulation of Baylen, was expected that very evening.

Napoleon came to his brother's aid, and two French armies were employed to punish a people guilty of the desire to belong to themselves. Joseph, whose head-quarters were at Vittoria, made his palace ready to receive the Emperor, but the Emperor wrote that he would lodge outside the city. The King sought a suitable house, there was none; on the day that the Emperor was to arrive, the King, having found nothing at four o'clock in the afternoon, sent Colonel Hugo, whom he had made his aide-de-camp, to meet his brother with a letter which he had him read, so that, if he should not meet the Emperor till after nightfall, he could say what it contained.

With this letter, and some verbal explanations, the Colonel set out, and about a quarter past five met a general officer quite alone, of whom he inquired where the Emperor was. This officer, who was General Bertrand, answered that he would find him at the turn of the road. And very soon he was before a small group of men on horseback, without escort, in the midst of which he recognised the Emperor by his resemblance to Joseph, for although he had been in the service since 1788, he had never seen him. There were so many armies at that period, fighting in so many places, that one might have been twenty years in the service without seeing the Emperor.

The colonel delivered the letter. But, at half-past five, it being winter, it was too dark to read it. The colonel offered to tell its contents.

"You have read it then?" inquired the Emperor sharply.

The colonel answered that the King, foreseeing the darkness, had had him read it.

"You have his confidence then! Who are you?"

"The former colonel of the Royal-Corse."

"What is in the letter?"

The colonel told him, and added that the apartments got ready in the palace of Vittoria, were exactly to the Emperor's taste.

"How do you know my taste?"

The colonel answered that he had merely repeated the words of the King, and asked if the Emperor had any answer to give him.

"I will see the King this evening."

"Will your Majesty permit me to re

turn and reconnoitre your road?" said the Colonel, who was a little annoyed by this too imperial abruptness.

"Go on."

He spurred his horse, and rejoined General Bertrand, rode by his side as far as Salinas, then went forward and, a league from Vittoria, met the King who was coming to meet the Emperor. He made his report to him, and continued his route, having seen enough of the Emperor.

However, the next day, he desired to see him by daylight. He took his place in the grand salon among the superior officers of the Young Guard; but the short and dry way in which the Emperor questioned them, soon made him repent his curiosity. The Colonel wore the uniform of the Royal-Corse; this foreign uniform attracted the Emperor's attention; he did not speak to him, but the mere look was enough to make the Colonel feel the necessity of leaving the salon, and be very glad to find himself outside.

X.

AVILA.

Napoleon, arriving before Madrid on the 2d of December, 1808, attacked it on the 3d, and took the Retiro on the 4th, from which he commanded the city. He immediately placed the mortars in position; King Joseph, taking pity on the inhabitants, sent Colonel Hugo to the Emperor to entreat him to spare the city; but the Emperor would not be moved. The King sent the Colonel four times, but the Emperor did not yield, and the bombardment would have begun if Madrid had not opened its gates.

Napoleon ordered the formation, under the name of Royal-Étranger, of a regiment of Spaniards, Swiss, and Walloons, with whom he put, as being Frenchmen no longer, the French who had been defeated at Baylen. This piebald and disgraced regiment was little tempting to colonels. Colonel Hugo accepted it at the solicitation of Joseph, who, in return, made him major-domo of the palace. But the regiment was hardly formed when Napoleon, wanting troops for Austria, and deeming that he had punished the men of Baylen sufficiently for their misfortune, took them back to himself and reduced the Colonel to a corps small and made up of suspicious elements. The Spaniards were constantly deserting. In an engagement against eight hundred volunteers from Avila, the first battalion, commanded by Louis Hugo, brother of the Colonel, passed almost entire to the enemy at the beginning of the action, and turned their fire upon the rest. He attempted to prevent desertion by terror. When Avila was occupied, the deserters found among the prisoners were tried by a special court-martial and executed immediately by a detachment from the companies to which they had belonged, and buried near the barracks at a spot by which the troops defiled every day.

To fill up the void made by the desertion of the Spaniards and the taking away of the French, the Colonel recruited wherever he could. The Royal-Étranger was very soon a babel of every nation; there were Hungarians, Bohemians, Poles, Russians, Danes, Egyptians, and even Englishmen. These men, whose countries were at war, expressed their patriotism by perpetual brawls; there is no real war without pillage, so they stole from one another, and the best supplied haversacks in the evening were sure to be empty in the morning. The guard-house, extra picket duty, loss of pay, had no effect. The Colonel, who, as I have said, had his bursts of passion, issued an order of the day, that every man convicted of having stolen from his comrades should be thrown out the window. The thefts ceased for a time. But, three weeks afterwards, a Swiss sergeant was taken in the act. The Colonel, no longer angry, was greatly embarrassed; his passion was gone,

but the order of the day remained. To renounce the law was to re-establish theft. The Colonel ordered two robust subalterns to hang the thief out the window, and to await his order for letting go of him. The Swiss was seized and turned horribly pale, when he saw nothing beneath him but vacancy and two stories. The Colonel was in the court-yard, and, after a minute, said: "Take him back." And when the bystanders smiled, and a captain said: "But the order of the day?" "Well, what?" said he, good-humoredly; "I said that the thief should be thrown out the window, but I did not say that I should not be there to catch him."

It was with this apology for a regiment that the Colonel was to subdue and guard the province of Avila, of which he was made governor. The whole country was placed in his charge, from the Escurial to Barco d'Avila, an extent of eighty miles. So long a line was easy to attack. The guerillas, who began to be numerous, surprised isolated soldiers, and intercepted couriers. El Empecinado appeared in the province, bringing some officers and merchants whom he had captured on the road from Valladolid; the Colonel sent after him and re-took a part of his prisoners. A stronger band fell upon a convoy of troops on their way to the Colonel, as they came out of Santo Domingo de las Posadas, dispersed the recruits, who threw down their arms and fled, and killed all the officers, including Lieut. Martin, brother-in-law of the Colonel.

His brother Louis, who was at Mengamuños with a feeble detachment, was surrounded in the night by fifteen hundred infantry and a hundred cavalry; in the morning, he moved out of the village, rushed upon and dislodged the enemy, killed the leader, and resumed his position.

The regiment was, moreover, tampered with by the inhabitants, who attempted to buy it over to treason. At Barco d'Avila, two sergeants of carbineers denounced their host, an old monk from a convent in Salamanca, who had tried to corrupt them. This monk was so fat that they had to pick among the mules for one strong enough to carry him. He confessed, and was sentenced to death. At the moment of being hung, he said that he deserved his fate for having, formerly, at the convent, killed, cut in pieces, and thrown into the privy a young girl whom he had violated. They hung him to a tree; his weight broke the rope, and they finished him with a musket-ball.

The Colonel had been governor of the province of Avila for six months, when he received a letter from the King warning him that ten thousand men were marching upon him by way of Puerto de Pico. He replied to the King that it was not ten thousand men, but seventy thousand. He had just learned that the Anglo-Portuguese army was advancing upon Madrid, and that its vanguard, commanded by the Duke of Albuquerque, was already at Oropesa. The general-in-chief of the King's armies, thinking of the isolation of Avila in the mountains, immediately sent the Colonel authority to fall back upon Segovia; but the Colonel, who knew the importance of Avila to the communications with Valladolid and Burgos, replied that he preferred to die there. He shut himself up in Avila and maintained himself there, and the two French armies were able to communicate with each other from Talavera to the left bank of the Tormes. After Wellington's retreat, the King acknowledged the service which the Colonel's firmness had rendered him, by the rank of Field Marshal, by a million of reals (fifty thousand dollars) in land scrip, and by the position of Inspector-General of all the corps, formed and to be formed. Soon after, the young general was made Commander of the Royal Order of Spain.

Affairs grew better for the French. Marshal Soult gained the battle of Ocaña; General Kellermann had the

advantage on the Tormes, and Ballesteros was obliged to retire under the cannon of Ciudad Rodrigo. The province of Avila had nothing more to disturb it but the guerillas, who were for the most part discouraged by the defeat of the Allies and the denunciations of the peasants. Many submitted; the struggle became less savage. Until then every "insurgent" had been considered as a bandit, and, if he were taken, shot; the guerillas, in retaliation, shot their prisoners. The Governor of Avila had several times offered to spare his prisoners if they would spare theirs. A guerilla had just replied to his offer by shooting two of his servants who were surprised at a gate of Avila, and a convalescent whose physician had prescribed a walk. Another was preparing to shoot some Frenchmen at Blasco Sancho; the inhabitants interfered; they all, the curé at their head, came forward and declared that prisoners should not be killed among them, that General Hugo would spare the Spaniards if they would spare the Frenchmen, and that in shooting their prisoners the guerillas were shooting their comrades. The leader resisted, but his men were convinced by the reasoning, and refused to fire. Some time after, a partisan leader, named Garrido, being taken, was much astonished when, instead of being shot, he was cured of a wound which he had received. His band, who learned how he had been treated, wrote a letter of thanks to the Governor, with a promise to do. as he had done in the future. This was noised abroad, butcheries of prisoners ceased in Old Castile, and the struggle was continued with as much humanity as war permits.

The manner in which the Governor of Avila had guarded and governed his province induced Marshal Soult, General-in-Chief of the king's armies, to give him two other provinces, which made him a considerable government, comprising Avila, Segovia, and Soria. He had to watch the whole bank of the Tagus as far as the frontier of Portugal. He left Avila, and established his head-quarters at Segovia, the centre of his command.

XI.

THE MONK CONCHA.

Some time previous, a captain of the Royal-Étranger had brought back from an expedition to Medina del Campo a monk whom he had found in a dungeon of a monastery, into which he had been thrown by his fellow-monks on the pretext of raving insanity, but, in reality, on account of resistance to their oppression and protest against their abuses. This monk, who was a young man named Concha, was so grateful to his liberators, that he offered himself, body and soul, to the French; his nationality and his dress opened all Spanish doors to him, he could pass himself off as a hostage for his monastery, inspire the suspicious with confidence, obtain the secrets of all movements, know all and report all. The Governor attached him to his bureau for Spanish correspondence with the civil authorities, and awaited an opportunity to employ him more usefully.

The opportunity came a little after the battle of Talavera. The King had sent a report of it to the Governor of Avila to be forwarded immediately to Marshal Soult. A letter from the King insisted upon the necessity of securing the delivery of the report by all imaginable means, and closed with these words: "If it does not get through, I shall perhaps be obliged to abandon Madrid a second time, and I cannot foresee the results of such an event." At that time the country was overrun with enemies, and the errand was not easy. The Governor had had copies of the report made upon silk paper and sent them out by his spies; but not one had returned. Nobody else wished to go,

at any price; the Governor thought of the monk, who was very willing. The dispatch of Marshal Jourdan itself was sewed into the saddle of one of the governor's mules; they waited for night, the mule was saddled, and Concha trotted quietly through the hostile army.

He travelled without hindrance all night and the next forenoon. But he had to stop at a tavern to dine and feed his mule. While she was at the rack and he was at table, the country people questioned him about what he had seen on his way. The throng grew little by little, and was increased by a detachment of Spanish troops who were on a scout, and who were more curious than the peasants. Concha answered as best he could, finished his dinner without haste, paid, and went to the stable for his mule. As he was buckling the girth, he perceived that the part of the saddle in which the dispatch was concealed had been ripped open.

He did not appear to see it. But he noticed that the detachment left the tavern at the same time as he and followed the same road. The leader told him that the country was not safe for a single traveller, that he might meet with the French, and that, if he wished, his detachment would escort him a little way. The monk still did not appear to understand, thanked him warmly, accepted this friendly offer with his whole heart, and said that it was very fortunate that they were going to the same spot. The leader seemed astonished, and said that he was going to his general. "So am I," said the monk. He took the officer in command aside, and confided to him a great secret: he had there, in the saddle of his mule, a dispatch which the French, whose prisoner he was, had made him promise to carry to the general-in-chief of a strong army marching from Salamanca upon the rear of the Anglo-Spaniards; he had promised, in order to get his liberty, but he had not for a single instant had the intention of doing it; he was carrying the dispatch, not to the French general, but to the Spanish general, and since they too were going there, he begged them to con duct him.

"Faith, that's what we are doing, said the commander.

And he in his turn confessed to th monk that his disappearance from Avila at night had excited astonishment; that an inhabitant, who was still a Spaniard, had given notice of it to the alcade of San Buenaventura, and the alcade to General Cuesta; that the detachment had come out expressly for him; that, while they were amusing him in the room at the tavern, they questioned the saddle of his mule in the stable, that they had found the dispatch in it, and that he had done well to speak, for they had taken him for a traitor and were about to shoot him.

The monk seemed much astounded to see that his saddle was ripped. He hoped, however, now that all was cleared up, they would return him the dispatch; they did return it to him in fact, and, as they approached the outposts, he thanked the officer in command and told him that he did not need to be directed further; but the officer, though without any suspicion, said that he had to render an account of his errand, and that it would not incommode him to conduct him to the end. Concha then had to repeat his story to General Cuesta, who half believed it and congratulated him on his patriotism, but who, to protect him from the French couriers, sent him under a good escort to the junta of Seville.

The Governor of Avila had heard nothing more of his monk, when one evening, the sound of a cavalcade, mingled with the uproar of a throng and the cries of children, as if a singular spectacle were passing in the street, made him look out of the window. He saw approach and stop at the door of his house a band of guerillas, whose chief, in a vest embroidered with silk and gold, a long hussar's sabre at his side, and ferocious

with a huge pair of moustaches, was the monk Concha.

This beard and this retinue prevented the Governor from recognising him at first; he recognised him by his voice, when Concha, getting off his horse, saluted him and asked a private interview, having things of the highest importance to communicate. As soon as they were alone the monk told him this:

He had not been able to return sooner, because the junta had detained him, first at Seville, then in the island of Leon, where it had taken refuge on the approach of the imperial army. The patriotism, of which he was deemed to have given a proof by coming to deliver the dispatch, had made him welcome in all intrigues and all projects against France. It was at the time expected that the Emperor would return to Spain; a Spanish desperado had offered to place eighty kegs of powder among the steep rocks which border the road from Mondragon to Bergara, contracted at that spot by the waters of the Deba. It could be done easily, the guerillas, who were very numerous on the road from Biscay, not permitting the French garrisons to explore the country seriously. The powder was to be sent by one of the little ports on the coast not occupied by the French. This plan, perfected by Concha himself, who had taken part in the affair in order to know all about it, had been proposed to the Cortes, examined in secret committee, approved, and the monk and his accomplice had been sent to Mondragon by two different roads. He had crossed Andalusia and Estremadura, but on reaching Old Castile, instead of keeping on he had turned towards the Zapardiel and come to tell his benefactor.

There was not a moment to lose; they supposed the Emperor already on the road; impossible to consult the King, who was then in Andalusia; the Governor wrote the facts to him, and wrote them also to General Béliard, who commanded New Castile, but he commenced by sending his brother Louis, then Colonel of the Royal-Étranger, and the monk to the Emperor himself.

Colonel Louis Hugo and the monk Concha reached the Pyrenees without meeting the Emperor; they pushed on, from station to station, as far as Paris, and, although it was ten o'clock at night, drove at once to the Tuileries. The Emperor, to whom General Caffarelli, Aide-de-camp on service, went to say that they had an urgent dispatch to deliver to him, received only the dispatch, and, after having read it, asked in very dry terms, why the governor of Avila permitted himself to send to the Emperor a report which should have reached the Tuileries only through the King of Spain. They did not save his life respectfully enough. Louis Hugo gave his brother's reasons, and the Aide-de-camp brought him back an order to go next day with the monk to the Minister of Police. They went, and the monk gave all the information desired.

In the evening, the monk was at Vincennes, and Colonel Louis Hugo was notified that he "might" return to Spain immediately.

The two brothers understood the ill reception of the Emperor and the arrest of the monk. The Emperor wished to have it believed, and wished to believe, that Spain was attached to his dynasty; the monk brought him fresh proof that she hated him to the death. That was why he did not receive him. This was not enough, he must prevent him from speaking; there is no better gag than a prison bolt, and that was why Concha, who doubtless expected a reward, got Vincennes.

XII.

THE UNCLE'S VISIT.

COLONEL LOUIS HUGO did not pass through Paris without going to the Feuillantines. Besides the pleasure

of seeing his sister-in-law and his nephews, he had, with his mission from the General to the Emperor, a mission from the husband to the wife.

He was to persuade Madame Hugo to join the General in Spain. After three years' separation the husband desired to embrace his wife again, the father his children. But there was another reason.

King Joseph wished those whose fortune he had made to fix themselves near him, without any thought of return to France, that he might always have sure friends at hand in that half subjected kingdom, and demonstrate to the Spaniards that the French were fully determined to stay, and that resistance was useless. The million reals given to General Hugo, as well as to other generals and all the great dignitaries, were to purchase domains in the country. General Hugo, not having found immediately a domain that suited him, the King sent for him, and, very kindly, but very sadly, reproached him with keeping his money for France, and with thinking of leaving him. To which the General answered that he would, on the morrow, purchase the first domain that could be had, and that he would have his family come to it.

It was necessary, therefore, that Madame Hugo should prepare to come to Spain. She would have a great position there, the wife of the governor of three provinces.

As for the education of the children, the mother would have the college of Madrid. The only objection was the danger of travelling through a country in insurrection, as they always called it; but there were frequent convoys from France to Spain. Besides, she could not start until spring, which would give her time to get ready, and Spain time to get settled.

To finish with the million reals, I will say here that this million, in land scrip, did not find any suitable domain to be exchanged for the assignats of King Joseph. General Hugo kept them until the battle of Vittoria, when they were stolen from him, which was the only proof that he ever had of their value. Previously, in order not to be suspected of disaffection, he had acquired some tract of land, with his own funds; this property, into which he had put all his personal resources and all his savings, was confiscated on the restoration of Ferdinand VII., so that this million reals, which was to enrich the Hugo family, ruined it.

So one autumn morning the children, who were breakfasting at the time, saw enter quickly and joyfully, with embroidery all over his coat, and a great shining sword which dragged at his legs, a tall man of elegant form who resembled their father, and who came from the land of the sun. This shining sword, the Spain which was mingled with it, the manly benevolence of his face, the prestige which then environed everything that was military, made this uncle a bewildering vision to them. M. Victor Hugo, describing this entrance of his uncle into the dining-room of the Feuillantines, said: "He had the effect upon us of the Archangel Michael in a beam of light."

Who knows to what degree these impressions of the child fashion the ideas of the man?

Perhaps we should not have the complete explanation of the character so militant of the literary and political life of M. Victor Hugo, if we did not know all his military family, father, and uncles. In saying a few words of his uncle Louis, I shall still be speaking of him.

Louis Hugo had been called into Spain by his brother, who desired him to have the benefit of his credit, and who had also sent for his other brother, Francis. Their elder brother pushed them forwards determinedly, and Louis was already a colonel; but I will not tell you the story of his life, I shall make him better known by letting him speak

himself. Many years afterwards—he was a general then—I heard him one evening narrate an episode of the battle of Eylau. His narrative so impressed one of the auditors, that he wrote it down word for word the same evening, and he has been so kind as to give it to me.

XIII.

GENERAL LOUIS HUGO'S STORY.

I WAS a captain of grenadiers in the 55th. We had fought all day. Eylau had been taken and retaken. At night we bivouacked near the cemetery. Our comrades were in the habit of going to look up a bed in the houses; I slept with my grenadiers. The first bunch of straw was mine, and my comrades had not yet found a bed, when I had already been asleep four hours.

In the middle of the night there came an order for the company to move into the cemetery. The colonel was not there, his lieutenant was not there. I took the command, and I stationed my men, all this in a snow-storm, with the thermometer at 10°.

On waking, I discovered that I had slept upon a frozen Russian. I said to myself: "Why, that's a Russian." At six o'clock fire commenced; we were thrown to the right of the cemetery. General Saint Hilaire, who commanded the division, passed by me and said:

"Hugo, have you any brandy?"

"No, general."

"I would be happy to take a drop with you."

"So would I, general."

It should be said that for three days we had taken nothing. One of my grenadiers, named Desnœuds, turned towards me and said:

"Captain, I've got some."

"Pshaw! you've some?"

"Yes, captain; here, open my haversack. I have kept a flask in case of thirst."

I opened his haversack, and found a bottle of French brandy which he had had the self-denial to keep since leaving Magdebourg, untouched, in spite of all the privations which we had undergone. I took a good horn, and, before putting the bottle back in the haversack, I asked him if he would be so kind as to allow the general to drink some.

"Yes," he answered, "but they will all drink my brandy, and there will be none left for me."

I then took a pewter goblet which he wore at the hilt of his sabre, filled it and carried it to the general, who was a few paces off upon a little mound.

"Who gave you that?" said he.

"General, a grenadier of my company."

"Here are twenty francs for him;" and he handed me a louis which I carried to the grenadier, and which he refused, saying:

"Captain, I have been fortunate enough to oblige the general, I wish no other recompense."

During all this, sixty pieces were firing upon us with grape. A quarter of an hour afterwards, Desnœuds received a ball in the leg. He left his rank, went and sat down a few steps off, and, while the balls were raining around him, took his haversack, drew out some lint, a compress, some strips of linen, staunched his wound, put on his gaiter, and returned to his place. I said to him then:

"Desnœuds, go away, you are wounded."

"No, captain, the day is fine, I must see it out."

An hour later he was cut in two by a cannon ball.

This poor grenadier was a brave man, and had already made himself a name. He was the same who, at Jena, while we were in pursuit of a detachment of Prussians, threw himself upon their colonel and took him under his arm, crying to his comrades: "I've got my share, let every man take his!"

At noon, a case of grape burst near me. I received a ball in my hat, and a bullet in my right arm. I turned half around, and I heard them saying about me: "There, the captain has got his account."

"Not yet," I answered.

And I gave a squeeze to my left arm to make sure that I still had a right arm. I saw nothing but a great hole in my sleeve. I then said to my sub-lieutenant:

"Lieutenant, command the company."

I withdrew. The enemy's fire lasted till six at night. When night came, out of eighty men in the morning, we had but four. I retired into a house, where I found some comrades wounded like myself. We lay in the same room. During my sleep I felt a hand lifting my arm, and, as the least movement made me suffer horribly, and I feared to stir, I begged one of my companions to strike a light and see what it was. We saw nothing but three or four French soldiers sleeping beside us, or pretending to sleep.

In the morning, we discovered that we had been completely rifled by them. The rascals had taken twenty-two louis from my pocket, my spurs which were silver, and would have stolen my watch if they could have lifted my arm which lay upon my breast.

The next day I sent through the city for a surgeon to dress my wound. They brought me one who said to me:

"Have you any money?"

"Not a cent."

"Have you any brandy?"

"I have nothing to buy it with."

The surgeon left me there. I had myself carried to the burgomaster, an excellent man, who received me very well. He told me that he had three wounded men in his house already, that he had no more room, that his wife had just been confined, but nevertheless he would do all he could to give me a lodging.

In fact, he had a screen put up in his wife's apartment, and made me a bed there. He asked me if my wound had been dressed, I told him no. In the mean time, they came to tell me that my servant was asking for me. I bade him come up.

"Have you any money?" said I.

"No, captain."

"Well! we are a pretty set of fellows! Is there any one of the company here?"

"No, captain. There is nobody but Dechèvre, who is below."

"Bring her up."

This Dechèvre was the vivandière of the regiment. She came in.

"Have you any brandy?" I asked.

"Yes, captain, and at your service."

"The fact is," I added, "that I can't pay you; I have no money."

"Captain, what difference does that make? I have some for you. Here," said she, drawing a stocking from her pocket, "here are five hundred francs."

"I can't make you a due-bill," said I; "my right arm is broken."

"Is that all, captain? I have confidence in you; you will return it to me when you can."

I asked to be taken into the adjoining room, where there were three French officers, and I said to them:

"Gentlemen, if any one of you returns to the regiment, I beg him to tell the colonel that Dechèvre has lent me twenty-five louis; let him please to take account of it."

I said to Dechèvre, who had followed me: "As you have some brandy, leave me two bottles."

The surgeon called by the burgomaster came. I sat down by a table, and gave him my right arm. While he was working upon me, with my left arm I took a drop with my host.

In the middle of the operation, the surgeon said to me:

"I can't go on; my bistoury don't cut."

"Well," said I, "you will find a knife with four blades in my valise, take that."

He took out of my arm, through

a large incision, the bullet, a piece of my coat, of my shirt, and my woollen vest. When he had dressed the wound I went back to bed. The burgomaster took a liking to me; the firmness which I had shown during the operation had prepossessed him in my favor, and from that time he did not let me want for anything. He had a beautiful coffin made for me, painted black, with cross-bones at the four corners, and a death's-head at the top, painted white.

It is the custom in that country, and a part of Germany, when they have a person very sick in the house, to have his coffin made. That is held to bring good luck. I showed mine to my comrades. I said to them, with a laugh: "There's my barracks."

And I heard them mutter: "Poor fellow, he doesn't think he speaks so truly!"

I had been at the burgomaster's for a week, when the arrival of Prince Murat was announced. It was the duty of my host to receive him. For that, he was obliged to send me away. He kept me, however, and told me that he would not let me go away in that condition for anything in the world.

Murat arrived, and asked if there were any wounded in the house.

They told him that a captain of the 55th Grenadiers was there, who had received a bullet in his arm.

Murat sent me his surgeon, and a bottle of Bordeaux wine and a chicken every day.

Soon the arrival of the Emperor was announced. My host confided to me that it was his intention to beg him to be the godfather of his daughter (the new child was a girl), and asked me what I thought of it.

"Do so," said I; "the Emperor likes such things."

The burgomaster made the request, and the Emperor answered that he had not the time, but that Murat would take his place, and hold the child over the baptismal font; that he would charge himself, moreover, with the education and the endowment of the girl, if she ever came to France; that if the father himself, by reason of the hazards of the war, was forced to seek a refuge there, he would remember him; that thus he recompensed services rendered to French soldiers.

Murat was the child's godfather, the ceremony took place in the room where I lay. Murat sat at the foot of my bed and said to me:

"Captain, we shall remember her!"

I have not seen Murat since.

The army left the city. I wanted to follow it, in spite of all the entreaties of my host, who did not wish to be separated from me. The Emperor knew my desire and sent me one of his carriages. While they were taking me down, other wounded came and got in. When I arrived there was no carriage left. They put me into a baggage wagon with three others, one of whom had his leg cut off, and another his breast pierced by a ball. On leaving me my host gave me a pillow to rest my arm. We followed the army thus. For three days we had no care, no bread.

On the road two of my wounded companions died. One had a bottle of brandy, he said to me:

"Do you think I am going?"

"Faith, yes, my boy, I think so."

"I'll take one more drink, then!"

And he died.

The third day we met some grenadiers. I entreated them, through the cracks of the baggage wagon, to take pity on poor wounded men. They heard me, lifted the cover of the wagon, drew us out and carried us into a house, from which we saw the whole army file by.

We were already regretting that it was going without us, when we recognised, in the ranks, our servants with our horses. We called them. They hurried up and we mounted on horseback. We travelled two hundred and fifty miles in that way. On reaching a town, the name of which

does not recur to me, I was carried to a garrison hospital.

My wound was examined, gangrene had already set in. They did not dare to tell me how it was, and that it would be necessary to cut off my arm. Nobody would consent to take charge of the operation, for it must be amputated at the shoulder-joint. I sent for a surgeon, who told me to procure a syringe and some quinine and to inject it into my wound. I had a wooden syringe made by a turner of the town.

One of my soldiers brought me five hundred francs, the result of a collection taken up for me. I could then buy all the quinine I needed. By dint of injections I succeeded in getting rid of the gangrene.

I still remember what the soldier who took care of me always said: "Captain, we shall get out of it."

For the rest, I did not lose courage a single moment, the worst was past, I rested and got entirely well.

XIV.

SEGOVIA.

The day after the visit of their uncle, Eugène and Victor found some new books on the table in their room. Their mother said:

"There is a Spanish dictionary and grammar. You will begin to study to-day. You must know Spanish in three months."

They spoke it in six weeks, hesitating only as to the pronunciation.

At the beginning of 1811 they took serious thought of their departure. Abel was withdrawn from the Lyceum, and the trunks came down from the garret.

While the mother and the sons were making ready to leave Paris, the father was installing himself at Segovia. The guerillas, roughly handled in the province of Avila, had retired upon the province of Segovia, and their blows were so frequent and so bold that at Segovia itself the soldiers did not dare to go out alone from the city by day, or from their houses by night. A horseman would not have gone to water his horse in the Eresma; the light-horse went only in a body and under arms.

The Governor began by strengthening the place, and securing the communications from city to city by posting reserves in readiness to sustain the escorts. A band of guerillas, who supposed they had surprised a troop of light-horse, were cut to pieces by a reserve, which killed a hundred of their men. Another band was crushed, and its leader, Pinilla, taken prisoner.

General Hugo tried to reconcile this energy of defence with moderation of government. He reduced the imposts to what was absolutely necessary. But he was not always the master, nor the King either, as he learned from an incident which will show what idea Napoleon had of the royalty of his brothers.

The province of Avila had just paid its taxes; Colonel Maurin, who commanded it under the orders of the General, notified him that Marshal Ney had sent him word that he must raise six million reals for him, and I forget what enormous quantity of grain. The colonel dared not resist a marshal of France. He commenced the levy, but, before delivering it, he consulted the Governor. General Hugo, astonished that another should command in his department, told the colonel to deliver the grain, which the French army might be in need of immediately, but to refuse the money. He wrote a respectfully firm letter to the Marshal, which he sent to him by a deputation from Avila, and which obtained this answer, that, if he did not immediately obey, thirty thousand men would bring him to reason. The Governor was still further from obedience, and sent to the King to know what this meant. The King said that he knew nothing about it, and decided against Marshal Ney. But Marshal Ney showed the King's aide-

de-camp an express order from the Emperor, who had given him the province of Avila without even informing the King of Spain. Then indeed must the General and the King obey the marshal.

The guerillas, from day to day, gave up the province of Segovia, as they had given up the province of Avila. Soon the Governor had not enough to do for the activity of his nature. It happened that his predecessor at Segovia, Count de Tilly, who had had Burgos given him, but could not get acknowledged there, came back to Segovia, disappointed, and regretting that he had left it. General Hugo offered to return it to him. The count was very much touched by the offer, but the King's consent was necessary; the General proposed that they should go together and ask it. Just at that time the King had written to him that he wished to see him. They went to Madrid, where the General found the King very cordial towards him as usual. By a singular coincidence, when he told the King that he came to beg him to take back Segovia, the King told him that it was to ask him to give it up that he had sent for him. He had more serious business for him.

The province of Guadalaxara was a prey to the great guerilla band, that of El Empecinado, against whom every French column until then had been broken. The King begged the General to exchange the government of Segovia for the government of Guadalaxara, believing that El Empecinado could be destroyed only by him who had destroyed Fra Diavolo.

The General eagerly accepted this exchange of provinces, which gave him an opportunity to serve his flag more efficaciously. The King thanked him, and, after dinner, told him that, if his million reals were not enough, he could give him another. The General took Count de Tilly back to Segovia, reinstated him there, and, two days afterwards, set out for Guadalaxara, accompanied by the gratitude of his successor and the regrets of the people. He took with him the Westphalian light-horse, the 1st regiment of the Irish brigade, the Royal-Étranger, and a battery of field artillery. The 1st of the line and the 1st of the mounted chasseurs were to follow him immediately.

XV.

EL EMPECINADO.

I shall not enter into the details of this mountain war—a repetition of that which the General had already waged in the Apennines. El Empecinado's system was the same as Fra Diavolo's; perpetual skirmishes and sudden disappearance. The very moment they were just about to crush him, he disappeared abruptly to reappear like a flash.

But there was an essential difference between the two wars; in Italy, the inhabitants were against the bands, while in Spain they were for them.

It was Spain itself which rose, and which would not have French rule. What added to the intensity of the strife was that it was entirely carried on by the people. The nobility from the first accepted King Joseph, and waited for the peasants to give them the example of becoming Spaniards again. Ferdinand himself had not been a very strong "Ferdinandist," and had had the cowardice to sign a renunciation of the throne. Among those valiant guerilla leaders who disputed their native soil with the conquest and finally tore it away, we do not find a noble name. They did not revolt for the places or the dignities which they lost in losing Ferdinand VII.; they could not be satisfied, like the dukes and counts, by being maintained in their offices and being promised new ones. They wanted nothing for themselves, save their country. No promise made them waver, and no defeat. Beaten at

Sotoca and driven out from Siguenza, El Empecinado sent the general a summons to evacuate the place.

A curious feature of El Empecinado's letter was that, recognising the bravery and the personal qualities of the governor of Guadalaxara, it invited him to change his flag and to come and fight for the independence of Spain, saying that it would be more worthy of a soldier like him to serve the liberty of a people than the ambition of a tyrant. At the same moment, the supreme junta was addressing a proclamation to the French against the tyranny of Napoleon, urging them to throw off his yoke and to desert his army.

Napoleon's despotism was one of the great incentives to resistance. Even if the Spaniards had not been determined still to be Spaniards, they had little temptation to become Frenchmen when they saw with what weight the imperial government bore upon France, and they represented at the same time both independence and liberty.

It was a singular chance in General Hugo's destiny that he should be the opponent of the two most ardent defenders of their nationality in Italy and in Spain. He was too intelligent not to have a vague feeling that Fra Diavolo and El Empecinado had the right on their side. He understood it better afterwards, when age and composure gave him opportunity to reflect upon this past oppression. In the *Mémoires* which he published, he speaks with admiration of these peasants who, to starve their conquerors, sacrificed everything and went out into the mountains, old men, women, children, in the winter and without bread. He pronounces "sublime" the devotion of that junta of New Castile, which he hurled from village to village, and which, hunted, threatened, attacked, having the chief seat of its administration in some ruined chapel, some hovel in the shrubbery, or some hole in a rock, decreed the independence of Spain.

But at that time he saw nothing save his flag. It is the terrible power of the military spirit that it puts honor, conscience, duty, truth, in the folds of that bit of stuff which goes where the caprice of an irresponsible master carries it. The soldier beholds it and follows it, no matter where, in unjust war and in civil war, against independence abroad and against liberty at home. It must be remembered that in 1810 the principle of nationality was not yet affirmed with the clearness that events have given it in our day, and that afterwards the invasions of Europe by France had this extenuating circumstance that she herself had been invaded by Europe. All these children of the Revolution, who had seen foreigners come among them to prevent them from using their right of self-government, believed that they used legitimate retaliation in going among foreigners and in not respecting their rights, so much the more as others had come to throw them back into the past, instead of which they carried new ideas, and, in spite of the empire, were always the Revolution.

But liberty is not inculcated by oppression, and it is a bad method of securing the acceptance of progress to cause it to be hated. There are always Pyrenees! And there always will be until the brutal conquest of soldiery shall give place to the peaceful conquest of ideas.

General Hugo recommenced therefore without scruple this war of thickets and ravines, in which he had great experience, having already waged it in Italy and in La Vendée. Besides the troops which had accompanied him, and those which had followed him, he had found at Guadalaxara the 75th of the line and a strong detachment of the 64th. This was not too large a force in a country in which the enemy was the whole population. Even the towns occupied by the French were governed by the junta, and sent it secretly money and men; the whole province of Guadalaxara paid its

twice; once to the Governor and once to El Empecinado.

When El Empecinado was beaten, nothing was accomplished. His bands scattered on all sides into the thickets where it was impossible to find them, and reorganized at some place in the mountains, which they entrenched, provisioned, and rendered inaccessible.

The General succeeded, however, in establishing in the province regular government and comparative security. He had worsted El Empecinado, hitherto invincible, in many encounters, especially at Cifuentes, and had handled him so severely that the partisan began to be suspected by the junta, and was almost accused of treason. King Joseph, delighted with the success of his general, came to see him at Guadalaxara and asked him what he would like. The general named several officers who had earned decorations.

"Certainly!" said the king. "What else?"

"Oh!" replied the general, "there are many others who have borne themselves bravely, but I am not able to give their names now."

"Well," said the king, "you will know them by to-morrow, and, as I shall be gone, I will leave you fifteen commissions in blank. What else?"

"What else? Faith, sire, I do not think of any one else."

"But yourself?"

"Oh! myself. Your majesty has overwhelmed me. What can you add to that which I have already?"

"A title! Would you like to be a Marquis?"

The general began to laugh.

"Sire," said he, "there are no Marquises since Molière."

"In France," responded the king; "but there are still in Spain. Well, if you do not wish to be a Marquis, let it be Count. Do you prefer to be Count of Cifuentes or of Siguenza?"

The name of Molière turned the conversation upon literature, and the king chatted a long time about the Spanish writers, whom he had studied. He had himself dabbled a little in literature, and had written a romance in his youth, entitled *Moïna.*

Meanwhile, continual alarms and the necessity of fighting at all points led General Hugo so rough a life that his health began to be affected. One of his wounds, badly tended, discharged splinters, and caused him to suffer exceedingly. The physicians prescribed rest as the only means of preserving his life, and he was obliged to ask to be relieved. They kept him waiting as long as possible, but at length sent him one of his comrades, General Guye, Marquis of Rio-Milano, and he went to recover his health at Madrid. But he was not allowed to remain quiet long. The day after his arrival, Marshal Jourdan invited him to become his chief of staff; and almost immediately afterwards, gave him the command of Madrid, which, with the office of Inspector-General, that he already had, constituted a rather busy leisure.

XVI.

AN IDYL AT BAYONNE.

I HAVE said, that at the commencement of 1811, Madame Hugo and her children began to prepare for their journey into Spain. From that time the three brothers thought only of their departure, and awaited the day with impatience. The garden lost much of its charm; the swing was unhooked, the wheelbarrow was placed under the shed, not to be taken out again; they did not concern themselves about that carriage now, but about real diligences, relays, and postilions. The house was in splendid disorder; there was an incessant opening of drawers and closets; everything was turned upside down to see that nothing was forgotten, and every moment, from dusty corners of the garret, there was produced a mass of indispensable objects, perfectly useless.

In the beginning of spring, Ma-

dame Hugo was informed that a convoy was about to depart, and that she must join it at Bayonne. She immediately began to look about for a carriage. A diligence was offered her. The diligences of that time had only one close compartment for travellers, the interior; the rotunda was for the baggage; the *coupé* was only a sort of cramped cabriolet which held two, and admitted the wind and the rain. The interior had six places; this was just what Madame Hugo required, who, with her three children, had a lady's maid and a servant. The cabriolet served them for the bundles which could not be placed in the rotunda.

I find in her account-book used on that journey, the following memorandum, which gives the price of this carriage:

"Messieurs Ternaux gave me at Paris a bill of exchange for twelve thousand francs upon Messieurs Chéraux, of Bayonne, to pay the expenses of my journey to Spain, whither I am going to join my husband. I have with me three children and two servants. I am now at Bayonne. I have not yet paid my hotel bill, but I have given nine hundred francs to the carrier who brought me here for the hire of his carriage."

Madame Hugo had defended her trunks as much as she had been able against those "indispensable" things with which the children had endeavored to cram them, but most of them made their appearance, coming I know not whence, as soon as they were placed in the diligence, and began to stretch, even to bursting, the pockets of the curtains.

At the first relay, Eugene and Victor alighted. Seeing the cabriolet, they saw that they would have a much better opportunity there to enjoy the country, the horses, the postilion, and the cracking of the whip, than in the interior. They asked to go there, and promised not to disturb the bundles. They took out what could be put into the rotunda, and the two children were free to stare with their eyes wide open as far as Blois, where evening and fatigue closed them just as they were entering among the poplars which are outside the town. At that period horses were scarce, on account of the war. The army took all which were passable. The rest, left for carriages, were not capable of great speed, nor of long journeys. The diligences rarely travelled at night. They slept, therefore, at Blois; and Victor, who entered it asleep, left hardly awake, and passed through, without even seeing it, the town to which his father was to be exiled upon the Restoration.

At Poitiers, two travellers, seeing a diligence, asked if there was any room. When told there was none they manifested a disappointment, the greater as there were eight places and only six persons. One of them was doing business at Murcia, and would lose a great bargain if he was delayed. Madame Hugo had pity on their business, and offered them her cabriolet, from which she called the two brothers. But they asked her to take with her two bundles instead, and, by crowding a little, they got four into the cabriolet. The new comers testified their gratitude by loading the children with cakes and dainties.

At Angoulême, Victor noticed the old towers. He had already so keen a perception of architecture that they remain in his memory, and that with so much precision as to enable him to draw them without having since seen them.

They crossed the Dordogne in a ferry-boat, there being no bridge. It was night, and the wind was high; the river had waves like the sea. The travellers remained in the carriage. The horses, frightened at the darkness and the surges, reared in the boat, and had to be fastened, so that they should not throw themselves into the water. M. Victor Hugo remembers that this terror of the horses frightened him very much. All he remembers of Bordeaux is a

breakfast of gigantic sardines, small loaves of bread better than cake, and sheep's butter, served by two pretty girls, dressed in red.

On arriving at Bayonne, Madame Hugo learned that the convoy, which she was expecting there on the morrow, would not pass through for a month. It was idle to complain. She set about finding a house; found one which was roomy and had a good prospect, and hired it for a month.

She had been there hardly twenty-four hours, when a person presented himself, covered with trinkets, and bowing to the ground, a mixture of the charlatan and the beggar. He was simply, as she succeeded in recognising, through a barbarous *patois*, the manager of a theatre, who came to beg her to take a box for the time of her sojourn. Not knowing how to refuse, and not knowing, also, how she should spend a month in a town where she knew nobody, Madame Hugo consented to take the box for a month.

The director was not so much overjoyed as the children. A month of plays every day, without missing one of them! The month had thirty-one days! They saw no end to their happiness. Thus far, they had attended the theatre but little. Their mother seldom went, and they never without her. When Madame Hugo wished to see a piece, she made arrangements with the Foucher family, and they went together. This happened hardly more than once a year. It was a great affair. They generally took all the little folks, in consideration of which they chose, in preference, the carnival time. The last piece which they had seen was the Countess of Escarbagnas. The three brothers had lived upon that act for a year.

That very night there was a piece. The dinner was not appreciated. They were at the theatre before it was lighted. When they could see, they admired their box, hung with red calico and yellow tassels. They did not get tired while awaiting the raising of the curtain. The theatre and the entrance of the people amply sufficed to amuse them. Soon the orchestra executed an overture, which appeared transporting to them, and the curtain disclosed the scene. The play was a melodrama of Pixérécourt, the Ruins of Babylon. It was very fine. There was a good genius, magnificently dressed as a troubadour, whose entrances were anxiously looked for; but his apricot doublet and the interminable plume of his cap were nothing beside the scene of the trap-door. The victim of the tyrant, to escape death, sought refuge, of course, in a cavern. There she would have died with hunger and ennui, if the good genius had not come, from time to time, to bring her food and to chat a little. On one occasion they forgot themselves, in the charms of a long conversation. Suddenly the genius perceived the tyrant, who came, with noiseless tread, towards the open trap-door. Then the troubadour, leaping rapidly upon the trap-door, shuts in his protégé, with a prodigious blow upon the head, and the tyrant stands aghast at the disappearance of his victim.

Fortunately, the next night they gave the same piece! A second representation was not too much for the appreciation of all the details. This time the three brothers did not lose a word of the dialogue, and returned knowing the five acts by heart.

The third day the Ruins of Babylon again. It was superfluous; they had sufficient knowledge of it, and would just as soon have had something else. They listened, however, with respect, and applauded the trap-door scene.

The fourth day, the bill not having changed, they noticed that the heroine spoke through her nose; the fifth they confessed that the piece was tedious; the sixth they missed the scene of the trap, because they were asleep before the end of the first act; the seventh they obtained permission

of their mother not to go to the theatre any more.

They had other amusements. One of the principal ones was buying birds. In this they put their money, and returned every day with new cages of greenfinches and goldfinches. When they had recited their Spanish, and were free from their *Cormon* and their *Sobrino*, they took the Thousand and One Nights, the book which they admired above all those which they had read, and reread one of the stories, or daubed its engravings. But it was not the Thousand and One Nights, nor the goldfinches, nor even the trap of the troubadour, that Victor remembered on leaving Bayonne.

The house in which Madame Hugo was, belonged to a widow, who retained one story for herself. This widow had a daughter.

Victor was nine years old; the widow's daughter was ten. But ten years for a girl is fifteen for a boy. She patronized him, and took care of him.

When there was musket practice, Abel and Eugéne, who were the big folks, as their mother said, never failed to go to see the maneuvring upon the ramparts. Victor preferred to remain with the little girl.

She would say to him: "Come with me; I will read, to amuse you."

She would lead him to a corner where there were stairs. They would sit together on the steps, and she would busy herself reading very beautiful stories, of which he heard not a word, because he was busy looking at her.

Her skin, clear and transparent, had the delicate whiteness of the camellia. He could watch her at his ease while she had her eyes upon the book. When she, too, lifted her head, he blushed.

At times she would perceive his want of attention; then she would be offended, and say: "But you are not listening at all! Pay attention, now, or I'll stop reading." He would protest that he had listened attentively, in order that she might cast down her eyes again; but when she asked him what passage had interested him most, he knew not what to answer.

Once she looked at him, just while he was contemplating her neck-kerchief heaving with her respiration. He was so troubled that he went without speaking a word to the door of the staircase, and began to play energetically with the bolt, the handle of which he turned till he blistered his fingers.

M. Victor Hugo, in relating to me these tête-à-têtes with the first woman who had made him feel embarrassed and awkward, said that everybody might find in his past, infant loves, which are to love as the dawn is to the sun. He called this the first cry of the awakening heart, and the crowing of the herald of love.

Thirty-three years afterwards, in 1844, he again passed through Bayonne. His first visit was to the home of 1811. Was it the memory of his mother which drew him thither, or that of the little reader? The front of the house was the same, only a little older. He saw again the balcony, the gate, the window of her chamber; but he saw not again the staircase of the court; the house was closed. He saw not his reader. He entered the neighboring houses and asked if she yet dwelt there, or what had become of her. Nobody knew her. He sketched the mansion, and began to wander about the town, with a vague hope that he should meet her; but he saw no countenance which resembled hers, and he has never heard from her whom he loved when he was nine years old.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE CONVOY.

The month drew near its close, and the convoy would soon arrive. They must prepare to continue their journey. There was a second moving in

store, a new struggle to be maintained against a new cargo with which the three brothers had enriched themselves at Bayonne. Madame Hugo resolutely resisted the care of five or six cages of birds, and the children, not being able to take their winged prisoners, set them at liberty.

The diligence which had brought Madame Hugo to Bayonne was replaced by an immense antiquated coach, such as are now seen only in pictures, which held with ease, besides the baggage, provisions of all sorts, a case of wine, an enormous wrought iron chest, with a double cover, full of cooked meats, and an iron bedstead with its mattresses, for Madame Hugo was suspicious of Spanish beds.

The General had sent one of his aides-de-camp to meet his wife and children. This aide-de-camp was M. du Saillant, a nephew of Mirabeau, who, that no servant might be in the secret, acted as his uncle's postilion on the occasion of his first visit to Marie-Antoinette.

M. du Saillant was at this time fifty years old, and might very properly take charge of a young woman. Madame Hugo, who expected a captain of dragoons and a nephew of Mirabeau, was much astonished to see a Marquis enter. The aide-de-camp exhibited an excess of courtesy and politeness, strongly in contrast with the brutality of the empire. But what struck the children more than his amiability, was his overcoat, which the dust of the road had so completely powdered, that when he dismounted they thought it had been snowing. And then his epaulettes: his overcoat, under which he wore his uniform, pushed them forward upon his breast, and they remained there when he removed his overcoat to visit their mother. They very soon discovered that all the officers wore them so; their great-coats shoving them forward, they became folded down, and their epaulettes were never upon their shoulders.

The Marquis du Saillant, in terms of excessive politeness, placed himself at the disposition of Madame Hugo, whose carriage he had intended to accompany on horseback. But the coach, which Madame Hugo called her great basket, was large enough to hold one more; the Marquis took his place, therefore, with the family. He crowded the less, as the coach had a cabriolet, of which Eugène and Victor very soon took possession.

They did not join the convoy immediately at Bayonne, but at Irun, whose mountains, rich vegetation and covered balconies give it the appearance of a canton exiled from Switzerland. The people are distinguished from their fellow countrymen by their extreme neatness. Their pride is in their linen, which they wash and bleach continually, adorning the meadows with it before they adorn themselves. Madame Hugo, who was weary of travelling, began to be reconciled when she saw this country and this cleanliness. She imagined that Spain would be a perpetual Biscay, and said to her aide-de-camp, that she began to think she should get used to it. The Marquis did not interrupt her illusion. Madame Hugo waited at Irun three days longer. She was not the only one who took advantage of the convoy. Spain was then in such a state of turmoil that nobody dared to travel alone. The Northern portion especially was beset by guerillas, who had not the moderation in Biscay to which General Hugo had reduced them in Old Castile. Stories were told of atrocities committed by the bands of Mina and El Pastor, barbarities which spared neither age nor sex; the insurgents were not content with killing women and children, they tortured them; they burned them alive. Fear and hatred doubtless exaggerated the facts, but the truth is, that the struggle was ferocious on both sides.

At each departure of a convoy, therefore, people came from all parts

of France to seek its company and protection. When the treasure reached Irun, it was assailed by a cloud of carriages. Victor counted more than three hundred. But their numbers rendered it impossible that they should be protected. The escort, which had to guard the treasure at all events, was not sufficient for so long a file.

And then so long a train would not have been easy to manage in defiles and precipices; the first necessity was to move rapidly so as not to give time for the peasantry to inform the guerillas. The convoy refused to overburden itself, and sent back two-thirds of the carriages.

It was the more pitiless as during the preceding month a convoy had been plundered and massacred at Salinas. This massacre, due to too great length of line, made an impression which was not effaced when fourteen years later General Lejeune made a picture of it, which, at the Exhibition of 1825, had a success of reality. Judge then what the impression was immediately after the event.

The escort was composed of fifteen hundred foot-soldiers, five hundred horse, and four guns. Two guns were in the front, and the other two behind the treasure. There was a strife among the travellers as to which should be nearest to the treasure, in order to be protected with it, and to have as travelling companions these two brave guns always ready to open their great mouths for the defence of their neighbors. Everybody wanted to be first. The order of march commenced with an immense hurly-burly of men and women quarrelling, coachmen abusing each other, carriages running into each other, and horses biting each other.

Madame Hugo, wife of a governor of a province, and of one of the great dignitaries of the Court of Madrid, claimed the first place. But when her mayoral attempted to conduct her thither he came in collision with the mayoral of the Duchess de Villa Hermosa, whose dignity would not permit any person to go before her Oaths and blows of the whip failing to settle the question, the Duchess by descent, and the Countess by epaulettes appealed from these to the Duke de Cotadilla who commanded the escort. The Duke, like a true caballero, gave the place of honor to the stranger, and the big coach of the General took the lead.

This enormous vehicle, which carried a whole household, and which six mules could scarcely draw, excited some mutterings in the throng; they said that it took up too much room, and made too much trouble; besides it was enough that it was favored; preferences always seem unjust to those who are not the object of them.

The tumult being hushed, and the arrangements completed, the Duke de Cotadilla gave the signal of departure.

It was a delightful thing for the boys to hang out at the windows and see before and behind this file, which, although it was reduced, was still of very considerable length. Except their coach, and that of the Duchess of Villa Hermosa, all the carriages were modern. Green being the imperial color, most of them were painted green, and their wheels were gilt, for gilded wheels were also a part of the imperial uniform. Even the stable paid its court.

On each side of the carriages marched the troops, well appointed and well brushed, with clean cartridge boxes and shining muskets. Joy at not being among the number who were refused a place in the convoy, the noise of regulating positions, and finally the pleasure of departure, caused all to forget the Salinas affair, and the convoy, numerous, various, shining, rolling, and flaunting, set out with that proud and happy flow of spirits, which characterizes all beginnings.

XVIII.

THE JOURNEY.

Victor, perceiving fai to the right a point which sparkled, he said, like a precious stone, questioned the Marquis du Saillant, who told him that the precious stone was the Gulf of Fuenterrabia.

The first halt was at Hernani.

Hernani is a village of a single street, but that is very broad and very beautiful. All the inhabitants are noble, and all the houses have coats of arms cut in their stone frontons. These, mostly of the fifteenth century, have a fine appearance, and give a grand air to Hernani.

Victor was delighted with this village, the name of which he has given to one of his dramas. But Madame Hugo did not share the enthusiasm of her son. That severe and haughty street destroyed the good effect of the pleasant country of Irun, and disgusted her with the journey. She became reconciled with it a little at Tolosa, which is cultivated and verdant as a garden. That pleasant town charmed her to such a degree, that she pardoned it the little bridges with but one arch so narrow that two carriages cannot pass. But Tolosa, on the contrary, pleased Victor only moderately. One thing was remarked about this little boy: that, while obedient in all things to his mother, and ready to do whatever she wished, he had his own personality and his own taste in nature and in architecture, and in these her authority had no existence for him. On this this first journey he felt what he has since understood on revisiting Tolosa, that Spain is made for the beautiful and not for the pretty, that her imperturbable blue sky demands grave towns only, and that the mountain dwindles when arrayed in its Sunday dress.

Another subject of discussion between the mother and the son was the carts. The wheels of the Spanish carts, instead of having spokes as in France, are solid. These heavy masses turn with difficulty, and extract from the axle grievous creakings, which irritated the traveller almost to exasperation. Whenever she heard them on the plains, she closed the curtains, and stopped her ears. Victor, however, found in that noise a lively oddity peculiarly agreeable, and said that it was Gargantua's thumb going around upon a pane of glass.

There was, however, one day when the squeak of the Spanish wheels was sweet music to Madame Hugo. They were in the defiles, and had entered the gloomy gorge of Pancorbo. On one side perpendicular crags, on the other a precipice. This continued for miles. The road narrows in places so that one carriage can scarcely pass. Inpossible to aid each other; fifty men above could crush a regiment. Night fell; the convoy became more and more serious, and was reviewing the massacre of Salinas, when suddenly they saw rising above the crags, and standing out against the sky with that mysterious grandeur which height and twilight give, a band of men leaning forward to listen and to watch. The travellers were panic-stricken. They lay down in the bottom of the carriages, mothers threw themselves over their children, and the troops loaded their muskets. Just then a fearful creaking was heard, and a dozen carts appeared at a turn; this terrible band was nothing but a dozen muleteers, carrying merchandise, and travelling in company that they might not be pillaged. The rumbling of the convoy had frightened them, and they had advanced carefully to see what was coming. Their fright had caused the fright.

They laughed at each other's terror and resolved to fear nothing thenceforward. The next halt was at Torquemada which had been a town, but General Lasalle had justified its name of 'burnt tower' (*torre quemada*) by burning it. They passed the night as best they could. At daybreak they

renewed their journey joyously, talking of the immense danger which they had escaped the night before, and the terrible battle that two thousand soldiers had almost fought with a dozen muleteers. Young colonels jested by the windows of carriages in which they had discovered pretty women. The gaiety was kept up as they approached Salinas, and the train of carriages entered this fatal defile, which had been their horror when they set out, as if they were going to Longchamps. Amid the bursts of laughter came a whistling of balls; this time it was not muleteers; human nature is such that after having shuddered at imaginary danger, we are not moved by real danger. The guerillas came too late; all fear had been expended at Pancorbo; none was left for Salinas. The pleasantry continued, and two balls having struck Madame Hugo's carriage, the children said that the bandits were very polite to send them marbles. The guerillas were not in force, and the treasure was too well guarded. After a quarter of an hour of random firing, to which the troops did not even deign to reply, the attacking party grew discouraged, and no more was thought of it.

Saladas had been burned with even more fury than Torquemada. There remained scarcely a remnant of the wall; it was not ruins; it was ashes. They passed the night there, and were obliged to sleep in the open air. The children thought there was no need of going to bed, and it was much more amusing to play hide-and-seek in the rubbish. This Spanish night was as light as day in France. They began therefore to run, to hide, and to seek each other and to climb the heap of stones which the ruin had formed.

But Victor, who, as he was the smallest, always wished to outdo the rest, trusted himself upon a loose stone, with which he tumbled down so severely that he lost consciousness. His brothers picked him up very much frightened; his face was covered with blood. His mother, seeing him returned in this manner, was for a moment greatly alarmed. Fortunately a surgeon-major who was sent for reassured her, the child opened his eyes again, a leaf of purslain was put upon his wound, and next morning the only remains of that bloody fall was a small scar which M. Victor Hugo still bears.

He was unfortunate in his childish sports. Before, in Italy, a dog that he was caressing had bitten his finger; a little afterwards, at school, one of his playfellows wounded him in the knee. He still preserves the two scars; for everything is effaced except wounds.

The villages which the French had not burned, were compelled to furnish the convoy food and lodging, and provisions to the next station. Madame Hugo was at first astonished at the quantity allotted to her, a quarter of beef, a whole sheep, eighty pounds of bread, etc., and with that a keg of brandy. She had received what was due her husband, four rations, one as general, one as governor, one as inspector, and one as major domo. Four offices do not make four mouths, but men are not particular with a conquered nation. Madame Hugo knew not what to do with it all, but soon the heavy Dutch grenadiers about her carriage, who were on their way to fight the Spanish—for Napoleon used one nation against another—and who could easily eat three days' rations in one, relieved her of three quarters of the General's meat and all his brandy.

This distribution of superfluous rations was of greater advantage than cost to the coach. Mondragon is upon the crest of a rock. The road is so steep that the six mules could not draw the heavy vehicle, and they had to reinforce them with four oxen. The slope was rendered still more difficult of ascent by a sharp turn along the side of a precipice. I know not whether Victor's fall among the stones of Saladas had rendered the three brothers careful,

but it must be mentioned that they did not exhibit complete serenity in the presence of this abyss, and wanted to get out and walk up the hill; but their mother, who was not timorous, responded that they might get out if they were girls, and ordered the mayoral to start up his oxen. The turn was passed without accident, and the carriage reached the summit of the rock safe. But it was not so fortunate next morning in the descent. Mondragon has but one point of entrance, and they left it by the same road as they had entered it. When they reached the dangerous place, the children did not dare to show any fear, though the road seemed to them like a pit; it was so steep that they could not see the mules. The unusual weight of the carriage precipitated it upon the beasts, which it pressed heavily against, and which stiffened their knees in vain to hold it back. At the turn the pressure became irresistible, and the two first mules slipped over the precipice drawing everything after them. All would have been over if a milestone had not blocked one of the wheels, but that gave way at the shock. The mother and her children hung over the abyss, and thought they were lost. But the grenadiers were there; some of them threw themselves down the slope at the risk of their lives, with only a yielding brushwood under their feet, braced the stone with their shoulders and their breasts, while others pulled up the mules, and the family was saved.

These mishaps and dangers did not convert Madame Hugo to an adoration of the journey. This food, which the grenadiers devoured so easily, good for soldiers upon a march, was heavy for the stomach of a woman. She had recourse to the cuisine that she had brought, but ham and preserved meats did not refresh her much. At some paltry place, I forget now what, she determined to treat herself to a salad. Her waiting-maid found the leaves and brought to her to prepare them, a cruet, the oil of which Madame Hugo took the precaution to taste. She made a grimace, and ordered that that medicine should be taken away immediately, to the great displeasure of Victor, who, while his mother saw nothing but the oil, was contemplating the cruet, a grand cruet of the time of Louis XV., completely festooned with silver roses. His mother rallied him upon admiring that ancient cotemporary of her coach.

For want of oil she determined to try butter. She sent her waiting-maid a second time, but when she asked for butter nobody understood her. Finally, by adding a brisk and animated pantomime to the little Spanish that she could muster, she succeeded in making herself understood by a woman, who said: "Ah! is it the cow's grease that you want?" and who gave her some butter. The seasoning was declared poor, but endurable, except by Victor, who regretted the cruet.

Oil and wine were two of Madame Hugo's objections to Spain. The wine has the flavor of the pitch with which the goat-skin bottles it is carried in are smeared, and the oil tastes of the presses, rancid with five hundred harvests.

One day, however, she was surprised by a salad really seasoned, and a dinner such as she might have got in Paris, served up with an enchanting neatness and elegance that brought out her warmest commendations. She was still more surprised, however, when the landlord presented a bill of eighty dollars.

The heat and dust were insupportable to her on the naked, arid plateau of Old Castile. The country was as hostile as the inhabitants. You arrived generally at a house like a bastile, and knocked again and again; at the tenth, perhaps the twentieth time, a wicket opened, and a dry, thin-lipped servant woman appeared. This servant listened, said not a word, and disappeared. After a time she returned and half opened the door. It was not hospitality, but

hate. The few chairs were hostile; the bare walls said, "Begone!" She showed you the bedrooms, the kitchen, the provisions, and you saw her no more. You never saw the family. They had retired into the furthest room, and remained imprisoned there until the French were gone. Not a step, not a sound; even the little children were savagely silent. The house was dead. M. Victor Hugo, from whom I have these details, and whose conversation I endeavor to reproduce literally, said that nothing was so forbidding as this suicide of a house.

An alcade invented still greater hostility. They were conducted into a large storehouse without a floor. The servant had gone. Madame Hugo, wanting something, sent her maid to find somebody. She found nobody. The house was empty. But before leaving the alcade had sealed all the doors.

Impossible to say to the French in plainer language that they were robbers.

Another species of hosts which did not endear Spain to Madame Hugo was the bugs, fleas, and the rest. There was vermin everywhere, fleas even in the ashes of Salinas, which made Madame Hugo say that in Spain even fire had fleas. The bugs were not less respectable in number. They attacked the Frenchwoman with patriotic activity, and would not allow her an hour of sleep. A bright idea struck her, she had her iron bedstead placed in the middle of the room with the four feet in four vessels of water, and went to sleep in full confidence, delighted with her invention of an island for a bed. In an hour afterwards she waked devoured by bugs. They had dropped from the ceiling. Madame Hugo then suppressed the ceiling; she had her bed taken out of doors in the marble court; a swarm of bugs started her out of sleep.

The children, however, resigned themselves to this inevitable cohabitation. They slept in the houses, and had beds like other people. Judge if wooden bedsteads and husk mattresses were inhabited in a country where fire has fleas and marble has bugs. The bodies of the three brothers were starred all over every morning with little black spots which ran. That did not prevent them from sleeping like logs.

They did not agree with their mother. They found the journey very amusing. They saw all sorts of strange things.

One of their delights was meeting a regiment of cripples on their way home. This saddest of sights was to the children very funny. There were all infirmities and all costumes; they were of all corps and all nations, horsemen without horses wearily marching on foot, footmen without feet awkwardly riding donkeys or mules; the halt led the blind. What was more truly comical was that these poor devils who had lost the epaulets from their tattered uniforms, had replaced them by some animal which they were carrying home, oftenest a parrot; some had two epaulets, a parrot and a monkey.

The convoy saluted with an immense burst of laughter this wreck of an army which had gone to Spain with eagles and was coming back with parrots. The cripples took it with a good grace and laughed too. But one of them said to the grenadiers: "See how you will come back!" And another added, "If you come back!"

At Burgos, the delight of the children at first was the cathedral. When they saw it from a distance, they were fascinated by the tufted abundance of its architecture, which piles up bell turrets like the spikes of a sheaf. The instant they arrived they must visit it. The interior has not the tumultuous prodigality of the exterior, which seems the festival of stone. Its richness is serious and almost austere. It is majesty succeeding to gaiety. The three brothers, Victor especially, admired equally the dual character of the

cathedral. They did not fail to examine the windows, the paintings, the columns; as Victor was looking up, a door opened in the wall, an old man strangely accoutred, a fantastic figure, ridiculous and deformed, appeared, made the sign of the cross, struck three blows and disappeared.

Victor, aghast, stared long at the closed door.

"*Señorito mio,*" said the dispenser of holy water, who served as their guide, "*es papamoscas.*" (My little gentleman, it is the fly-catcher.)

The fly-catcher was the spring-puppet of the clock. The three blows struck were intended to indicate that it was three o'clock.

The dispenser of holy water explained to the children why the puppet was called the fly-catcher. But Victor did not hear his story, so much was he affected by this imposing cathedral, which thrust this caricature so unexpectedly among its stone statues, and which made Punch tell the saints the time of day.

The cathedral, for all this, was not the less severe and grand. That fantasy of the solemn church more than once crossed the mind of the author of the *Préface de Cromwell*, and aided him to comprehend how the grotesque could be introduced into the tragic without diminishing the dignity of the drama.

The Marquis du Saillant proposed to Madame Hugo to conduct her to the tomb of the Cid, which is half an hour's distance from Burgos. The children accepted and the mother consented. But nothing now remained of the tomb. Time had commenced its ruin; the French had completed it. The soldiers had found the tomb of the great soldier good for a target; each day bullets tore a fragment from it. The poor tomb was dying.

An apparition which to the children equalled the fly-catcher, was an umbrella. The second day of their stay at Burgos it rained, real rain. There was so little expectation of rain in Spain that nobody had taken an umbrella. They could not however, refuse the evidence, and were obliged to confess that they were wet to the skin. So our four travellers went in search of an umbrella, but in vain did they search the city; the umbrella was unknown at Burgos. After hunting a long time, they came into a place Louis XIII., which resembled the Place Royale at Paris. Like the Place Royale, it had shops under its squat arches; they went in. They had gone through nearly all of them, when an old shopkeeper told them that he had what they wanted. He brought them to a shop, where all sorts of frippery was huddled together, and at last fished out from under a heap of old refuse, something so prodigious and so monumental that he could open it only in the court—a monster umbrella, a pavilion. The whalebones were of sufficient size to bear all the cataracts of heaven. Madame Hugo said that it was Noah's umbrella without any doubt, and would not have it; she waited under the arches till the end of the shower, furious against Spain. But Victor said that it was the greatest praise of the Spanish climate that umbrellas were provided only against the deluge.

Another pleasure. At Valladolid, they went for the first time to a Spanish theatre, and the children saw something which was still finer than the trap-door of the Ruins of Babylon. It was a personage who was killed by a dagger thrust, and who bled in earnest; the stage was inundated with blood.

The following was an incident which did not divert the Duke de Cotadilla as much as it did them:

When the convoy had taken sufficient rest at Valladolid, it was drawn up upon the vast Place of the Four Convents (which would have been better named, now, the Place of the Four Barracks); marched out of town; traversed, without molestation, the rugged defile of Coca, and descended into the plains. There it was joined and passed by a detach-

ment of cavalry, which preceded Queen Julia, who was also going to Madrid. The Duke de Cotadilla, apprised that the Queen would pass, and wishing to do her honor, ordered the whole escort to put on clean linen, and to array themselves in full dress.

There was not a house, not a rock, not a tree, not even a mound of earth, which could serve as a dressing-room. The women were cautioned, and they lowered their blinds. The little Hugos, on account of their sex, remained in their cabriolet, and witnessed the spectacle.

The soldiers made haste to stack their muskets and take off their haversacks, coats, breeches, and shirts. But they made less haste to put them on again. It was pleasant to them to be disencumbered of all clothing, in that oppressive heat, and they prolonged, as much as possible, that state of comfort and coolness. They prolonged it to such an extent, that Queen Julia, whom they did not think so near, arrived unawares, and passed through two thousand men in the interlude of their shirts.

The Duke de Cotadilla was deeply humiliated. The honor which he had designed to do the Queen was singularly reversed. They endeavored to console him by telling him that the Queen could have seen nothing but his intention; but it was a long time before he recovered from his unlucky gallantry.

Segovia still rests in the imagination of M. Victor Hugo like a dream. Houses, sculptured with machicolation and with bell-turrets; palaces of jasper and of porphyry; all the magnificence and reticulation of Gothic and Arabic architecture; and, to crown all, commanding the town, like a tiara of stone, the Alcazar.

I have told how Segovia had been given to the Count de Tilly, by General Hugo. I need not say what reception the Governor gave to the wife of the man to whom he owed his government. He came to take her every day in his carriage, the easy elegance and rapidity of which was not unpleasant to the traveller, after her dry and dusty wicker carriage. He took her everywhere, commencing with the Alcazar.

The Alcazar is built upon a height. The Count's carriage reached the foot of a tower, and the children prepared to get out; but the Governor told them not to stir. A gate opened; the carriage entered the tower, and continued to mount in the interior. The tower has a carriage-road, like the Chateau d'Amboise. The children, who had never seen anything like this, were astonished at the carriage which went up stairs.

They had a more solid satisfaction. After they had seen all sorts of halls, the finest of which they thought to be the gallery of the portraits of the Christian and Moorish kings, the Count de Tilly took them into the Mint. They were dazzled by the heaps of gold and silver. The most interesting object was the man who put the pieces of money under the stamp. He placed them and withdrew them with his fingers, which inattention for a second would have broken.' The Count took three pieces of gold, which they had seen stamped, and gave them as a memento of their visit.

On returning from the Alcazar they went to dine with the Governor. The repast was splendid. There was a profusion of French wines, and Victor got very tipsy.

All the courtesy of the Count de Tilly did not prevent Madame Hugo from leaving Segovia with pleasure. She was anxious to reach Madrid, and to be at the end of that eternal journey. A serious reason increased her impatience. Her carriage, infirm with age, showed symptoms of having enough of hills and of declivities. On leaving Segovia, she perceived that one of the hubs was splitting. She spoke of this to the mayoral, who said that it was nothing. It seemed to her, however, that the split was enlarging hour by

hour; but the mayoral always answered that she had nothing to fear. The confidence of her mayoral did not re-assure her entirely. A broken hub is vexatious in any journey; but in this it was dangerous. The convoy would not wait until the wheel was repaired; the carriage would get behind, and the guerillas would come. The very confidence of her mayoral was alarming; for he was a Spaniard, and, consequently, hated the French; and for the wife and children of one of their chief adversaries the guerillas would pay whatever he might ask. While she was making these reflections in the carriage, the hub snapped.

Quickly they sought a piece of rope, to repair, as well as possible, the unfortunate fracture. There was not a piece in the carriage. The servant went to the carriages in the rear, to ask for some. Nobody had any, or wished to give it; for they had not pardoned Madame Hugo for being before them. She knew not what to do. To complete her trouble, the Duchess de Villa-Hermosa said she could not wait for the good pleasure of the French lady, and ordered her mayoral to rejoin the treasure. All the carriages followed, happy to get one place nearer, and making little of abandoning a woman and her children. The poor mother soon saw the last of the carriages pass her, move away and disappear.

The mayoral labored to nail together the cracks of the wood; but he made no progress. The servant aided in vain; the hub could not be used. Madame Hugo was considering if she would not do well to leave the carriage there, and rejoin the convoy on foot, with her children. But the convoy was too distant, and she could not overtake it. She urged the mayoral, who was still perfectly calm; night was approaching, another terror. Suddenly she heard the tramp of horses, and trembled on seeing a troop approaching.

When the horsemen came up, she recognised the Marquis du Saillant and Colonel Montfort.

The Marquis was not with her when the hub broke. On returning to find her some moments later, he had been astonished at the disappearance of the carriage. The grenadiers had told him the cause. He had immediately asked some men of Colonel Montfort, who offered to come himself. An artilleryman had brought all the rope that was needed, and the wheel was very soon stronger than before.

The question now was how most quickly to overtake the convoy, which, during this time, was getting in advance. The mayoral wanted to go on at a walk only, saying that if he trotted the wheel would not hold, and that the carriage was very weak. Colonel Montfort told him that he knew how to cure it; he drew a pistol from the holster of his saddle, and, aiming at the mayoral, swore that he would blow his brains out if his mules were not immediately put into a gallop. This energetic medication operated instantly, and the carriage joined the convoy in good health.

When one approaches Madrid the north wind affects the air, which passes suddenly from the temperature of Senegal to that of Siberia. The earth is always white with snow when it is not with dust. Here and there, upon these white and level wastes, are houses, painted black and surrounded with pines, which the children compared to tombs upon a shroud.

Soon there rose to view the gloomy Escurial, well adapted to reign over this cemetery; then the sculptured lion of Charles the Fifth keeping watch and ward over Madrid.

The approach to Madrid delighted them. An avenue, shaded with trees, houses painted green, rose and lilac, were rendered still more pleasing by the joy of arrival. After the declivities, the drenchings, the wastes, the aridity, the Escurial, this verdure and these fresh colors were

charming. It seemed as though they were landing from a voyage in spring.

At the end of the avenue of trees, the carriage took the Calle de Alcalá, then the Calle de la Reyna, and entered the court of the Masserano Palace, which was at the corner of the two streets.

XIX.

THE MASSERANO PALACE.

General Hugo was not then at Madrid. He had been obliged, by the imperious necessities of his office, to be absent for some days; but Madame Hugo found a letter from him, which promised his speedy return.

The intendant of Prince Masserano, dressed in black, with a sword by his side, came to receive the traveller, and conducted her to a gorgeous suite of rooms.

Madame Hugo chose for herself a chamber hung with sky-blue, which looked out upon two streets, and had a large balcony and a fire-place. The children had a chamber hung in yellow.

Victor saw above his bed a Virgin, whose heart was pierced with seven arrows, symbolic of the seven passions. It is still graven on his memory, with that incredible precision of memory which he has in his eyes as well as in his mind.

Madame Hugo was charmed with her boudoir and its balcony. In examining it, she raised a curtain, and saw a door, which was sealed. The charm was broken. The Prince treated her like the alcade. In the heart of Madrid this palace insulted its Governor, in the centre of the French forces, and in the presence of the King.

Moreover, this was the watchword of the Spaniards. Throughout Spain Napoleon was called nothing but Napoladron (*ladron*, thief).

Madame Hugo found at Madrid, also, the other inhabitants of Spanish houses. The fleas and bugs had not done like the Prince and Princess; they had not left the palace. This splendid tapestry was full of them. Madame Hugo, who tried the Princess's bed one night, repented before morning, and returned to her island. But the fleas attacked her from the floor, and the bugs from the ceiling. She left this magnificent chamber for a servant's room, bare of tapestry; but the whole palace swarmed with vermin. She gave up the contest, and, weary of resistance, returned to the Princess's chamber, and at last became accustomed to her bedfellows.

A week after their installation, the children, who were playing upon the balcony, saw entering the Calle de la Reyna some horsemen, whose whimsical manner of wearing the hair resembled an ostrich egg, with sides like a melon. These horsemen, who were Westphalians, halted at the gate of the Palace; and, after some parley with the intendant, entered the court. This cavalcade was an express, bringing a letter from the General.

The roads were so insecure that it required sixty men to bring one letter.

The General wrote that he was on his way back.

They busied themselves at once with making room for the Westphalians, who were a part of the Governor's guard. The men were not the trouble. The Prince himself had his guard, who had gone away with him, and who had left a building empty adjoining the Palace. But the Prince's guard were infantry, and the stable was not calculated for sixty horses. They made stables of several rooms upon the ground floor, the marble flagstones of which were soon infected with dirt and ordure.

The three brothers witnessed this installation; for nothing pleases children so much as soldiers and horses. And then they had other pieces of good luck. With his letter their father had sent two thousand dollars

in gold, which they spread out upon a table, and which made them think that they were yet in the Alcazar at Segovia. The Westphalians had also brought the trunks of the General, who requested his wife to open them and air his garments. The children, under pretext of aiding their mother, passed in review the magnificent uniforms, the embroidery, the great epaulettes, the cocked hats with plumes. When their mother's back was turned, they tried on the beautiful things, to see if they would not fit them; and Madame Hugo, returning to their chamber from the dining-room, found little Victor frightening his brothers by the fierce look with which he stumbled about with his father's great sabre.

After the clothes, there were oranges. The father had sent two enormous boxes of these to the children. That gave them a little patience. At length one day more Westphalians turned into the street. They thought their father had come. But no; it was only another letter. The guerillas did not permit the General to leave, and he did not know even when he should be able to come. They had not, however, to make more stables for the new Westphalians. Not only these did not remain, but they took away the first, who were not too many for the consumption of men which the times demanded.

All went away, even the beautiful uniforms; even the great sabre.

Instead of their father, the children saw their uncles, Louis and Francis, who often had occasion to come to Madrid.

Madame Hugo had been delaying her presentation at court until the arrival of her husband. But she could not postpone it indefinitely, and her court-dress must be made ready. The children were charmed with the splendid stuffs which were brought every day, the shining silks, the spangled satins, and the Spanish laces, so thick and yet so soft. The first time their mother went to court, they thought her so fine that they did not dare to address her in their usual familiar manner. Their mother's robes with trains, coming after the embroidered apparel of their father, was a height of happiness hardly endurable. Madame Hugo at court made several acquaintances, among others that of General Lucotte, who was, like her husband, major-domo and count. Madame Lucotte was one of those pretty, graceful, and frivolous women who often succeed better in society than the beautiful and intelligent. Her two children by a former husband, Armand and Honorine, and an adopted son of the General, Amato, became the playmates of Madame Hugo's boys. The band was soon increased by the addition of the little daughter of the Marquis de Monte Hermosa. They played in the court, where there was a fountain, ran, chased one another, declared war, made peace, and crowned their delights by throwing water in each other's faces.

Coolness is always accompanied with dampness in the courts of Spanish houses. The pavement of the court of the palace Masserano was green with mould. The children did not dry it with their splashings. It had, besides, the gloom of the shadow of the four walls which inclosed it. They disliked it, and preferred the portrait gallery, which was an admirable place to play hide-and-seek, on account of the doorways, the pedestals for busts, and especially two colossal China vases in the interior of which the little Pepita was hidden more than once.

Victor had become very much attached to that gallery. He was often found there alone, seated in a corner, gazing in silence on all those personages, in whom the dead centuries lived again; the lordliness of their attitudes, the sumptuosity of the picture-frames, art, mingled with family and national pride; all this combined to stir the imagination of the future author of *Hernani*, and quietly sowed the seed of the scene of Don Ruy Gomes.

After the hour of the siesta, when the heat of the day was abated, Madame Hugo had the horses harnessed to a great carriage of the Piranese style, which belonged to the palace, and went to the Prado. In the evening, she remained long upon the terrace.

It was the time of the celebrated comet of 1811, which the Empire and Spain explained each in their own way, and which each mustered into its own service. Napoleon, then at the height of his power, husband of an archduchess, emperor of Europe, father of the King of Rome, considered the comet a sort of bouquet of celestial fireworks exhibited in honor of the birth of the prince imperial. The Spaniards regarded it as the presage of the fall of the Empire which was to disappear with the meteor. The comet recruited for the guerillas, the priests invoked it from the pulpit, they saw in it, and showed to peasants also the Virgin holding Ferdinand VII. by the hand.

The children, strangers to these quarrels of men, loved the comet for itself. When evening came they were upon the balcony, and each strove to catch the first glimpse of it. It was enormous, and seemed to occupy the third part of the heavens. The atmosphere of Spain gave it an extraordinary splendor. It appeared to them alive, and seemed a gigantic bird of paradise with a carbuncle for its head.

XX.

THE NOBLES' COLLEGE.

The father at length arrived. It was a delight, but for Eugene and Victor it very soon turned into sorrow. The journey had occupied three months, and they had been six weeks in Madrid, leading the life of a bird, skipping and singing from morning till night. This did not advance them in their studies, and the General judged it high time to end their vacation. For Abel studies were over. The Empire did not permit its youth to remain long upon the benches, but pushed them early into life. Abel was to become one of the King's pages when he was twelve. He lacked but a few months of that now, and it was not worth while to send him to the college for so short a time. All the pages, except Abel, were Spanish. The office was much sought, and the king endeavored by it to secure the principal houses of the kingdom. They continued in the service but two years. At fourteen, they chose between the army and the clergy; there was not much difference; the officers paid their court to the ladies in uniform, the abbés in a cassock. And these priests were always free. They could any day let their hair grew, throw off their violet camail, give up—there was the rub—the two or three thousand dollars of the canonicate, and marry.

On the Monday succeeding the arrival of their father, therefore, Eugène and Victor got into the Prince's carriage, which appeared less splendid that day. Their mother was with them. The carriage drove along the Calle de Hortaleza, beneath huge, grey walls, and stopped before a heavy gate, which was closed.

It was the gate of the Nobles' College.

A man of a serious aspect came to meet Madame Hugo. This man, who was the major-domo of the college, led the mother and her children along whitewashed and dilapidated passages, to which there seemed no end. Nobody was visible. Their own footsteps and voices echoed through the empty space. But little light came through the narrow openings in the top of the walls.

That gloomy gallery, which had little resemblance to the cheerful gallery of the Masserano Palace, led to a court, in which the major-domo showed Madame Hugo a door, on which was written SEMINARIO. He said that he could not accompany her further, being a layman, and having no right to enter the sacred precincts.

He knocked at the door, bowed, and returned the way he had come.

The Nobles' College was kept by monks. A monk appeared, in a large black gown, worn red with age, a white neck-cloth, and a sombrero. He was, perhaps, fifty years old, had a nose like the beak of a crow, and very deep-set eyes. But what most attracted attention was his leanness and his pallor. Body and face were rigid; his muscles had lost all elasticity, and seemed to be ossified. You were astonished that that statue of yellow ivory could walk.

Don Bazile (this was the name of the ivory monk) showed Madame Hugo and the two new scholars through the house. Everything was upon the largest scale, except the play-grounds, which, buried between high walls, had the gloomy dampness of a cellar. The dining-rooms, on the ground floor, were dismal, receiving their light from these courts, which had none. The dormitories higher up, where there was sunlight, seemed less sad to the children; perhaps because it was the place where they would forget it all.

The poor children were heavy-hearted at leaving their palace for this prison, and their mother for this forbidding monk. They, nevertheless, bore up as long as they could. But when their mother had gone, and Don Bazile had led them into the court, saying that their studies would not commence until to-morrow, and that they had the rest of the day for play, they gave way to despair, and burst into sobs.

They could not eat any supper. The sullen austerity of the dining-room was not enlivened by the small number of pupils. There were then only twenty-four; all the rest had been withdrawn, out of opposition to Joseph. Judge of the solitude produced by that imperceptible number, in rooms calculated for five hundred.

The dormitory gained nothing by being seen at night. Instead of the sunshine there were a few smoky lamps, which dimly lighted the only occupied corner, and the light of which gradually faded into the darkness. This was the sleeping-room of the little children. Out of a hundred and fifty beds, scarcely ten were occupied. At the head of each bed hung a crucifix. After that silken chamber where the three brothers dropped asleep while prattling with each other, and where the awaking continued the fairy enchantment of their dreams, this was a terrible chamber; this desert where the two little boys, lost in the darkness, felt that the look of the hundred and fifty crucifixes was upon them.

The next morning, at five o'clock, they were awakened by three blows struck upon the head of their bed. They opened their eyes, and saw a hunchback, red-faced, kinky-haired, dressed in red woollen waistcoat, blue plush breeches, yellow stockings, and Russia leather shoes. This rainbow made them laugh, and they were almost consoled.

This awakener was the drudge of the pupils. When they were displeased with him they called him, harshly, *Corcova* (hump). When he had done his work well, and they wished to be kind to him, they called him *Corcovita* (little hump). The poor man laughed. Perhaps he was accustomed to his deformity; perhaps he felt it keenly, in the depths of his heart, but dared not show vexation, for fear of losing his place.

Eugene and Victor soon joined in these pleasantries; and, to thank their *valet de chambre*, gave him, with the cruel kindness of infancy, his little name. M. Victor Hugo has repented of this more than once since, and Corcovita was no stranger to the idea which produced Triboulet and Quasimodo.

The two brothers were pleased with a large room contiguous to the dormitory, where there were stone bowls with water pipes, from which they could draw as much as they liked. When the pupils had made such ablutions as they wished, they went to mass. The pupils assisted at mass in

turn Madame Hugo, as I have said, had accepted of the Catholic royalism of her father and sisters, the royalism only; she was still a royalist in spite of her husband, but she was still a Voltairean in spite of her father. She had her own faith, which she had drawn partly from religion, and partly from philosophy. She desired that her sons should also have their own religion, such as their life and thought might form. She preferred to trust them to conscience rather than the catechism. And so, when Don Bazile spoke of their assisting at mass, she had strenuously opposed it. Don Bazile having replied that it was a strict rule for all the Catholic pupils, she had cut the discussion short by saying that her sons were Protestants.

Eugene and Victor, therefore, did not assist at mass; they rose when the others rose, but made no other sign, and did not give the responses. They did not go to confession or communion.

After mass Don Bazile took them to his apartments to examine them, and see in what class to put them. They found there another monk as yellow as Don Bazile, but in other respects totally unlike him. Don Manuel was as pot-bellied as Don Bazile was lean. The contrast was completed by their expression and their manner. Don Manuel was jovial, puffed up with comfort, smiling, fondling, bustling, and, beside the icy inflexibility of Don Bazile, had the appearance of a jolly bourgeois in company with a spectre.

Latin books, similar to those used in French colleges, lay upon a table. Seeing the age of the two brothers, they gave them the *Epitome*, which they translated off hand. They passed to the *De Viris*; the boys needed no dictionary for this, nor for Justin, nor for Quintus Curtius. The two monks were very much astonished; the astonishment of Don Bazile showed itself by a knitting of the brows; that of Don Manuel in joyous exclamations, and boisterous congratulations. They went on until they came to Virgil, where they gave closer attention, and read less rapidly; they got through Lucretius, however, with some effort, and failed only upon Plautus.

Don Bazile, displeased, asked them what they construed when they were eight years old. When Victor answered, "Tacitus," he looked at him almost with hostility.

He knew not in what class to put them. Don Manuel advised to put them in the highest class. But Don Bazile said it would not do to confound ages, and, as they were small, they must go into the lowest class.

Don Manuel was his inferior; he could only obey, and conducted the two brothers into a cell where five or six children were learning the A B C of Latin. Besides Latin, they were taught drawing and music. Sol-faing was not very attractive to Victor; but he had a natural aptitude for drawing; and there, again, he astonished his teachers.

They breakfasted on a cup of chocolate. The two children, who had had no supper, thought the breakfast excellent, and found no fault with the cup, except its smallness.

Don Bazile and Don Manuel ate with the scholars, each at a little table adjoining the large one, and higher, so that they looked over the boys. Every meal must begin with the *Benedicite* and the Spanish sign of the cross, which complicates the great cross with little crosses on all the features of the face. The two brothers were freed from all these crosses by their Protestantism.

The dinner was composed of the national *olla podrida* and a second plate: sometimes roast mutton, which would have been palatable if they knew how to roast in Spain; sometimes of the remains of the bread of the previous day, fried in fat. The bread was unleavened. For drink, the classic abundance.

After dinner the siesta. Monks, pupils, servants, all slept. Eugene and Victor never could acquire this

habit of sleeping in the daytime. It was their hour of liberty, none else awake; they did what they pleased, and the vast college was their own.

At three o'clock Corcova beat his reveille again; there was two hours of study, then an hour of recreation, with a bit of dry bread, then work till eight o'clock, then supper, usually a salad, made with this oil, to which Madame Hugo preferred butter, and which was not excused to Victor by the fine Louis XV. cruet; sometimes, and in this case he supped, *sandras*, pink lemons, sweeter and more highly flavored than ours.

Don Bazile could not keep the two brothers in the lowest class long. They had their tasks finished when the rest had scarcely begun, and were kept with their arms folded nearly all the time. They discouraged their fellow pupils, certain not to get the prize. They put them into a higher class, with still the same result; into a still higher, and yet they discouraged the rest. Don Bazile changed his determination, and put them with the largest scholars. In one week they had leaped from the seventh class to the highest.

The older scholars received these children with disdain, and began to look down on them from the height of their fifteen years of age. But when they saw them translate, the moment the book was opened, that which they were not always able to understand with the aid of their dictionaries and their study, they perceived that these children were their superiors, and admired them upon a footing of equality.

The fellow pupils of the two children had not merely the difference of age against them; they had also the difference of nation. Politics entered the college with these sons of families who were taking part in events. Their discussions did not always end in words. Eugène had one with a big boy named Frasco, Count de Belverana. The name of a young Spaniard, who had fought for Ferdinand, and who was kept a prisoner in the college on account of his youth, having been introduced into a conversation already somewhat heated, Eugène spoke lightly of the hero, and said that this gamin must have been caught between the legs of a grenadier. Belverana, furious at hearing a Spaniard thus spoken of, and a Spaniard who had fought against the French, seized a pair of scissors, rushed upon Eugène, and wounded him in the cheek. The monks hastened to the spot. There was no denying it. Belverana had still the scissors in his hand, and Eugène's face was covered with blood. The wound seemed deep. Don Bazile was the more severe towards Belverana as probably, in secret, he approved of the act, and feared lest he might betray his secret sentiments. He expelled him from the college.

A dismissal, under these circumstances, was a bad thing for Belverana, and perhaps for his family, whom this quarrel denounced as hating Joseph. Eugène forgot his wound; spoke to Don Bazile; told him that he had begun it; that Belverana ought, as a Spaniard, to have defended his insulted compatriot, and ought not to be punished for that. And when Don Bazile hesitated, not daring to pardon, he declared that if his comrade was sent away he would go also. Don Bazile dared not yet pardon him; but Madame Hugo having come in just then, Eugène prevailed on her to intercede with him, and Belverana was allowed to remain.

Victor, however, had more spite. Long afterwards, he revenged his brother, in his way, by making one of the least sympathetic characters of his dramas a Count de Belverana.

Another of his grudges was against a shocking great fellow, with crispy hair, sprawling hands, ill-shapen, uncombed, unwashed, incurably lazy, using his inkstand no more than his washbowl, surly, and ridiculous, whose name was Elespuru. It is

the name of one of the fools in *Cromwell*.

On the other hand he immediately became, and he remained, the friend of the oldest son of the Duke de Benavente. He saw him again in Paris in 1825. Ramon de Benavente was at that time suffering from one of those secret and bitter griefs which accept no consolation. To him is addressed the ode commencing:

"Helas! J'ai compris ton sourire."

The pupils addressed each other by their titles. In playing, Belverana would say to Benavente:

"Marquis, toss me the ball."

The teachers also called the pupils by their titles, and these monks, when preaching humility to them, never failed to remind them of their parchments. Don Manuel, reprimanding Eugène for bad conduct during a prayer, said:

"Count, you are talking, you shall not have any dessert."

On Sundays and Thursdays Don Manuel or Don Bazile took the whole school out for a walk in the city or country. So the little Hugos saw the environs of Madrid, which no Frenchman dared visit. But the monks had nothing to fear from the guerillas, who knew their opinions too well to disturb them.

One of their walks was to a cemetery three miles from the city. The wall of this cemetery was the cemetery itself. It had compartments in which the coffins were ranged. Upon the coffins were metal plates, giving the names and titles of the dead. Each family had its shelf in this etagère of corpses.

On days of bull-fights the pupils were sometimes taken, not into the amphitheatre, but upon the plaza; their amusement was to see the public going in or coming out; they imagined the representation from the cries and the applause, and Victor remarked that "a wall behind which something is going on, is already a very interesting object to us." Sometimes they succeeded in slipping into the passage by which the victims were carried out, men or beasts. One day they saw a dying bull, whose head had received a coiffure of iron hooks, with fuses upon them These were set on fire, and, in exploding, tore out and scattered shreds of bleeding flesh. The multitude screamed with delight. Six mules, dazzlingly caparisoned, loaded with bells and streamers, finally dragged away the martyr.

Winter came, and the college was gloomy. The winter is cold in Madrid, and the Spaniards do not know how to keep warm. The school-bills of so few pupils would not have sufficed to pay for warming the vast halls. Don Bazile, unable to warm them enough, did not warm them at all, so the pupils did not thaw. Eugène had chilblains, and Victor gatherings in his ears. The ear-ache is equal to the tooth-ache; the poor child had terrible sleepless nights; medicines were tried in vain: they came at last to a popular remedy—woman's milk. The majordomo of the college was married, and his wife was in the exact condition required. Victor was placed with her; she had charge of the laundry, and was obliged, therefore, always to have a fire. The warm atmosphere commenced the cure, and the milk completed it.

The winter of 1811 was made still more terrible by famine. Men died of cold in the streets and of hunger in the houses. The pupils were put on rations, as to bread even. The famine increased and the rations diminished. The dinner became a mockery. When the pupils complained, Don Manuel made the sign of the cross upon his big belly and told them to do the same and that would nourish them. Certain it is that he did not grow any leaner; on the contrary, he grew fatter; and yet he continued to eat with the pupils, and not more than they. The collegians attributed this miracle less to the

signs of the cross upon his belly than to the dinners which they suspected him of taking secretly in his room.

Their mother did her best to shield them from the famine. She always came loaded with preserves, fruit, pies, etc. But they had comrades, and next day nothing was left of it all but the remembrance.

Their interviews with their mother were a continual shock to the stiffness of the Spaniards. Madame Hugo, without being very demonstrative, gave herself up to the caresses of her children. The Spaniards thought that these effusions lacked gravity and ceremonial. Ramon de Benevente and his three young brothers had not seen their mother for a year; one day they were at dinner in the huge refectory, the door opened, a woman of haughty figure, in a black satin dress trimmed with jet, appeared; Ramon and his brothers, seeing her, rose solemnly and went to her; she extended her hand to Ramon, who kissed it, then to the three others in the order of their age, and that was all. It was their mother.

Etiquette was rigorous among the brothers. Ramon, the oldest, called his brothers by their given names; they called him only by his title.

The winter was the more unpleasant on account of the small number of visitors at the college. Their friends did not like to leave their firesides. Eugène and Victor saw only their mother. The General, always upon the road, came to Madrid but rarely. Abel was busy. They saw him but once while they were in the college, but that time counted. He wore the splendid costume of a page, and wore it gallantly. He was accompanied by Madame Lucotte, elegantly apparelled, and in all the radiance of that double beauty which is composed of beauty and success. Victor, who thought her prodigiously pretty, trembled with hope and pride when she said in her silvery voice:

"In a year it will be your turn; you will be a page, and will be like Abel."

In a year Joseph was leaving Spain. There were no more pages, and the splendors of Abel, consigned to the corner of a wardrobe, were eaten by moths.

XXI.

THE RETURN.

At the beginning of 1812, the affairs of the French had become so desperate in Spain that General Hugo deemed it prudent to send his wife and the two children back to France. Abel remained with his father. He had not taken the oath of fidelity to the King to abandon him in the time of danger.

Eugène and Victor were as happy to leave Spain as they had been sad on leaving Italy. Avellino had been free air and full liberty, and their mother, all the while. Madrid was the College; and not even the French College, with compatriots, with friends, and professors who are men, under whose gown you perceive the dress of the world, but with *superiors*, separated from life for ever, and condemned eternally to their winding sheet.

Marshal de Bellune was going to France. Madame Hugo profited by his escort.

So great was the confusion in Joseph's administration, that even the orthography of the name of the Governor of Madrid was forgotten. I have before me the passport, given to Madame *Hugau*.

The children were impatient to see their dear Feuillantines again, which Madame Hugo had retained, and the keys and keeping of which she had confided to Madame Larivière. The return seemed long to them, and was not shortened by the incidents of the road.

At Burgos, the place where, on coming to Spain, they had been amused by the diluvian umbrella,

another incident befell them, of a less amusing character. A boisterous multitude passing before the house in which they lodged, they followed it. They came to a square, and saw what attracted all this multitude,—a wooden platform, surmounted by a post. They asked what this was, and were told that it was a scaffold, and a man was to be garroted. This idea frightened them, and they ran away at full speed. In going out of the square, they encountered a brotherhood of grey and black penitents, bearing long batons also grey and black, with lighted lanterns at their larger ends; their cowls, drawn over their heads, had holes for the eyes. These eyes, staring where there was no countenance visible, seemed frightful to the children. The spectres had in their midst a man bound upon an ass, with his back to the animal's head. The man seemed stupefied with terror. The monks held up the crucifix, which he kissed, without seeing it. The children fled in terror.

This was M. Victor Hugo's first meeting with the scaffold.

On entering Vittoria the carriage passed by the foot of a cross, on which were nailed the limbs of a young man who had been cut in pieces. With horrible ingenuity the pieces had been fitted together, and of the fragments had been made a corpse. It was the body of Mina's brother, who had been taken by the French. The carriage passed so close to it that the children sprang back, lest they should catch the dripping blood.

This ferocious retaliation told the severity of the struggle, and the danger of travel in Biscay. Madame Hugo, who expected to proceed in the morning, received a letter from the Marshal de Bellune, regretting that his escort was too feeble to conduct her to France.

She had not to wait long. There was much returning to France. A convoy soon came, which took her, and did not leave her on the road, but which escorted her roughly. It was a very different thing from the journey into Spain; the situation was serious; there was no laughter; the carriages were crowded together; it was a train no longer; it was a chain. The marches were forced; they must obey at a gesture, pack and harness before the order, day and night There were now neither women nor children; all were mustered in, and under military command; they rarely halted, had little food, and no beds. They went!

Hardly was Saint Jean de Luz behind them, and the great plains of France in sight, when, without saying a word or bidding each other adieu, all the carriages broke ranks, happy to escape this harsh protection, and scattered across the country in every direction, with the haste of a joyous flight and a triumphant rout.

The children did not find at the inn of Bordeaux the two pretty servants with the red petticoats. They consoled themselves by eating so many dried almonds that they were surfeited with them, and have not been able to look at one since.

Victor, however, lost not only the two pretty girls and the liking for almonds; he lost his watch also. He was the possessor of a gold hunting watch, which his father had given him. This had been a source of great anxiety in crossing Spain. He felt perpetually in his watch pocket, to assure himself that it was still there, and the guerillas would not have taken it from him easily. A common pickpocket stole it from him at Bordeaux.

Misfortunes never come singly. He lost also, in a crack of the diligence, the gold piece given him by the Count de Tilly.

At last they saw the Feuillantines again! Madame Larivière had taken good care of everything; the garden was raked, and the house in order, as if they had never been out of it. Madame Hugo had written the time when she had expected to arrive. She found the meat upon the spit,

the sheets upon the beds, and she had only to dine and to retire.

On the Monday following the Latin re-commenced. It was difficult to send two scholars who had been in the highest class, to school again. They did not go to M. Larivière's any more; but M. Larivière came to their house. Their principal master, however, was the garden, where their mother allowed them to study the first of all books, nature.

Madame Hugo was an advocate of the freedom of education. She read much, and had a yearly subscription at a library. People who like reading go through any book which they begin; in order that she might not begin a tedious book, Madame Hugo made use of the children as trial readers. She sent them to her library, kept by a man named Royol, a very singular man who preserved the costume of Louis XVI. in all its purity, camlet coat, short breeches, figured stockings, shoe-buckles, and powdered hair. The two brothers searched his library and brought away what they liked. With these two purveyors, who never failed to keep her supplied, Madame Hugo consumed books enormously, and had soon exhausted the ground floor of goodman Royol. He had still an upper room left, but he did not care to let the children enter there. He there kept works of too bold a philosophy or too free a morality to be exhibited to every eye. He gave his objection to the mother, who answered that books never did harm, and the two brothers had the key of the upper room.

The upper room was topsy-turvy. The shelves not being able to hold the books the floor was piled with them. To save the trouble of stooping down and getting up every minute, the children lay flat upon the floor and tasted whatever came to hand. When their interest was excited they remained there sometimes for hours. Everything was good to their young appetites, prose, verse, memoirs, travels, science. They read in this manner Rousseau, Voltaire, Diderot, they read *Faublas* and other romances of the same kind; but this interested them less than the *Voyages of Captain Cook*, which was the success of the day, and of which they became very fond.

With all this, Madame Hugo was a very firm, almost a stern mother in everything relating to positive material life. She exacted a respectful and punctual obedience. Having had the government of the house both before and after her marriage, obliged to fill the place first of her mother and now of her husband, she had contracted a habit of masculine authority.

As the two brothers had grown during their journey to Spain, the garden seemed on their return to have dwindled. They found it large enough, however, when their mother made them rake, dig, and water it. Discontent was of no avail; they must garden. It is perhaps from this that M. Victor Hugo derives his love of uncultivated gardens, growing spontaneously and watered only by the rain.

XXII.

JEAN L'OURS.

There had been, during their absence, notable changes at the Court-Martials.

First, M. Foucher had ceased to be clerk. Appointed chief of the recruiting bureau of the Minister of War, he had given his clerkship to his brother-in-law, M. Asseline, on condition of retaining half the suite of rooms, which was amply sufficient for two families. Though he still resided at the Court-Martial, he was seen there but little; it was a weary work to record the recruits of those days; the days were not long enough, and he lost his health working at night. Eugène and Victor sometimes heard him speak of this fearful expenditure of human life, and it did not make them love Napoleon.

The judge-advocate was also

changed. The new one was M. Delon. The Delons had a son, who soon became the friend of the little Fouchers, and consequently of the little Hugos. He clambered over the roofs and thundered down the stairs at home, and at the Feuillantines raised the swing to unknown heights, and taught the rabbit-warren what was a serious assault. He rattled through life, was in the Berton conspiracy, escaped through Spain, was sentenced to death, and died in Greece with Lord Byron.

Sometimes, when the children were tired, they would go into the cistern and sit down while Edward Delon related his adventures, which they thought wonderful and always too short. One evening he commenced one more amusing than the former ones, and which had the additional merit of being long. It was the history of *Jean l' Ours.* It was so long that the evening ended before it; and the storyteller, who was obliged to be at school at a given hour, was forced to leave his open-mouthed audience and remit the rest of his tale to the next holiday, not dreaming that he had that night invented the continued romances of the newspapers.

But when the next holiday came, great changes had occurred.

The Mallet conspiracy had failed. Mallet, Lahorie, and Guidal, masters of Paris for some hours, had been stopped short by the firmness of the commandant of place, Hulin, disarmed, and thrown into prison. Madame Hugo knew well that it was all over with Lahorie. These three men, who, from the depths of different prisons, had produced a revolution, had shown too clearly the weakness of the Empire not to be condemned in advance, the more, as the police and the ministry, who had not been able to discover it nor to prevent it, would avenge themselves for their own imbecility. Madame Hugo, however, did not abandon Lahorie. She hurried to the Court-Martial and supplicated the judge-advocate to shield the godfather of her child. But M. Delon was a fervent Bonapartist, and, excited by the danger which the Empire had incurred, he received her coldly, and his prosecution was implacable.

On the day of sentence the court of the Hôtel Toulouse was crowded with troops. A large force of cavalry, with drawn sabres, guarded the Rue du Cherche-Midi. The ministers guarded the accused better than they had guarded the Empire. During the trial Madame Hugo was at the house of Madame Foucher, to hear the first news, and she anxiously followed every incident.

The next morning Eugène and Victor were passing before Saint Jacques du Haut Pas. There was one of those fine, penetrating autumn rains. The rain was a pretext for the two children to delay in the street by sheltering themselves under the massive colonnade which supports the façade of the church. While they were playing and laughing, a poster attracted the attention of Victor by the word *Soulier* (shoe), printed in large letters. He called Eugene, and they read the poster together. It was the sentence which condemned to death Generals Mallet, Lahorie, and their accomplices, among whom was Col. Soulier. The execution was to be that same day. No one of the names gave any hint to the children. They knew Lahorie only under the assumed name which he bore at the Feuillantines; it did not enter their minds that it concerned that relative who had lived with them for eighteen months, and Victor began to laugh and play again while they were shooting his godfather.

Madame Hugo never pardoned the judge-advocate, and broke off all relations with the Delons. Edward, therefore, did not come again to the Feuillantines; and to this day Victor and Eugène have never heard the remainder of the story of *Jean l' Ours.*

XXIII.

ABEL'S OMELET.

About this time the liberty of the two brothers was gravely imperilled. A dean came to solicit them for his college, and for a moment disquieted the soul of their mother, in view of the consequences of that loose education which lacks the discipline of the university. I do not relate the scene, which is given at length in *Les Rayons et les Ombres.* The "dean of some college," described with a spite which twenty-six years had not appeased, was the Dean of the Napoleon Lyceum. The mother hesitated for some days, and the children trembled. But the remembrance of the College of Nobles was too fresh; they had told their mother too much of what they had suffered; she had no wish to reproduce Madrid at Paris, and left them to their garden.

General Hugo gave his wife his salary as major-domo, eighteen thousand francs. But soon the troubles in Spain affected this salary, and Madame Hugo could no longer obtain it regularly. To complete her difficulties, a reserve of silver was stolen. The theft happened just when she was expecting Madame Lucotte, whom the disorder in Spain had sent to Paris, and to whom she had offered her hospitality. She rented another story, and Madame Lucotte did not perceive her embarrassment.

Eugène and Victor were at the age when what is lost is easily replaced. They had lost Edward Delon; they found Armand Lucotte and Amato. The garden, although it was winter, was still beautiful; but this was the last of it. The City took it to extend the Rue d'Ulm. Madame Hugo, who had rented the house only for the garden, removed.

On the 31st of December, 1813, she went to live in the Rue du Cherche-Midi, nearly opposite the Court-martial. The new rooms were far from having the character or the spaciousness of the Feuillantines; nevertheless, they had a good appearance. Madame Hugo, faithful to her habits, took the lower floors, which had a garden. The lower floor not being enough, she took a part of the third story for her children.

Madame Lucotte did not leave her friend, and hired the second story, where her husband soon joined her.

General Hugo did not remain long in Spain after the departure of his wife.

Wellington took Ciudad Rodrigo, then Badajoz; and, with eighty thousand men against forty-five, defeated Marshal Marmont at the village of Arapyles. He marched upon Madrid, whence Joseph was obliged to fall back upon Valencia. General Hugo, besides the troops under his orders, had under his care more than twenty thousand French and Spaniards, who fled from the Capital, men, women, and children, crowded into two thousand five hundred and thirty-seven carriages, and piled upon horses, mules, and asses. It seemed more like the emigration of a people than the retreat of an army. The journey was terrible. They suffered with hunger and died of thirst. In the kingdom of Valencia they halted. Dysentery, poison, and desertion had reduced the foreign brigade to a regiment. Marshal Soult having taken the offensive, the King joined him, and re-entered Madrid. But nearly all the French and Spanish families which the General had brought thus far preferred to continue their journey. They had lost faith in Joseph's reign. The King and the Marshal soon commenced the pursuit of Wellington, and finally drove him into Portugal. Joseph was King another winter.

In the spring Joseph felt that his kingdom was again slipping away from under him. This King without subjects left Madrid, never to return. On the 27th of May, 1813, General Hugo, who had remained to the last, left the city, this time taking with

him a convoy of three hundred carriages, in which were the Ministers, the Councillors of State, a part of the diplomatic corps, and those French families or allies who had hoped to the last moment. He rejoined the king between Valladolid and Burgos.

In a few days came the battle of Vittoria, Joseph's Waterloo.

The retreat was harassed by an irruption of the enemy's hussars, who burst in among the carriages. The drivers cut the traces and fled with the horses. Women and children shrieked; the rout was indescribable. Neither grade nor nation was distinguishable. The treasure-wagons were pillaged by Englishmen, Spaniards, Portuguese, and even by Frenchmen. The ground was broken by ditches of mire, in which fugitives and conquerors were engulphed. A vivandière, escaping on an ass at a gallop, fell into a slough, in which the ass sank out of sight and she was following; she felt the mire giving way beneath her and was calling in desperation for help, when some French soldiers came who were fugitives also; they saw her; one of them took his musket by the muzzle, placed the butt upon the woman's breast, and, with the aid of this solid support, cleared the ditch; the next did the same thing, only he was obliged to rest the butt of his musket upon her shoulder, the weight of the first having carried her breast down out of sight; the others rested upon her head. Fortunately there were but four or five, for the woman, entirely out of sight, could serve no more.

General Hugo rallied two regiments and two battalions and checked the enemy till night, when he proposed to their commanders to go to Vittoria and kill or capture Wellington. They had many officers who spoke English; they would represent themselves as an English column returning from the pursuit of the enemy; he knew Vittoria; the palace wall was but twelve feet high; Wellington would be in the apartment which Joseph had occupied; he would wake a prisoner; if they failed to bring him off they would kill him, and they would not be killed until afterwards. The colonels replied that they would go themselves, but dared not risk their commands without an order from the general-in-chief or the King; so the project was abandoned.

Thenceforward the retreat, though harassed, was conducted in good order. Food was not abundant. The King himself was reduced more than once to a dinner of roasted acorns. When kings dine poorly their pages go hungry. Abel, who had not left the king, and with whom his father had been well satisfied at Arapyles and Vittoria, was of an age to endure battle more easily than hunger. He went on exploring expeditions, hoping to find dinners, but always disappointed. At length, at some place in the Pyrenees, I have forgotten where, he saw a hut, to which he rode at full speed. He found an old peasant and his wife, who were very civil for Spaniards.

He took out a gold piece and asked them what they had to eat.

"Nothing."

This was more Spanish.

Ceasing to talk, he put the gold piece upon the table and searched in the cupboard. He found six eggs. This was enough for an omelet; but he must have butter. There was none, but he discovered a pot of lard, then a slice of bacon. The result of all his discoveries and of a fire which he kindled, was a golden and appetising omelet, upon which Abel was about to feast when Joseph entered.

Joseph's first glance was at the omelet. It was a famished and a royal glance.

Abel turned pale, but he understood what must be done.

"Will your Majesty," said he with a sigh, "do me the favor to taste of my omelet?"

"The deuce!" said the King.

And he began to eat. Abel hoped to get his share, at least, but the omelet was so good that Joseph did

not leave him a mouthful. The unfortunate page came away with a little more appetite and a little less money, and thought that he had payed pretty dearly for another's omelet.

The Emperor never pardoned failure; the defeat of Vittoria cost Marshal Jourdan his command, which was given to Marshal Soult. On that same day Joseph left the army with the officers of his household. He dismissed them at Saint Esprit, to go to live with his family at Morfontaine, and General Hugo returned to Paris with Abel.

XXIV.

FRANCE INVADED.

Abel was an admirable recruit for the joyous band of the Rue du Cherche-Midi. It was then complete. There were three Hugos and the two Lucottes, and Victor Foucher had only to cross the street. The house had a court, and the court a coach-house, in which was General Lucotte's carriage. That carriage was converted into a ship; some of the children were the passengers, others the waves. One half stationed themselves within and the other half without, and straightway the rolling and pitching began. The carriage, shaken in every way, cracked and was becoming disjointed; it was fine sport, but General Lucotte preferred to preserve his carriage, and he put a stop to this stormy navigation by placing padlocks upon the coach doors.

The elegance of Madame Lucotte had not been brought from Spain without a prodigious quantity of trunks and boxes, which encumbered the carriage-house, and were a pressing invitation to the construction of a fortress. They built one very much like a real fortress, with towers, bastions, and platforms; all the boxes were used for this, whole or in pieces. Then the rabbit-warren assaults ceased to be child's play. It was real war. They escaladed; they rolled down; they were wounded with splinters of wood; they had bloody hands; the forgotten nails tore their trousers and their skin; it was grand amusement. But yet their mothers scolded. Instead of congratulating their sons upon the glorious wounds of the assaults, they scolded them, and the door of the coach-house suffered the same fate as the doors of the coach.

The court had lost its charm. They went to the barn. The charm of the barn lay in the forage of General Lucotte's horses. It is one of the great pleasures of life to roll upon a haymow, to give battle in it, to bury one's adversary in the hay, or be thrust into it one's self. But the barn had another attraction. It had an exterior platform, a sort of balcony without a railing, which afforded an opportunity for a very pretty sport. They climbed upon the roof of the barn, and only the cowards refused to jump down upon the platform. Their mothers—mothers are always impracticable—did not, however, comprehend the beauty of this leap. Under the pretext that a false spring might throw the leaper off the platform, and break his skull upon the pavement, they were very angry, and locked the granary as well as the coach and the coach-house.

Expelled high and low, sport took refuge in the mid regions. Armand Lucotte's room became its asylum. Not to be pursued in this last refuge of proscribed liberty, they gave up noisy manifestations and the battles which had betrayed them. The chairs were used for seats; the bed was not a barricade; and the commode was a commode. Armand Lucotte said:

"I have found out how not to be disturbed."

And he triumphantly pulled from his pocket a pack of cards and counters.

There was but one voice in the band·

"Let's go to playing right off."

"What game?"

"All games!"

"No!" said Armand, "there is only one game proper, bouillotte."

"We don't know it."

"I will teach you."

They played, at first, a trial game. Armand explained it. All was comprehended in a trice, and it was not even necessary to finish the trial game.

"We know it! Now let's play for money!"

To play for money was an ambitious affectation. Turning their pockets inside out, and emptying their purses, those who had twenty sous were rich. But it did not matter. They made up for lack of funds by making the counters cheap, ten for a sou. Everything being relative, these fractions of a sou were contended for with the same emotions as bank notes elsewhere. Bouillotte became a passion and a fever. They could not sleep. They gave themselves up to these unbridled games. Some of them played a fearful game, and made their fortune, having more than thirty sous before them! Victor Foucher had at one time such insolent fortune that he gained almost six francs; but then they had played all night.

During this furore for bouillotte France was invaded, and General Hugo, after serving as a volunteer in Germany, took command of Thionville.

The house was full of anxiety. Madame Hugo did not love the empire; but what was to become of the Emperor's Generals? General Lucotte went every day to Joseph, then President of the Council of the Regency, for news, and M. Foucher's office informed him of the movements of troops. Every day regiments left Paris by post, in huge drays, the soldiers sitting back to back, with their legs hanging down, and fell suddenly upon points which the enemy had thought to surprise. This rapidity was the characteristic of this final campaign, which revealed again in Napoleon the young General of Italy.

The political excitement became so great that it reached the children Cards were abandoned for charts upon which they began to follow th progress of the war. General Lucotte had very fine and complete charts. Victor plunged into these eagerly; he devoured them all, and learned geography as it is well learned, by the eyes.

On the 29th of March Victor and Eugène were awakened by a noise, which seemed to them as if made by timber tumbling in the court. They got up and looked out at the window. The court was still. Nevertheless, the noise continued. They did not know what it meant, and went to bed again. When their mother's room was opened, they asked her what the noise was which they had heard all the morning. Madame Hugo told them it was the cannonade of the Russians and Prussians. The tumbling which had awakened them was that of the greatest of thrones.

They were astonished, though prepared by what they had heard, for the defeat of the Emperor. They could not realize that foreigners were at the gates of Paris, they who had always seen, on the contrary, the French in the capitals of other nations. Their astonishment was tempered by the novelty of the sound of the cannon, which they studied with the imperturbable curiosity of children, and which they found to resemble the cracking of a whip.

They saw General Lucotte, in full dress, mount on horseback and gallop away to take Joseph's orders. They desired to go out, also, and see what was going on in the street. The walls were covered with images representing Cossacks with terrible faces. They were enormous; rolled savage eyes under shaggy caps; bran dished lances red with blood, and wore necklaces of human ears, and watch chains. Others were setting fire to cottages, and warming their

hands by villages in flames. Paris was full of these illuminated bugaboos, Napoleon's last reserve.

Hour by hour the defence gave way. One misfortune of the situation was that fighting for Paris was fighting for the Empire, for which few men now cared. A portion of the population looked upon the foreigner as a liberator. Very few said *the enemy;* nearly all said *the allies.*

Paris surrendered. The conquerors must be lodged. Madame Hugo had for her share a Prussian Colonel and forty soldiers.

When she saw this company she remonstrated, and told the Colonel that she had a room, but not a barrack.

"Pshaw!" said the Colonel, "with this court!"

He placed his men in it, saying that it was nicely paved, and there was a pump for washing and watering, and that after adding to the furniture a few bundles of hay, it would be a real palace.

The officer was young, slender, lithe; his figure, the steel crescent of his epaulettes, his plumed hat, and his sword belt, pleased the children at first; but the charm was broken by an observation of Victor, who, pointing to the feathers in his hat, and his stuffed breast, said to Eugène:

"Look at the Colonel, with the breast of a hen and the head of a cock!"

No more was needed to ruin the Prussian in the opinion of the two gamins, who thus proved that they really belonged to Paris.

The courts were not enough; the Cossacks camped in the streets, they slept in the mud between their big lances and their little horses. The children went out to see these streets which were changed into bivouacs and stables. The Cossacks resembled their pictures in no wise; they had no necklaces of human ears; they did not steal watches or set fire to houses; they were mild and polite; they had profound respect for Paris, which was to them a sacred city; they seemed embarrassed and almost ashamed to be in it.

Travel was not easy among these heaps of men and horses.

One morning, Victor, wishing to go out, found the street barred even to the door with recumbent Cossacks, who looked at him out of their cold eyes and did not move.

The Prussian Colonel, who was by, said to Victor:

"Never mind, walk over them."

While they were saying *the allies* at Paris, General Hugo still said *the enemy.*

Thionville, though repeatedly summoned, refused to surrender, until, on the 14th of April, an officer of the staff of the General-in-chief brought him despatches announcing the cessation of hostilities, and in confirmation, the *Moniteur* from the 31st of March to the 11th of April, and Napoleon's act of abdication. Then the General convoked a council of defence, which unanimously adhered to the acts of the Senate.

XXV.

THE BOURBONS.

The restoration of the Bourbons was a joyful thing for Madame Hugo. Her hatred of Napoleon, thus far concealed by the fear of compromising her husband, now found free utterance.

The Emperor was now nothing but Buonaparte; he had neither genius nor talent,—not even military; he had been beaten everywhere, in Russia, in France; he was a coward; he had fled from Egypt and Russia, leaving to the plague and the snows those whom his ambition had carried with him; he had wept at Fontainebleau like a child; he had assassinated the Duke d'Enghien, etc. On the contrary, the Bourbons were all-virtuous and all-glorious.

Royalty recalled to her her dear Brittany; her youth began again; she became really young; she had for

some weeks extraordinary activity and vivacity. She missed no public festival. Her royalism displayed itself in her dress; the season permitted her never to go out except in a white muslin dress, and a rice straw hat trimmed with tuberoses. Fashion affected green shoes for women, that the imperial color might be trampled under foot; Madame Hugo wore only green shoes.

None were more happy than she except the hairdressers. To them royalty meant wig, powder, bird of paradise. In the intoxication of their restoration, they daubed the fronts of their shops sky-blue, spotted with gilt fleurs-de-lis. This azure was a dead loss, the pigeon-wings did not come back, and the hairdressers soon passed over to the constitutional monarchy.

On the day of his entry, the Count d'Artois sent to the sons of so good a royalist the decoration of the order of the Lily. Their pride was so much the greater from the fact that the decoration was accompanied by a certificate signed by the Prince. The lily was silver, and hung by a white moire ribbon. The new dignitaries made haste to suspend from their button-holes this princely trinket. At every street corner were peddlers of white cockades; they each bought one—which they had sewed upon their hats. Thus tricked out they considered themselves perfect royalists.

A celebration was in preparation at Notre-Dame. The royal family were coming in state to hear a thanksgiving mass. Madame Hugo was in quest of a window from whence to see the procession. M. Foucher had obtained one and offered her half. The two families went together in full dress. It was a beautiful day, and they walked. Victor gave his arm to Mademoiselle Adele. He was radiant at having his lily in his button-hole and a "woman" on his arm.

The King wore a blue coat with tasseled epaulettes. They remarked his blue ribbon, his little queue, and his big belly. He was in an immense carriage covered with fleurs-de-lis, and he had with him the Duchess d'Angoulême, dressed in white from shoes to parasol. The Count d'Artois and the Duke d'Angoulême rode on horseback one on each side of the carriage. Before and behind were the musketeers. The old guard followed, humiliated at escorting this gouty-foot imposed by the foreigner.

When the children received the decoration of the lily, their father was less in favor. He had not been accommodating to the Allies, and had kept the Hessians too long before Thionville. Refusing to surrender a French fortress was then treason, and the Abbé de Montesquiou, then minister, spoke publicly of the "revolt of Thionville." The General expected to be removed from the command, and so did not send for his family.

Madame Hugo, who went to see him for a short time on business matters, took Abel only, leaving Victor and Eugène under the care of Madame Lucotte and Madame Foucher. I copy the following passage from a letter written by Victor to his mother.

"My dear Mamma,

"Since you have been gone everything here is tedious. We go very often to M. Foucher's as you told us. He has proposed to us to follow the course of lessons that his son is taking; we thanked him. We work all the morning at Latin and mathematics. A letter sealed with black, and addressed to Abel, came the evening that you left. M. Foucher will send it to you. He has had the kindness to take us to the Museum.

"Respectfully your Son

"VICTOR."

Madame Hugo remained but a few weeks at Thionville, Eugène and Victor returned to their ordinary course of life.

Nothing new happened during the

Spring and Summer except Punch. They were much taken with his display, the prodigious drubbings that he administered to his Judy, and her laughable outcries. All this was only to attract the public to the puppet show inside. The display over, the children bought their tickets, and for four sous saw the gesticulations, laughter, and weeping of puppets so large that they gained for the booth the majestic title of the Theatre of the Automatons. These beautiful representations inspired the two brothers with the idea of having a theatre themselves. They bought a magnificent one, of pasteboard, with gilt bands, and a complete troupe of little wooden comedians. Each one undertook to get up a piece, and the future author of Ruy Blas made his debut in the dramatic art in an *Enchanted Palace*, the rehearsals of which proceeded finely, but the representation was prevented by a serious occurrence.

In September, the Restoration believed itself strong enough to punish those who had resisted the invasion. General Hugo was deprived of his command and sent into retirement, as were all the leaders, without exception, who had aided in the defence of Thionville. He came to Paris, and judged that it was time to look to the future of his children. Eugène was then in his fifteenth year, and Victor in his thirteenth. The General, who intended them for the Polytechnic School, sought a preparatory school for them. He found one in the Rue Sainte-Marguerite, and took them there the night before the day fixed for the first representation of the *Enchanted Palace.*

XXVI.

THE CORDIER SCHOOL.

The boarding-school of M. Cordier was not an "enchanted palace." The Rue Sainte-Marguerite, gloomy and crowded in between the prison de l'Abbaye and the arcade du Dragon, smoked and dinned by its smiths, had nothing which prepossessed one in favor of the house. The house was a main building, of but one story, between two courts, the second of which was the play-ground. On looking into that court through the windows, the two boys were at first astonished to see foliage and fruits in mid-winter, but they soon perceived that the trees and fruits were painted upon the farther wall.

The master of the establishment, M. Cordier, was an ex-abbé, who had thrown his cassock to the dogs, like the Abbé Larivière. He was an old man of odd appearance. He was passionately fond of Jean Jacques Rousseau, whom he copied even to his Armenian costume. He added to his pelisse and cap an enormous metallic snuff-box, which he perpetually took out, and which he rapped upon the heads of those pupils who did not know their lessons, or who "replied" to him. This Cordier had an associate, called Decotte, more brutal than himself.

The two brothers were not with the other boarders. The General, wishing them to be pushed forward in their studies, had them taught separately. They had their own room, and were with the rest only at meals and play-time. They had, however, a room-mate, the son of one of the tutors, an amiable and studious boy, named Vivian. This tutor's son, a deputy after 1830, was prefect of police under Louis Philippe, and minister under the Republic.

They were not soon consoled for the loss of their liberty. But at their age trouble passes quickly away, and then they soon had friends, among others one who was intelligent and sympathetic, M. Jules Claye, since become the excellent printer whose aid has been so useful to M. Victor Hugo, and who has produced the fine editions of *Les Contemplations*, *La Légende des Siècles*, and *Les Misérables*. And then what was to hinder them from giving in the

school the theatrical representations so unceremoniously interrupted at home. This idea, proposed in a play hour, was received with enthusiasm. It would be much better than in the Rue du Cherche-Midi; the parts would not be played by puppets, since they had a troupe of flesh and blood actors among the scholars. It would be a real theatre this time. The hall was all ready for them; they took the large school-room; the tables set together made the stage, the space beneath the tables the side-scenes, the lamps served for foot-lights, and the benches for the parquette.

There was no embarrassment about the kind of play; that was dictated by the costume. The costume most easily made and best adapted to the times also, was evidently the military costume. With pasteboard and gilt and silver paper, they made casques, epaulettes, lace, decorations and sabres; a cork blackened in the flame supplied moustaches. The plays of which Eugène and Victor were the privileged authors, were uniformly upon the wars of the Empire. The only difficulty was in the distribution of the parts. The enemy being always vanquished and beaten in the end, nobody was willing to be the enemy. Victor arranged this by proposing that each should play the enemy in turn. He carried conciliation so far as to play himself, on one occasion, although the author of the piece, a Prussian officer. But it was only once and for an example. In general he reserved for himself the principal part. When Napoleon was in the piece, he played Napoleon. Then he covered himself with decorations, and his breast was radiant with gold and silver eagles. On great occasions, in order to give reality to all these splendors, he added to the eagles his decoration of the lily.

Eugène and Victor had great prestige among their comrades from the mere fact that they were private pupils. The organization of the theatre and composition of the plays increased their influence until it became domination. The school was divided into two nations, one of which took Eugène for its King, the other, Victor. Vivian alone, being a private pupil also, refused to recognise them, and not being able to rule, would not obey. There is no nation without a name; the subjects of Victor called themselves *the dogs*, and those of Eugène called themselves *the calves*. The two Kings were absolute. They exercised despotic authority, suffering no opposition, having their code, the harshest penalty of which was the loss of civil rights and of nationality. One of the subjects of Eugène, having failed in obedience, the King said to him. "You are my calf no longer," and it was terrible. The ex-calf, who vainly endeavored to secure his reception among the dogs, and who was repelled on the ground that he was a bad citizen, became an outlaw in the school, and was excluded from all the sports; his sadness and his remorse appeased Eugène, who deigned to grant him an amnesty and to recall him from his exile.

On the other hand, when the subjects conducted themselves well, their King protected them. A calf no sooner touched a dog than Victor unleashed his whole pack for revenge. The two Kings had their congresses in their rooms, where they discussed the reciprocal wrongs of the nation, and Eugène said seriously to Victor, "I have reason to complain of your dogs." At the close of a whole week, during which he had had no occasion to punish any body, Eugène filled his subjects with a just pride by saying "Calves, I am satisfied with you."

Nobody would be King long if he had nothing to give. The King of the dogs and the King of the calves might have given pensions and salaries. They would only have had to levy taxes upon their subjects, and they could have raised a large civil list. They could then have given gifts from their privy purse, and their people, to whom they would have

thus restored a few crumbs of their own money, would have blessed their generosity. They disdained to govern men by vile interest, and distributed nothing but honorable recompenses. They had their decoration: to avoid conflicts with other governments, they informed themselves of the colors which had not been assumed by any order, and chose lilac for their ribbon. The cross was necessarily of pasteboard covered with gold or silver paper, according to the grade. Of course Eugène and Victor gave themselves the grand cordon.

The power of the two tyrants was so well established that when the masters could not secure obedience from a pupil, when M. Decotte had exhausted his tasks and the Abbé Cordier the raps of his snuff-box, they came and begged his King to speak and to order him to be docile and studious.

The day-scholars were specially employed in conducting foreign affairs. A young and pretty boy, who is now a powerful and substantial man, a good swimmer and clever horseman, skilled in all arms, ready for all adventures, Léon Gatayes, had then, for his daily mission, to get two sous' worth of Italian cheese, which His Majesty Victor I. ate with his dry bread for his breakfast, and trembled when the frowning brows of the King indicated his discontent with the quantity or quality. Another errand-boy of Victor was a little fellow, the only son of wealthy parents, whose fondness was seen upon his rosy cheeks; they had sent him as a day scholar only, not being able to spend the twenty-four hours without him. He came every morning with his pockets full of bonbons and cakes, which Victor distributed to the most worthy, leaving him a small portion only when he had done his errands well. However, the little Joly gave them up with the readiness of those who have all that they want. He was always dressed with great elegance, wadded in winter, embroidered in summer.

In 1845 M. Victor Hugo, traversing the court of the Institute, saw approaching him a man with grey hair, wrinkled, miserable, and clad in the remains of a grey overcoat patched with blue cloth, who accosted him:

"Do you remember me?"

M. Victor Hugo endeavored to name the tattered and degraded figure, but could not.

"No?" said the man. "It does not astonish me. I am somewhat changed. I am Joly."

"Joly?" repeated M. Victor Hugo, to whom the name recalled no more than the face.

"Yes, Joly, of the Cordier school."

M. Victor Hugo then remembered the pretty boy, so rich and so well dressed, who always came loaded with bonbons.

"You remember me now," said the man in rags. "Yes, it's me. I am the pretty little Joly. I recognised you at once. It seems that the Academy and the Chamber of Peers preserve one better than the galleys."

And the miserable man related that he had lost his father and mother while he was quite young, and found himself with a great fortune. He had spent without reckoning, debts came; he could not resign himself to poverty, and he had committed forgeries, for which he had been sentenced to seven years in the galleys and to be branded.

While they were talking, M. Victor Hugo and he had left the court and were walking upon the quay. M. Victor Hugo, before leaving the unfortunate man, desired to give him some money, and put his hand in his waistcoat pocket.

"Not here," said Joly to him. "Should an officer see you he would arrest me for begging, and then they would recognise me. I am now breaking my ban. I am ordered to remain at Pontoise. But what can I do in a little place where every-

body knows at once who you are? I came to Paris. I show myself very little in the daytime. To-day I came out to look for you, I knew it was your day at the Academy. At night, not to be picked up in the lodging-houses, I sleep on the strand. Here, come this way first."

He led M. Victor Hugo into an obscure alley, where his former fellow-pupil gave him five francs, and asked him to come and see him in the Place Royale.

Joly came, and M. Victor Hugo strove to raise him from the abyss into which he had fallen. But he himself made no effort; he would not do anything, and refused everything except alms. At each new visit he was more and more blighted and corrupted by vice.

At length he became exacting even to insolence, and it became necessary to close the door against him. He came last on the 1st of January, 1847; since then M. Victor Hugo has not heard of him.

XXVII.

THE HUNDRED DAYS.

On Sunday, February 26, 1815, the Cordier school went to walk on the Champ de Mars, and followed the tow path. In passing under the Pont d'Iena one of the pupils noticed and pointed out to his comrades this inscription written in large letters upon an arch: *1st of March*, 1815. *Vive l'empereur.* This cry, thrown in the face of royalty, was commented upon by the scholars. Wherefore the 1st of March when it was only the 26th of February? Was it a mistake in the date or a menace? The school returned much perplexed.

On the 1st of March Napoleon landed at Cannes.

General Curto, who had replaced General Hugo in the command of Thionville, declared that he should remain faithful to Louis XVIII., and harangued the garrison, who seized him and threw him over the ramparts. General Hugo was invited to report immediately to the Prince D'Eckmüll.

"General," said the Prince to him, "in a quarter of an hour you leave for Thionville. Everybody there demands you, the garrison, the inhabitants, the authorities, and the General commanding the division. There is a unanimous desire there for you to resume the government. It is a splendid tribute to your ability and your conduct."

That night General Hugo left for Thionville.

Napoleon, this time, did not last long. Paris was soon a prey to anxiety. One's fear was another's hope; all men were eager for the news. People lived in the streets.

The general preoccupation penetrated the Cordier school; studies suffered from it; the doors, poorly fastened, gave egress to the pupils.

The Allies appeared before Paris again.

There was at that time in the school, a young, intelligent, frank tutor, named Biscarrat. His face, very badly marked by the small-pox, was smiling and honest, and his character was like his face. He liked Victor and Eugène very much, and he was very much liked by Mademoiselle Rosalie, the laundress of the school. Mademoiselle Rosalie had a relative employed at the Sorbonne, and made an arrangement with Biscarrat to go up into the dome, whence Vaugirard, Meudon, Saint-Cloud, etc., can be seen, and whence they could observe all the movements of the Allies. Biscarrat, more a friend than a lover, took his two young comrades along, and the whole four climbed the steep stairs of the cupola. The first sight for the two brothers was Mademoiselle Rosalie, who made Biscarrat go up before her, but who paid no attention to these two children.

From the top of the building the view was splendid. It was June, and the finest weather in the world. The

birds were singing, the sun shining, the horizon a sea of verdure; it was terrible: volleys were bursting, cannon thundering, blood was reddening the flowers of spring, men who had done nothing to each other and who did not know each other, were cutting each other's throats in the quarrel of an Emperor and a King. The sky was none the less resplendent. Victor had a grudge against the sun for being so brilliant and the woods for being so green; he was struck with this egotism of nature.

Some days after the battle of Waterloo Lieut.-General Czernichef, commander of the Russian advance guard, summoned General Hugo to deliver Thionville to the Emperor Alexander. The General refused, and on the same day the communications of Thionville with Metz were wholly intercepted.

On the 11th of July the General learned that the allies had entered Paris. He refused, however, to share the garrison of the fortress with the Prince of Hesse-Homburg, and to show that it was the foreigner and not the king whom he resisted, on the 22nd of July he raised the white flag and changed the cockade of his troops. His troops mutinied and most of them marched out, and when on the tenth of August he was ordered to disband the National Guard, he had but sixteen hundred men remaining.

The Prussians, meanwhile, were approaching Thionville. They bombarded the neighboring forts, Rodemach and Longwy. The Prince of Hesse said that it was the turn of Thionville. The General, without a garrison, accepted the contest. His courage frightened the cowards; there was a conspiracy to seize him in the night and deliver him to the Prussians. This infamy was prevented, and the following night the inhabitants demanded that a platoon of picked soldiers should sleep in the houses adjoining that of the general.

Everything was prepared for an obstinate defence. The place was furnished with provisions and munitions; the ditches were cut, the Metz road inundated, news came that peace was signed and that our enemies were our friends. But the King was more generous than the general; he opened Thionville to the allies; they occupied it with other towns, till the signing of the treaty. This time there was no necessity of removing the General; he would not surrender a place which could not be taken, and as the Prussians were to enter on the 20th of September, he left on the 13th.

Addresses of regret and thanks were written to him by the officers of the National Guard, the customs corps, and the principal inhabitants. The year before the Jews of Thionville had offered him a large sum, as a debt due from that fortune which his firmness had preserved to them; he had refused it. They renewed their offer, and he renewed his refusal.

XXVIII.

THE FOLLIES THAT M. VICTOR HUGO COMMITTED BEFORE HIS BIRTH.

I HAVE in my hands a dozen copybooks of verses made by Victor at school. At the foot of the table of contents of the oldest one, which contains eighty-five pieces, I read: "*N. B.—See the contents of the eleventh book.*" This was in 1815; the author was thirteen years old. Poetry was then in vogue; everybody made verses; Eugène made them; Father Larivière made them, and had not restrained his two scholars who had begun at his house; dismal Decotte made them, but he had not encouraged them; quite the contrary. He found it inconvenient to have rivals among his pupils, and, Victor having translated into verse the first eclogue of Virgil, he hit upon the revenge of translating it himself, and crushing Victor's trans-

lation by his own, the superiority of which he set forth with great energy.

But the beardless poets had two accomplices, Felix Biscarrat, who, of course, made verses himself, and their mother. It was a part of the natural system of education which Madame Hugo applied to her sons, to permit their genius to go whither it would, and not to thwart their bent. She was their confidant, gave them advice, and proposed subjects to them.

The first verses stammered by Victor at M. Larivière's, were languishing and chivalric; then he passed to the warlike and heroic style. I need not say that these verses were not verses, that they did not rhyme, that they were not upon their feet; the child, without a master and without a prosody, read aloud what he had written, perceived that something was wanting, began again, changed, searched, until his ear was no longer shocked. By this tentative process he taught himself measure, cæsura, rhyme, and the alternation of masculine and feminine rhymes.

But at the Cordier school it was that his fever of versification broke out. M. Decotte had watched him closely with the eye of a master and with the still more clairvoyant eye of a rival; in vain did he fill every hour with Latin and mathematics; he could indeed make him blow out his light and go to bed; but he could not make him sleep, and Victor employed a part of the night in rhyming. The Latin even went over to the enemy; one of his night exercises was the translation into French verse of the odes of Horace or the eclogues of Virgil, which he had been compelled to learn by heart.

An accident gave him leisure. In a promenade upon the Bois de Boulogne, the dogs and the calves disputed the possession of a knoll near the pond of Auteuil. They had a regular siege. Their arms were handkerchiefs tied into knots. The calves, who were the besiegers, were repulsed with loss, and a vigorous sortie of the dogs completed their shameful defeat. A calf, who could not endure this humiliation, put a sharp stone in his handkerchief, and, rushing furiously through the dogs, penetrated to their king, whom he struck with all his might. The blow was so severe and painful that Victor uttered a cry. He was wounded in the knee, and blood flowed from it. The boy who had done this was frightened at his success. Not only his comrades reproached him for his wicked perfidy, but he feared a complaint to the master. Victor reassured him on that point; he commanded his own people, and he desired Eugène to command his, to say nothing about it. He returned from the Bois de Boulogne to the Rue Sainte-Marguerite as best he could, limping and aided by his brother; but scarcely had he arrived at the school when he was seized with a fever; the effort had aggravated his wound, and the knee was swollen enormously. They were obliged to carry him to his bed; the physician came and asked him what had happened; he replied that he had fallen upon a piece of glass; the physician perceived the untruth, and made him confess that he had been struck by a stone; but neither the physician nor M. Cordier nor M. Decotte could make him tell who threw it. The wound was serious; it was long healing. He was not restless, however; he was rather pleased to be rid of mathematics, and to be able to muse at his ease. His mother came to see him every day; one day she asked him what the doctor had said, and he answered, without exhibiting any emotion: "I think he said he would have to cut my leg off." It was not cut off, but the joint was long getting well; for weeks he was free from his lessons, at first in bed, afterwards sitting up. Released from mathematics, he gave himself up to poetry, which took decided possession of him.

During the three years which he

passed at the Cordier school (1815–1818), he wrote verses of all possible kinds—odes, satires, epistles, poems, tragedies, elegies, idyls, imitations of Ossian, translations of Virgil, Horace, Lucan, Ausonius, Martial, romances, fables, tales, epigrams, madrigals, riddles, acrostics, charades, enigmas, impromptus. He even wrote a comic opera.

He read this to his mother, to Eugène, to Biscarrat, who gave his advice frankly, and who noted as good and bad such passages as struck him. A poem of five hundred lines, *Le Déluge*, annotated by him, closes with this recapitulation:

20 *bad*,
32 *good*,
15 *very good*,
5 *passable*,
1 *weak*.

I wonder what the other four hundred lines can be which are neither bad, nor good, nor very good, nor passable, nor weak.

Victor had a more rigorous judge than Biscarrat, himself. With each book his taste grew clearer, and he burned the preceding one. It is for this reason that eleven are wanting.

At the end of one of the books which he has spared he pleads the extenuating circumstance of his youth (thirteen years).

On rereading the books preserved, he would efface one piece one day, and another the next. There is one book in which he has written at the beginning, this line: "*An honest man may read all that is not erased*," and in which he had erased everything.

In another, at the close of a tale which has no title, there is this memorandum: "*Let him give a title who can; I have yet to discover what subject I tried to write upon.*"

Upon the first page of the last, and consequently the best of his copybooks, I find this: "*The follies that I committed before my birth*," and below, an egg is drawn, in which something shapeless and horrible is seen; at the bottom is written, "*bird.*" I shall look for a moment into the egg, for the benefit of those who are interested in the formation of the bird, and who see in it already the budding of wings.

XXIX.

CONTINUATION OF THE FOLLIES, ETC.

Most prominent in all these books which I have been able to read, is the wonderful tenderness of the son towards his mother. In all the world he sees nothing but his mother; she is upon every page; he never suffers a birth-day nor a New Year's day to pass without addressing some verses to her. He dedicates his comic opera to her. He cannot accustom himself to live without her.

The child-poet has naturally the political opinions of his mother; he repeats only what he has heard her say. He had never heard anything else; M. Foucher was a royalist; Lahorie detested the Empire; he hardly knew his father, whose imperialism, lukewarm at first, and chilled by the implacable rancor of Napoleon, could not, had it been otherwise, have counteracted the daily and passionate influence of his mother. The child's belief is, therefore, only an echo of his mother's; hatred of the Revolution and the Empire, love for the Bourbons.

His adoration of royalty was not less violent than his hatred of the empire. I notice a song, the refrain of which is, *Vive le roi! vive la France!* an ode in which France calls the Duke d'Angoulême the greatest of her warriors; and another ode upon "the death of Louis XVII.," anterior to that of the *Odes et Ballades*, with a motto from Delille.

His first tragedy (at fourteen years of age) is a Restoration. Its spirit of royalism has no bounds. The last line of the piece sums up perfectly that which the boy then saw in the word royalty:

"When the people hate a tyrant, then they ought to love a king.'

To him the Bourbons brought liberty: royalty was progress. His royalism was the Voltairean royalism of his mother, the throne without the altar. On Sundays, during mass, which the school attended at Saint-Germain-des-Prés, he employed all the time in meditating verses, often far from orthodox, epigrams, gallant odes translated from Horace, elegies, and tales, in which bigotry was treated no better than barbarism and war.

The author of the military pieces played and applauded by the school, was not to be content with one tragedy only. He was urged towards the dramatic art, first, by his instinct, and then by the plays of Voltaire, which General Lahorie had once given him, and which he had devoured during his sickness, from *Mahomet* to *Les Guèbres*, and from *Zaïre* to *Nanine*. Two years after his first tragedy, *Irtamène*, he commenced a new one, *Athélie ou les Scandinaves*, perfectly regular, in five acts, with the unities of time and place, imagination, confidants, etc. But he was then fifteen years old, he became dissatisfied with it during its composition, and got no further than the second act. He went to work upon a comic opera, *A quelque chose hasard est bon*; then he turned to the drama and wrote *Inez de Castro*, a melo-drama in three acts, interesting as the first attempt, the starting point of his dramatic works.

XXX.

FIRST RELATIONS WITH THE ACADEMY.

In 1817, the subject proposed by the Academy for the prize in poetry, was *The Happiness that study procures in every condition of life.*

"What if I should compete," said Victor to himself.

This idea no sooner occurred to him than he set to work. He wrote three hundred and twenty lines.

When the verses were finished, the difficulty commenced; they must be carried. Victor had confided his purpose to no one, not even to his brother, not even to his mother; he wished, if he succeeded, to shine suddenly forth in all his glory, and, in the more probable case of failure, to spare himself the humiliation of it; but how send to the Secretary of the Institute the poem and the sealed letter, containing the name of the author? The Secretary's office is not open on Sunday, the only day on which the scholar could get out. Besides, the verses were not finished until Monday, and the time for receiving them closed on Thursday. In the impossibility of getting along alone, Victor was compelled to make a confidant. He divulged the grand secret to Biscarrat, who was astounded and delighted, and who arranged the matter.

Thursday, the last day, was their day for walking out, and Biscarrat conducted the school. He took them by the Institute, and was seized with a sudden admiration for the monument and the lions, before which he halted his column. While the pupils were absorbed in the contemplation of the fountain, he ran off with Victor. The porter saw two terrified beings enter his lodge, who asked for the office of the Secretary of the French Academy, and who rushed towards the stairway. Victor was very glad then that he had been compelled to make a confidant, for he would never have dared to enter alone; Biscarrat, who opened the door, entered first; Victor followed him with a beating heart, and saw seated solemnly before a desk, covered with portfolios, the guardian of the sacred archives, a person with white hair, majestic and terrible, who was a goodman named Cardot. Victor tremblingly presented his verses and his letter. Biscarrat, who had preserved a little self-possession, offered some words of explanation. The terrible goodman took a pen and wrote upon the letter and the poem

the figures 15, and the master and pupil descended, proud of their courage, and saying to each other, that the most difficult enterprises were successfully accomplished when entered upon with manly resolution.

As they were leaving the stairway felicitating each other, Victor found himself face to face with Abel, who was crossing the court.

"Hold up," said Abel, "where have you been?"

Victor's face grew purple as if he had been sun-struck.

Biscarrat himself, taken in the very act, could not lie. He confessed all. Victor expected to be scolded for the enormity which he had committed, but Abel, who was no longer fifteen, and who was no longer in school, had not the fear of the Academy before his eyes, and thought the thing natural enough. Victor, a little reassured, begged him to keep it a profound secret.

"Be easy," said his big brother, "I shall cry it at the corners of the streets."

I need not relate with what emotions, with what alternations of hope and of fear, Victor and Biscarrat awaited the judgment of the learned body, who hold in their sovereign hands the glory of poets. This serious anxiety did not prevent their recreations, in which Victor forgot the French Academy for ball and leap-frog. One day while he was in the heat of a contest at cross-bars, he saw Abel approach, accompanied by two friends. This imposing appearance inspired him with a vague suspicion.

"Come here, imbecile," cried his brother to him. He approached, a little frightened.

"You are a great goose!" continued Abel. "You're well paid for putting such stupid things in your verses. Who asked you your age? The Academy thought you were trying to humbug it. If it had not been for that you'd have got the prize. What an ass you are! You got a mention."

Thus it was that M. Victor Hugo was apprised of his first success.

The good-natured, joyful face of Abel belied the gruffness of his words. He was very much pleased.

M. Raynouard had read, amidst great applause from the public, especially the feminine public, the passage on the loves of Dido. The Academy had in fact done the author the honor to doubt his age. The report said: "The author says in his work that he is only fifteen years of age. If indeed he is no older," etc.

In those days a mention by the Academy was an event. The newspapers took it up. Victor was almost famous. His royalty gained by it; his people were proud to belong to him; desertions became frequent among the subjects of Eugène, and a good number of calves metamorphosed themselves into dogs. As to M. Cordier, he would not have been more dazzled if the sun had come into the house.

The fierce Decotte himself was vanquished. This occurred at a time when the master and pupil were more widely estranged than ever. They had had a violent dispute, the heat of which was not over. The occasion was this:

Victor put all that he wrote in the drawer of his table, which he always took care to shut. One day, on entering his room, he found the drawer open, and the papers gone. He did not hesitate, he said to himself on the instant, that the violater of his drawer could be no other than M. Decotte, and he was preparing himself to go and speak to this robber of papers, when he was informed that M. Decotte wished to see him. He went and found M. Decotte and M. Cordier sternly seated at a table, on which were spread all his manuscript books.

To write verses in school is of itself an unpardonable crime, especially after express and reiterated prohibitions, like those which M. Decotte had enjoined on Victor. But here the verses were aggravated

by a journal. Victor had a habit of writing down every night the incidents and impressions of the day.

Unfortunately this manuscript has become illegible in places; the ink has faded, and pages have been torn out.

The following is interesting as a specimen of the politics taught him by his mother:

"—— Play is over at nine. M. Cadot comes; we take our drawing lesson till ten. Mamma comes at two o'clock. The weather is bad. We talk of affairs. To-day is the trial of twenty-five brothers and friends whose design was to blow up the Tuileries, massacre the royal family, and cut the throats of the guard, in order to re-establish the slough. I wish they would exterminate such villains. It seems that there are long heads, which are secretly pulling the wires of conspiracy. Mamma is to tell Abel to come and see us; he is to bring us the pieces of poetry which we have given him. She leaves us at three o'clock. We shall not go to walk to-day. We dine. M. Decotte wants us to be ready for our geometry lesson to-night. But there are visitors; it will be another day. We go to bed at nine o'clock."

The most remarkable entry is this, dated July 10th, 1816 (fourteen years old):

"——I will be Chateaubriand or nothing."

This last line would have been enough to exasperate M. Decotte, but in relating the incidents of the day Victor necessarily recounted his relations with M. Decotte. If the master did not love the pupil, the pupil loved the master still less. Everybody knows what proportions the faults of masters assume in the eyes of pupils: M. Decotte was, in the journal, the epitome of all moral and physical deformities.

With a cold and dignified gesture, the offended master pointed to the manuscript books open upon the table, but, not wishing to appear influenced by personal feeling, he said nothing of the journal.

"Monsieur," said he, in a tone a serious as his gesture, "I have forbidden you to write verses."

"And I, Monsieur," boldly replied the pupil, "have given you no permission to pick the locks of my drawers."

M. Decotte was thrown aback. He anticipated a culprit caught in the act, and suppliant; he found himself before an accuser. He endeavored to confound him with his most magisterial eloquence; but Victor lowered neither look nor voice, and persisted in saying that it was a crime neither to write verses nor to keep a journal, but to force locks. The master, having exhausted his arguments, closed the dialogue by this decision:

"Since you add insolence to disobedience, from this moment you cease to belong to the institution."

"That is what I was about to tell you," rejoined the pupil.

But here M. Cordier intervened. If Victor left Eugène would evidently go also. Two private pupils were a thing to be considered. M. Cordier, for his part, had not the same reasons as his associate to sacrifice the interests of the common purse; the verses did not clash with him, and the journal, friendly to his person, was wanting in respect only to his Armenian pelisse. He patched up as best he could the disrupted harmony, and peace was restored, to the advantage of Victor, who took back his manuscripts, and had henceforth the tacit right of writing whatever he liked. But the peace was only upon the surface, and from that day M. Decotte and Victor were in a condition of secret enmity. They avoided speaking to each other, which was not a little inconvenient to both, M. Decotte being the instructor in mathematics. When it was Victor's turn to demonstrate, he went to the board without waiting to

be called. M. Decotte never pronounced his name, and, living perpetually together, they seemed not to know each other. The mathematics gained by this quarrel; it would have been too great a sacrifice of the conqueror's dignity to deserve a reprimand from the conquered; so he worked at his theorems and his equations with a hostile intensity.

The mention changed all this. M. Decotte abandoned all jealousy before this triumph. He knew that it was of no use to contend with a gay boy who had mentions from the Academy, and he forgot the overthrow of his poetry to rejoice in the honor which redounded to his school. He pardoned the journal, which had, moreover, been only the least of his grievances.

Victor, wishing to convince the Academy that he was only fifteen years old, sent to M. Raynouard his register of birth, with a note of thanks. The perpetual Secretary of the French Academy responded in a kind letter, which ended thus; "I shall be happy to *maik* your acquaintance."

Victor showed this letter to M. Cordier, who saw but one thing in it, the lustre that would be shed on his school by a pupil to whom Academicians wrote letters. Victor was free to choose his own time for this visit. In virtue of his Secretaryship M. Raynouard lodged at the Institute; it was to the temple itself, therefore, that the neophyte went to see the high-priest. To complete the solemnity of the occasion, it happened to be a meeting day. He was introduced into the library, separated by a glass door from the hall in which were the immortals. While waiting for the author of *Les Templiers*, Victor was left with an old Academician, dressed in uniform, with a violet cap, M. de Roquelaure, Bishop of Senlis before the Revolution. This old man, who read at a table, and paid no attention to him, intimidated him very much.

M. Raynouard came at last, with the busy and unpleasant air of a man who is disturbed. He saw a gamin, and, after having been incredulous as to his youth, became too credulous, and did not invite him to be seated· told him that the incredulity of the Academy was fortunate; that it was well for him not to have received the prize so young; that such a success at his age would have infatuated him, and disgusted him with work, and turned his back upon him with a simplicity which made Victor say that his politeness equalled his orthography.

All the Academicians were not so surly as M. Raynouard; on the contrary, the Academy was full of smiles for the lad. M. Campenon, whose eulogy it afterwards devolved on him to pronounce as Director of the Academy, complimented him in verse.

The senior Academician, M. François de Neufchâteau, had himself, in his thirteenth year, received a prize from a provincial Academy. This glorious incident, again brought into notice, was compared with the new triumph, the fifteen years were placed beside the thirteen, a parallel was drawn between the two prodigies, and it was predicted of Victor, that he would be another François de Neufchâteau.

The aged laureate wished to know him whose youth repeated the splendors of his own; the more as at the time of his prize, Voltaire (for that dated back to Louis XV.) had consecrated him a poet and publicly adopted him:

"I must yield to a successor,
And I hail in you my heir."

M. François de Neufchâteau, to whom these lines were recalled, was charmed to repeat them in his turn and to be the Voltaire of somebody He expressed his desire before a friend of Abel; Victor went to see him, and there soon ensued an interchange of rhymes.

One day the Decotte school was covered with glory; M. François de Neufchâteau invited Victor to din-

ner. There was one whom the old Academician admired as much as Voltaire. Parmentier, who introduced into France *parmentières;* for M. François de Neufchateau would not have said himself, or allowed any one else to say, *potatoes*, under any pretext. He had made himself the advocate, the patron, the devotee of the sacred tuber. He had a large garden, which was entirely given up to the culture, I might almost say to the worship of the parmentière. To prove that one could live, and live well on nothing but parmentières, he would not eat anything else. As, however, he was fond of good living, he taxed the imagination of his cook to invent for parmentières forms and flavors of various kinds. The parmentière assumed all shapes, and each dish was a surprise. You were served with a cutlet, it was potatoes; a fish, it was potatoes; a croquet of rice, still potatoes.

When they had exhausted the history and eulogy of Parmentier, they turned to literature. The Academician was engaged at this moment upon a new edition of Gil Blas, which M. Didot was about to publish. One point embarrassed him. A Jesuit named Isca had pretended that the romance of Lesage was only a copy of a Spanish romance by Marcos Obregon de la Ronda. This romance not having been translated in France, it was necessary, to assure himself of the truth in regard to this matter, to know Spanish, and he did not know it.

"I know it," said Victor.

"Ah! good," said the old man, "you will do me a great service, if you will take the trouble to read the book and tell me if the Jesuit is right."

So next morning Victor went to the Richelieu library. It was scarcely necessary to ask permission to go; the porter had orders once for all never to refuse egress to the guest of the Academicians. Victor profited by this liberty a little more even than he would have wished, for the romance was in four large volumes the reading of which occupied several sittings, especially as, in order to respond to the confidence with which he was honored by the heir of Voltaire, he took notes and made a comparison in detail of the French and Spanish romances. The result of this comparison was, that there was no similarity between the two romances, and that Lesage was really the author of his book.

Victor took his study to M. François de Neufchâteau. The venerable senior of the Academy found it so well done, that he put it into his edition without changing a word, and signed his name to it.

XXX.

DINNERS AT EDON'S.

VICTOR, nevertheless, as well as Eugène, pursued the courses of philosophy, physics, and elementary mathematics at the college of Louis-le-Grand.

The Professor of Mathematics, M. Guillard, was so genial, and his sympathetic ugliness had something so paternal about it, that the students called him Father Guillard. He was very absent-minded, and had a harmless mania for tucking up his gown, as though he were walking in the water. He tucked it up to go from his chair to the table. He had a nose with facets like a diamond. It made the pupils laugh, and suited him. One day, when one of the pupils could not comprehend the nature of a polyhedron, he said to him: "Look at my nose!"

The Professor of Philosophy was a M. Maugras, who, like M. Larivière and M. Cordier, had been in orders. Thinking that he had worn the gown enough as priest, he dispensed with it as professor. His costume was, nevertheless, severe; he always wore a long coat buttoned up to the chin, and a white cravat. The small-pox, with which his sallow face

was riddled, served to make him think that he resembled Mirabeau, whose attitude and gesture he succeeded in imitating better than his eloquence. His teaching tended to materialism. His class was much smaller than that of Father Guillard, and he proved his philosophy, otherwise than by his title, by explaining the theory of the *sensations* to the benches.

Academical glory does not prevent puerility. M. Maugras was struck by, and grateful for, the profound attention with which Victor took notes while he was speaking; the truth was that Victor imposed upon himself the task of commencing every line of each page by the same letter, *a* or *d*, or some other, which required constant attention; it was necessary to separate or compress the words that the desired letter might fall in the right place. Victor did not permit himself to be diverted from this important matter, and was cited as a model of application. Unfortunately, M. Maugras sometimes questioned him, and perceived that he had understood nothing of what he had listened to so well.

M. Maugras, nevertheless, preserved a certain esteem for this mechanical but apparently excellent auditor; when the time for the general competition came, he sent him in.

"I count on you. When one has had a mention from the Academy, the least he can have is a prize at the University."

The University was more difficult than the Academy. Victor got nothing at all. The subject, however, appealed to his imagination—it was the demonstration of the existence of God.

He was more fortunate in physics, in which he obtained the sixth prize. Contrary to philosophy, physics had interested him very much. The professor, M. Thillaye, taught experimentally. His first lesson had been a lesson at billiards; the caroms and the cushions had explained in an amusing and palpable manner the angles of incidence and reflection, and the elasticity of spherical bodies. He gave also a course at the School of Medicine, where he had a cabinet much finer and better stocked with instruments than the one at the college. He took his Louis le Grand pupils there one day to exhibit some phenomenon of optics, and let them all look through a telescope.

"See," said he to Victor, "if with the telescope you can read the sign yonder."

Victor, without putting his eye to the instrument, read:

"*CHANTIER DU CARDINAL LEMOINE.*"

"Faith," said the astonished professor, "you are a telescope yourself!"

The subject for competition in physics, The Theory of Dew, was announced by a person with a frigid air and a prominent and haughty chin, whom Victor had never seen, and who was Cuvier.

The vacation was a perfect fête to Victor, whose mention was celebrated by all his mother's friends. Abel, who, having no military future since the fall of Joseph, had laid aside his epaulettes and sword and turned his attention to business, had his own lodgings, where he received a good deal of company. One of his friends dazzled Victor; he was a printer named Gilé, remarkable for his rich and fashionable dress. His olive-colored swallow-tailed coat, which was the highest elegance of the day, sparkled with metal buttons up to his shoulders. The more moderate fashionables had the waist of their coats midway up the back. Gilé had his at the nape of his neck. His hat was tipped over his right ear to make room for a great tuft of frizzled hair puffed out over the left. His pantaloons, striped with a broad band, which seemed the lace of his grade in the regiment of dandyism, strangled his knees, and, widening below, gave him the feet of an elephant.

It is easy to conceive the admiration into which these splendors threw Victor, who could not refrain from contemplating with melancholy his poor school clothes. He even ventured to hint before his mother a timid desire to have a swallow-tailed coat. But Madame Hugo, so yielding to the wishes of her children in all that concerned their moral aspirations, gave an ill reception to this inclination to dress, and reminded him, with some severity, that men were rated by their intelligence, and not by their dress.

Abel had a number of literary friends, and with these Victor and Eugène allied themselves more intimately. The result was a company who desired a closer union. A dinner was organized, for the first of each month, at Edon's, a restaurateur of the Rue de l'Ancienne Comédie. This banquet, which cost two francs a head, wine included, compensated for the insufficiency of the bill of fare by a poetic variety. At dessert each one was obliged to give a sample of what he had done during the month. These youths took the matter seriously, and it was not Bacchanalian couplets which were most highly prized. Victor read at one time *le Dernier Barde*, at another *l'Achéménide* of Virgil, at another the translation of a satire of Horace.

The only cloud upon this brilliant banquet was when the waiter made the tour of the table, asking from each forty sous. The first to whom he came was not embarrassed. He put his hand in his pocket without the least hesitation, and was suddenly astonished to find that he had forgotten his purse. But all could not have forgotten their purses on the same day, and the others knew not how to answer. Then Abel, who was the Rothschild of the band, smiled.

"Come," he would say, "I am going to be magnificent cheaply."

And he would pay for those who had no money.

The recommencement of the classes did not interrupt the *Literary Banquet*. Victor was free to leave school when he wished, and to take Eugène, who, moreover, capricious and strange at times, often refused to go, and remained at the school.

Victor himself never failed to be there.

One day an idea struck one of the diners.

"Do you know what we ought to do?" said he.

"What?"

"We ought to make a collective book. We join in a dinner; let us join in a romance!"

"Explain yourself."

"Nothing simpler. We will suppose, for example, that some officers, on the eve of a battle, relate their histories to each other, in order to kill time while waiting to kill other people, or be killed by them. That will give the unity; we shall get variety from our different styles. We will publish the thing anonymously, and the public will be deliciously surprised to find in one book so many kinds of talent."

"Bravo!" cried the whole table, enthusiastically.

The plan was adopted. They settled upon the length of each story; for it was necessary that the work should not exceed two volumes octavo, in order that the sale might not be too heavy. Otherwise, each was free in relation to his subject. As they were separating, Abel repeated what had been determined upon.

"And now," added he, "we must not fold our arms. To force ourselves to work, it will be well to fix a time when it shall be finished. Let us see; how much time shall we give ourselves?"

"A fortnight," said Victor.

The others looked to see if he were speaking seriously. But he was at that age when one doubts nothing. He repeated:

"Well, yes; a fortnight."

"A fortnight to write a romance!"

said Malitourne; "to invent it and to write it. It is childish!"

"I shall have done in a fortnight," insisted Victor.

"Fudge!"

"I will bet that I will."

"Well, a dinner all around."

"A dinner all around. Done!"

On the 15th, in the morning, each of the members of the *Literary Banquet* received word from Victor that he had finished his novel, which, that there might be no question as to the quantity, was a complete volume, and that those who might desire to hear it had only to come that evening, at eight o'clock, to Gilé's.

All came, and Victor read *Bug Jargal.*

Malitourne confessed that he had lost. The others, with one voice, declared that that was worth more than one dinner, and that they ought each to give one.

Abel gave his first and—last. The rest lacked means to follow his example and time to do their part of the book, and the novels stopped with Victor's, as the dinners did with Abel's.

XXXII.

OLD FRIENDS SEPARATE.

DURING the year of applied mathematics Victor was again noticed for his application by the professor of the morning class, M. Laran. But one day the professor, who was a long, slender man, rose suddenly in his chair, leaned forward and stretched out his neck, which lengthened like an opera-glass. He then saw that what so conscientiously occupied Victor and riveted his eyes so intently upon the table, was a volume of *Le Génie du Christianisme*, adroitly concealed behind a barricade constructed with his inkstand, his copy-books, and his cap. The volume was confiscated, and the pupil threatened with expulsion the first time he should be found with any book other than his mathematics. Then Victor had no resource but to carve his name on the table, with date, flourish, and embellishments.

His attention was better at the afternoon class. The professor, M Lefébure de Fourcy, a huge, awkwardly-built man, whose two shoulders, on bad terms with each other, supported a long, pock-marked face, was full of life and enthusiasm. He crossed the class-room at a single stride, demonstrated like a thunderbolt, and furrowed the black-board with lightnings. This flashing rapidity animated Victor, who became enamored for a moment with figures. But having followed the other course poorly, his science had many a hiatus, which he was obliged to fill up with his imagination. Sometimes he found strange and complicated solutions for the most difficult problems. This strange pupil was himself a problem to M. Lefébure de Fourcy, who was equally astonished at his invention and his ignorance.

Among Victor's classmates were Victor Jacquemin, the Orientalist, and Blondel, who not only felicitated M. Victor Hugo in verse on his first Academic success, but was, years afterwards, the commander of the company ordered to parade in his honor on the day he was received at the Academy—appearing by a strange chance at both ends of his Academic career, saluting him once with the pen and again with the sword.

Victor did not remain satisfied with a mention by the Academy. He competed again this year. The subject proposed was the *Institution of the Jury.* He wrote a dialogue between Malesherbes, glorifying parlements, and Voltaire, preferring the jury. The Academy perfected the system of M. Raynouard, which consisted in shielding youth from an excess of glory; Victor had not even a mention.

Eugène, who had modestly left the Academy of Paris to his brother and contented himself with a provincial academy, obtained a prize at the

Jeux Floraux of Toulouse for an ode on the death of the Duke d'Enghien, in which his royalism energetically stigmatizes the author and the accomplices of the bloody ambuscade, and predicted Murat's punishment:

> "Murat, Calabria and her crags attend thee;
> Her callow vultures wait to rend thee!"

In August, 1818, the two brothers .eft the seminary and returned to their mother. Madame Hugo no longer lived in the Rue du Cherche-Midi; the half-pay of the General would not permit her the luxury of a garden; she had less costly rooms on the third floor of No. 18, Rue des Petits Augustins. She could not renounce verdure entirely; having no trees herself, her eyes, at least, became possessors of those of others. From her window she saw the beautiful remains of the old La Rochefoucauld garden.

The house, which was contiguous to the museum of the Petits-Augustins, was formerly a part of the convent which this museum had replaced. The sleeping-room of Madame Hugo, with vaulted ceiling, was a portion of the chapel. The room assigned to the two brothers for their work, opened on the court of the museum, which was full of sculptures and architectural fragments. When the Revolution, which did not destroy inequality in life to tolerate it even in death, restored kings to the common clay, the tombs of St. Denis had been transported to the museum of the Petits-Augustins. It was these sepulchres which Eugene and Victor had before their eyes. Louis XVIII. did not admit that kings, though dead, should be classed with other men, and repeopled St. Denis. The museum was then obliged to restore to the cathedral the tombs which it had usurped. Victor witnessed this mortuary removal with pain. Even when sadness leaves us, it leaves its void behind.

The life of Victor soon had an interest other than Academic competition. After dinner Madame Hugo made a practice of visiting Madame Foucher. When her two sons left the seminary, they went there with her. Almost every evening of the winter of 1819–20, the porter of the hotel Toulouse saw Eugène and Victor enter arm in arm, and behind them their mother, reticule in hand, and dressed in an amaranth merino gown, which was covered by a yellow palm-leaf cashmere.

Madame Foucher occupied her sleeping apartment, which was a large room with a deep alcove. Madame Hugo always found her arm-chair ready in one of the chimney corners, and, without laying aside her shawl or hat, seated herself, took her work from her reticule, and began to ply her needle.

M. Foucher, who had not been busy at night at the war-office since the fall of the Emperor, occupied the other corner, having near him, on a shelf, his tobacco-box and pipe. Between him and Madame Hugo, around a table, sat Madame Foucher and her daughter, sewing. Eugène, Victor, and Victor Foucher, completed the circle.

The evenings were very silent. The health of the master of the house, affected by his vigils, was little favorable to gaiety or to conversation; he did not even care to be asked the news; he hated to be noticed; every attention worried him; he seemed to be ashamed of being ill; he tried to hide himself in his corner and his books; Madame Foucher, not to trouble him, and from her natural inclination, talked but little; Eugène and Victor, as disciplined in actual life as they were free in intellectual life, had been taught by their mother never to speak unless spoken to. Madame Hugo interrupted her sewing occasionally to look at the crackling fire, or to open her snuff-box, for she indulged as well as M. Foucher. She would present her box to her old friend, saying: "Monsieur Foucher, will you take a pinch?" M. Foucher answered Yes, or No;

and these were ordinarily, with the good-day and the good-night, the only words exchanged during the whole evening.

These monotonous evenings had an attraction for Victor which at first was not understood. As soon as dinner was over, he was ready, and reproved the tardiness of Eugene; in the street, he had difficulty in not leaving his mother far behind; when, by chance, she did not go to the hotel Toulouse, he was sad.

The Revolution had respected the statues of kings no more than their tombs. The statue of Henry IV. had been overturned at the same time that his body had been exhumed. By an exception in favor of this king, less unpopular than the rest, advantage had been taken of the exhumation to make a cast of his face. This plaster mask served the sculptor Lemot in making the equestrian statue of the Pont Neuf. The enormous bronze left the workshop, enveloped in a green veil, heavily drawn by a score of stout horses, and escorted by a multitude of the curious, which increased from street to street. One of this throng was Victor. All went well at first; the horses were strong enough; but, on reaching the quai, the ascent was too steep, and they could not get to the end; the whips and oaths of the cartmen were powerless; the poor beasts did their best, but their hoofs slipped upon the pavement, and all their efforts ended in sparks. Then the multitude detached them, and, taking their place, throwing themselves upon the wheels, the shaft, and behind, everywhere where there was room for a hand, they pulled, pushed, rolled and triumphed over the ascent. We may well imagine that Victor was not the last to lend a hand.

This year, the Academy of Toulouse offered a prize for a poem on the *Re-establishment of the Statue of Henry IV.* This subject belonged peculiarly to Victor, who, feeling a little cool to the Academy of Paris for his recent check, was attracted towards the Jeux Floraux, which had gratified Eugène with such a beautiful silver lily. Besides, he could compete without interfering with Eugène; the Jeux Floraux was not one of those miserly academies which have but a single prize for poetry; they had seven. There were palms enough to load abundantly the brows of the two brothers.

For the six other prizes, the Academy left the choice of subject to the taste of the competitors. Victor had an ode all ready, *the Virgins of Verdun*, which he sent first. As he was about to begin the *Re-establishment of the Statue of Henry IV.*, Madame Hugo was seized with an inflammation of the chest, which the cold weather of January aggravated. The prize was forgotten; the brothers passed the whole time at the bedside of their mother. One evening, Madame Hugo, who was better, asked Victor if he had sent his second ode; he replied that he had not written it, and that there was now no time to do it, for, in order to be in season, it must be sent next morning. Madame Hugo expressed much chagrin at this impossibility, of which her sickness was the cause, and fell asleep, very sad. Victor, seeing the regret of his mother, set to work, and, while watching with her, wrote his ode which she found next morning upon her bed.

Some days afterwards he received this letter:

"TOULOUSE.

"Since we have received your odes, Monsieur, I hear nothing spoken of except your fine talents, and the vast hopes which you give to our literature. If the Academy partake of my sentiments, Isaure will not have crowns enough for the two brothers. Your seventeen years find here none but marvellers, almost incredulous. You are to us an enigma of which the Muses have the secret.

"Accept, etc.,

"SOUMET."

The Virgins of Verdun took the golden amaranth, and *The Statue of*

Henry IV. the golden lily. Eugène had mentions and the glory of having his verses printed in the collection of the Jeux Floraux.

Madame Hugo having recovered, they began to spend their evenings at Madame Foucher's again. But the winter was drawing to a close. Madame Foucher hired for the summer season a small cottage in the suburbs. In the summer of 1819 she went to Issy. This going into the country thwarted Victor severely.

In vain did he insinuate that Issy was not much further than the court-martial, that you had only to cross Vaugirard and you were there; the visits could not now be made every day. Often, however, when the weather was fine, Madame Hugo took her two sons, purchased on the road baskets of fruit, which they were happy to carry to Issy, and the servant to whom they gave them in charge, quickly made three more places at the table. The fruits eaten, they went into the garden to take a little fresh air, and sometimes much dust, for the rear wall, sloping by design, was upon the place where the village dances were held.

Apart from the dinner at Issy, Victor had no recreation. Madame Hugo, as her two sons grew older, held them with more strict authority; it was time that they should think of their future; they had now to make it themselves; they could no longer count upon their father, ruined by the fall of the Empire and the defence of Thionville.

She felt the grave responsibility that she had assumed in encouraging them to give up mathematics for literature, and her conscience, as well as her maternal love, was enlisted for their success. She had disposed of them contrary to the desire of the General, she had taken them to herself; she was at the same time their mother and their father; she had a double duty, so she governed them absolutely; every day they passed in labor; they never went out without her, and it was touching to see these two big boys, one in his twentieth year and the other making a noise in the papers, tied to their mother's apron-strings, obeying her and still children to her.

Summer ended, the silent evenings began again at the hôtel Toulouse, and Victor was enchanted, but he showed it too much. The parents perceived his joy and sought its cause; it did not take long to discover that his happiness was not in seeing the fire crackle, nor in passing two hours motionless upon a badly stuffed chair, and that he did not care that anybody should speak, and that he was satisfied that M. Foucher should keep his eyes on his books, and the women theirs on their work, because then he could watch Mademoiselle Adèle at his ease. They found at the same time that Mademoiselle Adèle was not displeased at this. They were obeying the prophecy which had affianced them before they had an existence.

They could hardly count thirty years between them. To marry these children would have been a folly. Victor had nothing, and Mademoiselle Foucher was just as poor. Let us separate them, said the families; if their affection persists they will learn how to find each other again. And the parents ceased to see each other.

XXXIII.

A REMARK OF GENERAL HUGO.

VICTOR suffered, but did not renounce. Of the two obstacles which stood in his way, one, his age, would disappear of itself, the other, poverty, depended on his efforts. So he labored with indefatigable desperation. In 1820 again he sent to Toulouse, *Moïse sur le Nil*, which also took a prize. Three prizes made him the master Es Jeux Floraux, and he was, at eighteen, a provincial academician.

Abel was not the friend of a prin-

ter for nothing. Gilé printed the ode *A la Vendée*, which Victor had just completed, then a satire; the latter sold passably. Abel then conceived the idea of a bi-monthly review; he established with his two brothers and some friends, *le Conservateur littéraire.* Victor labored assiduously upon this. He published *Bug Jargal* in it; he wrote prose and verse for it. All was strongly royalistic; he saw more absolutely nothing but his mother. He saw his father less than ever, who came only two or three times a year to pass a day or two at Paris. In these hurried visits, the General did not even lodge at his wife's house. These perpetual separations had not taken place, it is easy to see, without weakening the bond between husband and wife; they had become accustomed to live without each other, and it was now choice which separated them quite as much as necessity. The children had necessarily sided with their mother; they had never been away from her; she had restrained them in nothing; she had taught them in the open air; she had permitted them to choose their future course; she was to them liberty and poesy; while their father was a sort of stranger to them, who appeared at Madrid only to imprison them in the Nobles' College, at Paris only to imprison them in the Cordier School, and who sentenced them to mathematics for life. For all these reasons, the father's opinions had no effect upon those of his children. He comprehended the uselessness of struggling a few hours yearly against a daily and hourly influence. He submitted, trusting to the intelligence of his children when they should come to the age of reflection. In one of his visits, so few and so brief, he saw Eugène and Victor at General Lucotte's. Victor having ardently expressed his Vendéan opinions, the father, who had listened without interruption, turned towards General Lucotte and said:

"Let time do its work. The child is of the mother's opinion; the man will be of the father's."

XXXIV.

A REMARK OF CHATEAUBRIAND.

I have already remarked that Victor, so submissive to his mother in his mode of life and his political belief, revolted in the things of nature and art, in which he had an intense personality. Like all that is original, *Atala* had been much derided on its appearance; the shouts of laughter still found an echo in 1819, and a parody, entitled *Ah! la la!* crushed for ever its pictures of the Meschacebé and the virgin forests, by twenty pages of description of a potato-patch. Madame Hugo was for the parody; Victor was strongly for *Atala.*

The reading of Chateaubriand, for which he had a passion, sensibly modified his ideas on one point. The *Genius of Christianity*, in demonstrating the poetry of the Catholic religion, had taken an excellent means of recommending it to poets. Victor gradually accepted this faith, which is so commingled with the cathedral architecture and the grand images of the Bible, and passed from the Voltairean royalism of his mother to the Christian royalism of Chateaubriand.

The death of the Duke de Berry inspired Victor with an ode, which was a great success in the royalist world. Louis XVIII. recited one of the strophes several times before his intimate friends.

M. de Chateaubriand, talking with a deputy of the Right, M. Agier, spoke to him in enthusiastic terms of the ode, and called the author a *sublime child.*

M. Agier wrote an article upon the ode for *le Drapeau blanc*, quoting the phrase of M. de Chateaubriand. This expression of the great writer was everywhere repeated, and Victor became really famous.

He went to thank M. Agier for his article, but did not dare to confront the glory of M. de Chateaubriand, who was astonished that he did not see him, and said so to M. Agier. The deputy came to make known M. de Chateaubriand's surprise to Madame Hugo, who laughed no longer at *Atala*, now that *Atala* admired her son, and ordered Victor to make the terrible visit. He himself felt that M. de Chateaubriand desiring it, there could be no resistance, and submitted to the honor which was inflicted upon him.

The next day, at seven in the evening, M. Agier came for him. With intense emotion he reached No. 27 Rue Saint-Dominique. He followed his guide across a yard, at the rear of which they mounted some steps. M. Agier knocked, a servant in a white apron opened the door, and introduced them into the antechamber, then into a large drawing-room, simply furnished, the seats of which were covered with grey cases.

Madame de Chateaubriand, sitting upon a tête-à-tête, did not move. M. de Chateaubriand, leaning against the mantel, said to Victor, without stirring:

"Monsieur Hugo, I am enchanted to see you. I have read your verses, those on LaVendée and on the death of the Duke de Berry. There are, especially in the last, things which no poet of the time could have written. My age and my experience give me unfortunately the right to be frank, and I tell you sincerely that there are passages which I do not like so well, but what is beautiful in your odes is very beautiful."

The eulogy was not sparing of praise; there was, however, in the attitude, in the inflexion of the voice, in this distribution of positions, something so sovereign, that Victor felt rather humiliated than exalted. He stammered an embarrassed response, and felt anxious to go.

Two friends of the house, the Marquis de Talaru and the Marquis d'Herbouville, arrived opportunely. He recovered himself a little, and was able to survey the glorious writer whom he knew only in his books.

M. de Chateaubriand affected the military style; the man of the pen called to mind the man of the sword; his neck was stiffened up by a black cravat which concealed his shirt collar; a black coat buttoned to the throat held up his bent little body. His head was fine, disproportioned to his figure, but noble and grave. His nose was firm and imperious; his eye proud, his smile charming, but it was only a flash, and the mouth quickly resumed its severe and haughty expression.

It grew dark. No light was brought. The master of the house suffered the conversation to drop. Victor, embarrassed at first by words, now was by silence. He was delighted when M. Agier arose.

M. de Chateaubriand, seeing them departing, invited Victor to come and see him again, and told him that he would find him at home every morning from seven to nine.

Victor crossed the antechamber and the yard without stopping; when he was in the street he breathed freely.

"Well," said M. Agier, "I hope you are satisfied?"

"Yes, to get out."

"What!" cried the deputy. "But M. de Chateaubriand was charming to you. He talked a great deal. You do not know him; he is sometimes four or five hours without speaking a word. He made a great exception in your case, in so soon according to you formal and informal receptions. If you are not satisfied you must be difficult."

Victor was not convinced. He liked the author of *The Martyrs* better in his books than in his drawing-room, and, if it had not been for Madame Hugo, whose wish was all-powerful with her son, their relations would gave gone no further.

Out of deference for his mother, he went one morning to the Rue Saint-Dominique. The same servant

let him in. This time M. de Chateaubriand received him in his chamber. In passing by the drawing-room he met Madame de Chateaubriand, who, notwithstanding the early hour, was going out, and had one of those narrow hats, then the fashion of the Faubourg Saint-Germain. Victor, who on his first visit had not seen her distinctly, she being in a bad light and night approaching, then saw a large, thin woman, with a dried-up face, marked with the small-pox. She did not stop for this little young man; still she deigned to make him a slight bow. When Victor entered, M. de Chateaubriand, in his shirt-sleeves, a knotted silk handkerchief upon his head, was seated at a table, with his back to the door, engaged in looking over some papers. He turned eagerly:

"Ah! good day, Monsieur Victor Hugo. I was expecting you. Sit down. Well, have you been at work since I saw you? Yes, is it not so? Have you written much verse?"

Victor answered that he was always writing a little.

"You are very right. Verse! Write verse! It is the highest literature. You are upon a more exalted plane than mine. The true writer is the poet. I, too, have written verse, and I repent that I did not continue. My verse was better than my prose. Do you know that I have written a tragedy? Yes, I must read you one scene. * * * Pilorge, come here, I want you."

An individual with red hair, whiskers, and face, entered.

"Bring me the manuscript of *Moïse*."

Pilorge was the secretary of M. de Chateaubriand, and had no sinecure. Aside from manuscripts, correspondence alone occupied a great deal of time, because, besides the original letters which he wrote and M. de Chateaubriand signed, he transcribed these in a register, in which the illustrious writer, mindful of posterity, carefully preserved his most trifling notes. Pilorge had also to classify and number all the letters received at the house.

The secretary brought the desired manuscript.

The author of *René* then read, with pomp and emphasis, a dialogue, and afterwards a chorus in imitation of the choruses of *Athalie* and *Esther*, which did not prove to his auditor that he was right in preferring his verse to his prose. Victor tried to think it very fine, and succeeded in admiring one line of the chorus, to which he clung like a drowning man.

The servant who had let him in brought an immense basin, filled with water. M. de Chateaubriand took off his handkerchief, and began to take off his green morocco slippers. Victor was about to retire, but he detained him. He continued to undress himself without ceremony, took off his swan's skin pantaloons, his shirt, his flannel under vest, and got into the basin, where his servant washed and rubbed him. Wiped and dressed, he made the toilette of his teeth, which were very fine, and for which he had a full case of dental instruments. Enlivened by his bath, he talked with spirit while working on his jaws, and charmed Victor. He spoke of the censorship.

"What a government! They are wretches and imbeciles. Thought is stronger than they, and they will wound themselves by striking it. If they injured only themselves! But they will lose the Monarchy by this game!"

Victor received from this second interview a better impression than from the first. He wrote for M. de Chateaubriand the ode entitled *le Génie*. He went often to see him, but he rarely found the vivacity and abandon of his second visit. M. de Chateaubriand was generally the same as he had seen him on the first evening, freezingly polite; you came in contact with a character whose rigidity nothing could bend; whose haughtiness nothing could diminish; you felt more respect than sympathy; you recognised that you were in the presence of a genius, but not of a man.

It was not without secret joy

that Victor learned that M. de Chateaubriand was appointed ambassador to Berlin. He went to congratulate him and to bid him adieu.

"What! Adieu!" said the Ambassador. "But you go with me."

Victor opened his eyes.

"Yes," said the master, "I have had you attached to the embassy without asking your permission, and I take you along."

Victor thanked him cordially for his kind intention, but told him that he could not leave his mother.

"Is it only your mother?" asked M. de Chateaubriand, smiling. "Very well, you are free. But I am sorry that you cannot go; it would have been honorable to us both!"

Madame de Chateaubriand entered her husband's study. She had never seemed to know Victor. He was very much surprised, therefore, to see her approach him, with a smile upon her lips.

"Monsieur Hugo," said she to him, "I have caught you, and you must aid me in doing a good deed. I have an infirmary for poor old priests. This infirmary costs me more money than I have; so I have a chocolate factory. I sell it rather dear, but it is excellent. Would you like a pound?"

"Madame," said Victor, who had taken to heart the grand airs of Madame de Chateaubriand, and who felt the necessity of dazzling her, "I will take three pounds."

Madame de Chateaubriand was dazzled, but Victor had not a sou left.

Madame de Chateaubriand was not alone in her charity. M. de Chateaubriand always had upon the mantel of his study piles of five-franc pieces; every moment his servant came in, bringing him letters from beggars, Emigrees real or pretended, Vendéens, Chevaliers de Saint Louis; he took from the pile, grumbling, wrapped the money in the letter and sent it all out by the servant.

Madame Sand speaks, in "The Story of her Life," of the crowds of beggars who pounce upon writers of renown. This soon becomes a regular business unless it is stopped. All enter into it, paupers, swindlers, unfortunates in rags, or collectors in laces, and do not always ask, like Madame de Chateaubriand, with a smile.

M. de Chateaubriand gave without counting, as he spent. Money poured out of his hands. When he went to see Charles X. in exile at Prague, the ex-king questioned him about his fortune.

"I am poor as a rat," he answered. "I live pell-mell with Madame de Chateaubriand's paupers."

"Oh! it must not be so," said the king; "come, Chateaubriand, how much would it take to make you rich?"

"Sire, you are wasting your time; you might give me four millions this morning, and I should not have a farthing at night!"

The unfortunate side of this noble contempt for pelf was that it put the great writer at the mercy of money-lenders. Economy contains independence and dignity. Those who opened their purses to him considered that they had the right to interfere in his political course, and sometimes, the morning after a speech in the Chamber or a newspaper article, came to his house and made threatening remonstrances, which his pride had to endure. The lack of money which distressed his old age forced him to sell in advance his *Mémoires d'Outre-tombe*, and to hypothecate his body. He was to have an annuity of twenty thousand francs a year. As he did not die soon enough, and the bargain became a bad one, it was proposed to him to reduce it to twelve thousand francs; he confessed that he had no right to linger so long, and accepted the diminution.

XXXV.

THE DEATH OF THE MOTHER.

SINCE her inflammation of the lungs, Madame Hugo had not been well. She attributed her ill-health to her lodgings. Accustomed to the

air, she breathed uneasily within four walls. She did not like to remain, and, in the beginning of 1821, left her third story and went to the Rue Mézières No. 10, where she had a garden. She was so hurried that she did not allow time for the repairing and painting of her new rooms. Once there, to do this more quickly and economically, she set about it herself, with her two sons to assist her. It was also an idea with her that men should learn to be useful on all occasions. She had already accustomed them to aid her in the dyeing of stuffs, to which she paid particular attention, and they might have shown the men of the craft how to color woollens and silks. From dyers they became easily white-washers and paper-hangers.

They became gardeners again. The garden was in bad condition, and had to be made anew. Spring was coming on, and it was the season for it. They must dig, spade, sow, plant, graft. Their mother spaded as well as they and more than they; her love of flowers prevented her from feeling fatigue. One day she desired to complete a plat; she was warm, and drank a glass of water. Almost immediately she had a chill and then a fever. A second inflammation of the lungs set in. Her sons again passed their nights watching her; the beloved invalid recovered from the acute attack; but her lungs were affected; she lingered for some weeks in a state of unreal convalescence, and took her bed again at the close of May. Notwithstanding this relapse, the physician continued to have hope. In the middle of June she appeared better, and the two brothers expected that she would soon recover.

On the 27th of June, towards noon, they were alone with their mother.

"See," said Eugène to Victor, "how much better mamma is! She has slept since midnight."

"Yes," said Victor, "she will soon be well."

He approached to look at her and to kiss her forehead. The forehead was cold. She was dead.

Abel, called immediately, attended to the funereal details. On the next day but one, the three brothers, a few friends and some others attracted by the young renown of Victor, conducted the dead to the church of Saint Sulpice, and thence to the Cemetery of Montparnasse. Friends took the three brothers away and endeavored to distract their attention; but Victor preferred to weep and returned alone to the empty house. He could not remain there, went out and took the road to the Cemetery. When they shut the gates, he wandered upon the boulevard dejected and discouraged with life. The need of uniting himself again to some hope led him to take, in returning, the Rue du Cherche-Midi. It was eleven o'clock at night; he expected to find the Court Martials hushed and dark. The gate was wide open and the court and the windows ablaze with light. He met a party entering with shouts of laughter. He would have continued his route, but he could not move a step. He hesitated an instant, then, suddenly, urged by the bitter envy of suffering, he sprang into the court, ran up the grand staircase, and entered a large empty room where a comedy had just been performed. The stage had upon him the effect of another tomb. In a mirror he saw his face which had the pallor of death, and the crape of his hat which he still had upon his head. The sight recalled him to himself. He fled precipitately and plunged into a dark hall whence he heard above his head the step of the dance and the sound of instruments. He could not resist mounting another story, then another; he knew the house, and went to a sort of casement-window which looked into the ball-room from above. There, alone and in the darkness, he pressed his forehead against the window-pane and became desperately intoxicated with the pleasures of others. He soon saw her whom he sought; she was dressed in white, had flowers in

her hair, and was smiling as she danced.

The rupture between the two families had not been less painful to Mademoiselle Foucher than to Victor. Father and mother struggled against the sadness of their daughter, by seeking for her all opportunities for amusement. The 29th of June was the birthday of M. Foucher; a celebration had been arranged, a ball and a vaudeville, *Monsieur Guillaume*, in which Mademoiselle Adèle represented the heroine. On the eve of the great day, M. Foucher had received a note inviting him to the funeral of his old friend, whom he had not seen since the separation, and of whose sickness he had scarcely heard; he thought only of his daughter, who would lose a diversion, and concealed from her the sad news.

The next day, Mademoiselle Foucher, dizzy and weary with the pleasures of the evening, was walking in the garden of the Court martial. She saw Victor enter; his presence and his pallor told her at once there had been some misfortune.

She ran to him: "What is the matter?"

"My mother is dead. I buried her yesterday."

"And I, I was dancing!"

He saw that she knew nothing about it. They wept together, and this was their betrothal.

XXXVI.

LA ROCHE-GUYON.

THOSE who had accompanied the body to the church had remarked, on entering the Chapel of the Virgin, a young priest who listened to the service with them, and who also went to the cemetery to cast his spade-full of earth upon the coffin. This priest was about thirty years of age; his silken locks surrounded his tonsure in a complete circle; his linen and his cassock were of a texture rare among priests; personally he himself had a grand air of distinction and of race.

It was the Duke de Rohan. Immediately after his marriage his wife was burned to death. In despair he took orders, and he was then subdeacon of the Seminary of Saint-Sulpice.

Some days afterwards he asked, through a mutual friend, permission to come and see Victor. Victor replied that it was his duty to go and thank M. de Rohan for having attended the funeral of his mother. He went to the seminary; the abbé being just then in the chapel, they introduced him into his cell, the only furniture of which was a wooden table, a wooden bed, and a wooden crucifix. He was touched with this detachment from human things on the part of a man of the world who bore so lofty a name.

The abbé hastened to greet him with cordial simplicity. He spoke first of death with a sincerity of emotion which penetrated the son. Then he talked of things less sad, complimented Victor on his poetry, all of which he knew; predicted glory for him; said that, as to himself, he had renounced all; that he desired to be nothing in the Church; that had his health been good he would have become a Trappist, and that all his ambition was to become the curé of his village.

He pleased Victor very much, who saw him frequently until the vacation of the seminary. He passed the holidays in his village, and insisted that Victor should go with him rather than remain in the house where his mother had died. Victor did not go with him, but promised to join him.

So one morning in the middle of August he mounted the diligence with their mutual friend who had been their intermediary, M. Rocher. The village was La Roche-Guyon. On reaching the bank of the Seine, M. Rocher hailed the ferry-boat. From the middle of the river the two visitors saw their friend who was waving his handkerchief upon the

balcony of the château. When they arrived in the court of honor, the young Seminarist received them upon the staircase, with a dozen abbés, stewards and valets behind him, which began to disturb Victor's ideas concerning the humility of the Duke.

The lord of La Roche-Guyon was, however, as friendly and as unreserved as the Seminarist of Saint Sulpice. Dinner was waiting for the visitors; there were a dozen guests, nearly all priests. The Duke placed Victor at his right and was charming; but a princely etiquette burdened the dinner; the guests treated the master of the house with a ceremonious respect; they called him nothing but *Monseigneur*, except one abbé, since almoner of the Duchess de Berry, who called him *Highness.* Behind his Highness, standing erect, with sword by his side and napkin under his arm, was a tall, ill-looking man. A word astonished Victor who asked the Duke who this person was.

"It is the Mayor of La Roche-Guyon," responded the Duke.

Victor's faith was shaken in the ambition of the Duke to become Curé of La Roche-Guyon.

It was too late to visit the park after dinner. They talked. Then the Duke conducted Victor to a vast, opulent Gothic chamber, the windows of which looked upon the Seine. This chamber had a greater merit. The Duke de la Rouchefoucauld, author of the *Maximes*, had occupied it.

In the morning Victor rose with the dawn, and went alone into the Park, which extended over the hill back of the château, which was built half way up. The ruins of *La Tour de Guy*, the primitive burgh, whence had come the name of the present village, *La Roche à Guy*, then *La Roche-Guyarde*, then *La Roche-Guyon*, first attracted his attention. There was nothing remaining but the circular wall, which was very thick, and covered with ivy and moss. The ceilings of the four stories had successively crumbled to the ground, where they formed an enormous heap of rubbish. A narrow stairway with no balustrade, and broken in many places, mounted spirally upon the interior surface of the wall to the summit, whither it led. This ruin served Victor in his description of the tower of *Vermund le Proscrit* in *Han d'Islande*, with which he was then occupied.

The sound of a bell aroused him; he thought it was for breakfast. It was for mass. The chapel was under ground, and cut in the rock. On entering the crypt he heard the sound of the harmonica. He pushed open a door, and saw a chapel, splendidly illuminated. A Christ of life-size lent reality to the illusion, and a jet of vermillion gushed from his wounds. The wood representing linen was painted white, the body flesh color; the eyes were enamel, and the crown of actual thorns. Behind this Christ a cloud of seraphim, in high relief, like those of Saint Roch, projected rays of gilded wood. All the household abbés were there. The Curé of La Roche-Guyon said the mass, and was served by the Duke in the dress of a deacon; but it was easy to see that it was not the deacon who was the servant.

Victor had intended at first to remain two months, but he had enough of it in two days. The second day after his arrival, he wrote to a friend in Paris: "These immense gilded salons, these vast terraces, and, above all, these grand, obsequious lackeys, weary me. I have no other attraction here than the woody hill, the old towers, and, first of all, the charming society of this amiable Duke de Rohan, one of my dearest friends, and of those most worthy to be nobly loved. I leave him soon; but he is happy. What need has he of me, who am not? Madame the Duchess de Berry, who is at Rosny is coming to visit the château in a few days. M. de Rohan would detain me at least until then; but I distrust his kindness. I do not wish

that my private position should expose me to become the protégé of a man, when my social position permits me to be his friend. I love the Duke de Rohan for himself, for his beautiful soul, for his noble character; but not for the material services that he can render me. * * *"

He went, leaving the friend with whom he had come, who attempted in vain to prevail on him to remain, saying that by this abrupt departure he would grieve the Duke, who loved him very much.

"I also love him very much," said Victor, "but I prefer him in his cell or at my own house."

Between Rolleboise and Mantes there is a hill, which he ascended on foot. He there met a young woman who had also descended from her carriage, and who, to obtain a better view of the country, had climbed up a steep slope. She seemed embarrassed about descending, having with her only an aged man who could scarcely retain his own footing. Victor advanced and offered his hand, which was accepted with a good grace. At Rosny, where he stopped to visit the château, he was told that the Duchess de Berry had just left for La Roche-Guyon with M. de Meynard, and that he must have met them. The Duchess de Berry did not suspect that she was touching the hand which had written the ode upon the death of her husband.

We love to recall the remembrances of our youth. In 1835 M. Victor Hugo, travelling in that region, re-visited La Roche-Guyon. The château belonged no longer to the Duke de Rohan, who had sold it to Madame de Liancourt. The Duchess was hospitable to tourists. A servant complacently showed the apartments, and among others, a chamber "in which Victor Hugo had lodged," and which was not the right one. Then he desired the visitor to inscribe his name in a book kept for this purpose. M. Victor Hugo was about to do so when, turning over the leaves of the book to find a blank page, he saw his own name at the bottom of a few lines, written in a neat, round-hand. Despairing of being able to imitate this hand and this signature well enough not to be suspected, he wrote *In se magna ruunt*, and signed: *Lucan.*

XXXVII.

FRAGMENTS OF LETTERS.

General Hugo offered to make his sons an allowance if they would adopt a more regular and less hazardous profession than literature. Victor refused, and found himself reduced to his own resources. His whole fortune consisted of eight hundred francs, which his publications had brought him. With this modest capital, he launched into the unknown.

His exterior life had a famous and brilliant commencement; the world sought him, he was invited everywhere; I see, among others, a letter in which "M. le Comte de Chabrol, Prefect of the Seine, and Madame the Comtesse de Chabrol beg M. Victor *Hugot*, member of the Academy of the Jeux Floraux, to do them the honor to dine with them Saturday, December 29th, at half-past five o'clock." But when he returned to the house where there now was no mother, he felt alone in the world. He could not live thus; he went to M. Foucher and asked of him his daughter.

He had nothing but his courage and the heart of her for whom he asked. M. and Madame Foucher, out of affection for their child and sympathy for the young man who was carving out his future career alone, and accepted so resolutely the chances of destiny, consented to the marriage, which they postponed only to the time when Victor's position should be a little more certain.

Fortified with this promise, he set to work with new ardor. Newspaper articles, odes, romances, plays,

he wrote all these, or he attempted to write them. For two years he led an active life, panting and feverish, full of dreams, hopes, and anxieties. He had one consent, but he must obtain another, his father's; would he gain it? He put off asking for it until he should have need of it. The following fragments of letters will give an idea of his occupations and of the state of his mind during these two years.

" * * * Nothing is to be despaired of; and no petty check abates a grand courage. I shut my eyes neither to the uncertainties nor to the menaces of the future; but I have learned from a brave mother that we may master events. Many men walk with trembling step upon firm ground; when one has a tranquil conscience and a good purpose, he ought to walk with firm step upon trembling ground.

"I am laboring here upon purely literary works, which give me moral freedom, while I am waiting for them to give me social independence. Letters, considered as private enjoyments, are a pleasure in prosperity and a consolation in misfortune. At this very time they have snatched me from the whirlpool of the little society of a little city, and created for me an isolation in which I can yield myself entirely to sad and sweet affections. It seems to me in this retreat that I am near the two beings who fill my whole life, although the one lives far from me, and the other lives no more. My material existence is too empty and too barren not to compel me to seek to create an ideal existence, peopled by those who are dear to me. Thanks to literature, I can do it."

Unfortunately, literature was not always a consolation. His renown began to expose him to attacks, violent already. He was not yet inured to enmities and to abuse, and he had not that indifference to them, which long habitude has since given. His general state of suffering rendered him more sensitive to everything, and exaggerated in his mind the importance of these stings:

" * * * You cannot imagine the multitude of troubles which besiege me. Independent of my afflictions and my domestic anxieties, I must also resign myself to all the vexations of literary animosities. I know not what demon has plunged me into a career in which every step is trammelled by some secret enmity or base rivalry. It is pitiful, and I feel ashamed for literature. It is a dreary thing to wake every morning a butt to the petty attacks of a multitude of enemies to whom you have done nothing, and whom for the most part you have never seen. I could wish to inspire you with esteem for this grand and noble profession of letters; but I am forced to confess that it furnishes a strange study of all human meannesses. It is in some sort a great marsh in which you must plunge if you have not wings to sustain yourself above the slime. I, who have not the wings of talent, but who am isolated by an inflexible character, am sometimes tempted to laugh at all the petty wrongs of which I am the object, but more often I confess, to the shame of my philosophy, I am tempted to be angry. You will think, perhaps, with an appearance of justice, that, in the important interests which occupy me, I ought to be insensible to such miseries; but it is precisely the state of irritability in which I am that renders them insupportable; what could only tease me if I were happy, is hateful to me now; I suffer when the wretched gnats come to feast upon my sores. Let us speak of them no more; it is too much kindness to them; they are not worth the wear of my pen or the paper which I soil. * * *"

But he soon came to look upon this from a firmer and loftier point of view.

"I find here on my return a petty literary squabble for my edification in the mysteries of patience. But I am as insensible to injuries as I am sensible of services. There are some abortions in the world for whom my contempt is not enough, and who desire my hate; they will not obtain it."

Then he reflected, and felt form within him that idea of universal forgiveness, which subsequently inspired the *Prière pour tous*, and all his plays.

"* * * You cannot imagine in what incredible good-will I enwrap all my brothers in humanity. I accustomed myself very early to search in the wrong done me, for the motive which prompted a man to do it. Then my momentary anger almost always changes immediately to long and deep compassion. It often happens that I even find a laudable principle in the source of a bad deed. Then you will confess that it is hardly a merit to console one's self for injury received, and to pardon it * * *."

He explained to her who was to be his wife what poetry was to him.

"* * * In two words, poetry is the expression of virtue. A beautiful soul and a fine poetic temperament are almost always inseparable. Poetry comes only from the soul, and can manifest itself as well by a fine deed as by a fine line * * *."

And in another letter:

"* * * Verse alone is not poetry. Poetry is in ideas. Ideas come from the soul. Verse is only an elegant dress upon a beautiful body. Poesy can be expressed in prose. It is only the more perfect under the grace and majesty of verse. It is the poetry of the soul which inspires noble sentiments and noble deeds, as well as noble writings. A dishonorable poet is a degraded being, more base and more culpable than a dishonorable man who is not a poet * * *."

He saw love no less grandly than poetry:

"There is within us an immaterial being, an exile in our bodies, which it is destined to survive eternally. This being of purer essence and a better nature is our soul. It is the soul which gives birth to all enthusiasms, all affections, which apprehends God and heaven. The soul, so superior to the body to which it is bound, would remain upon the earth in an unendurable isolation, were it not permitted to choose from among all other souls a companion which shares with it misery in this life and happiness in eternity. When two souls which have thus sought each other, for a longer or shorter time, in the multitude, find each other at last, when they have seen that they agree together, that they understand each other, in a word, that they are alike, then there is established between them for ever a union ardent and pure as themselves, a union which commences on earth, not to end in heaven. That union is *love*, true love, such, indeed, as very few men understand it. This love is a religion, which deifies the being beloved, which lives by devotion and enthusiasm, and to which the greatest sacrifices are the sweetest pleasures * * *."

"* * * Love, in this divine and true acceptation, elevates all the sentiments above the miserable human sphere. We are linked to an angel who lifts us unceasingly towards heaven."

His affairs did not prosper as he would have wished; promises upon which he had counted were not realized; unforeseen obstacles arose between him and the goal which he thought he touched, and discouraged him. He wrote to M. Foucher:

* * * "My whole future is again

plunged in uncertainty. Nothing positive, nothing sure. I would be certain of something, even were it misfortune; at least I could walk knowing whither I go. At present I must wait! The only quality which I possess, activity and energy in action, is paralysed. Circumstances, on the contrary, demand of me *patience*, a virtue which I have not, and probably never shall have. * * * The state of stagnation in which I now am, cannot endure. I shall, at least, do all that I can to end it. I would much rather perish in a river than drown in a pond!"

M. Foucher endeavored to calm him:

"* * * I understand your condition. Louis XIV. said of a poor officer who preferred the Cross of Saint Louis to a pension: '*He has not got the conceit out of him.*' I should say the same of a young man who prefers misfortune to a paralysing uncertainty which circumstances place between his present and his future. Yet things do not appear to have grown worse. Listen. Obstacles will not always be superior to our own efforts, and until we can make ourselves their master, let us give a change to our impatience by cultivating the domain which cannot be taken from us. Let us work. Your literature is a vast field. You have sown in it; produce the harvest. Be it sweet or bitter, ripe or green, what matters it? * * *"

In the midst of all these annoyances and all these hindrances, these hopes and these uncertainties, one thing never changed, his inflexible resolution to succeed only by worthy means, means which should cost his conscience nothing. He had as great desire to merit happiness as to obtain it.

"* * * If, in order to hasten the day of my good fortune, I do nothing derogatory to my character, it will be a strong proof in my favor. It is a cruel position, that of a young man independent by his principles, his affections, and his desires, and dependent by his age and his fortune. Yes, if I come out of this ordeal pure as I entered it, I shall believe that I have the right to have some esteem of myself. I have many cares to trample under my feet, for I must work in spite of so many agitations. * * *"

"* * * All roads are good to me, if one can tread them erect and firm, without crawling upon his belly, or bowing his head. This was my idea, when I said that I would rather create the means of my existence by my labor, than seek them from the haughty benevolence of the powerful. There are many roads to fortune; and I might doubtless have made mine already through them, had I wished to purchase favors by flatteries. That is not my way. * * * What is left to a young man who disdains to advance himself by these facile methods? Nothing but the consciousness of his power and his esteem for himself. He must mark out his career nobly and frankly, and advance as quickly as he may without wounding or overturning others, for the rest relying upon the justice of God."

I extract a few lines more, in which may be discerned his desire to be himself, and not to yield blindly to ideas and opinions received from others when a child:

"* * * I make small account, I confess, of the spirit of compromise, promiscuous creeds, and conventional traditions; because I think that a prudent man ought to examine everything with his reason before accepting anything; if he is deceived, it will not be his fault."

XXXVIII.

LAMENNAIS—CONFESSOR OF VICTOR HUGO.

It was at this time he wrote *Han d'Islande.* I read in one of his letters:

"In the month of May last, the necessity of expressing certain ideas which pressed upon me and which our French verse does not receive, led me to undertake a species of romance in prose. I had a soul full of love, of grief, and of youth; I dared not confide its secrets to any living creature; I chose a mute confidant, paper. I knew, moreover, that this work would bring me something, but that was only a secondary consideration when I undertook my book. I sought to lay aside some part of the agitations of my inexperienced and burning heart, the bitterness of my regrets, and the uncertainty of my hopes. I desired to delineate a young girl who should realize the ideal of all my fresh and poetic imaginations, to give myself the sad consolation of tracing the image of her whom I had lost, and who now appeared to me only in the remotest future. I wished to place near this young woman a young man, not such as I was, but such as I desired to be. These two persons were to be the prominent characters in the development of a narrative, partly history, partly invention, which should bring out a grand moral conclusion, the groundwork of the composition. Around these two principal actors I ranged many other persons, to give variety to the scenes and to move the wheelwork of the machine. These persons were grouped upon several planes, according to their degree of importance. The romance was a long drama, the scenes of which were tableaux, in which description supplied decoration and costume. For the rest, all the persons delineated themselves; an idea with which the compositions of Walter Scott had inspired me, and which I desired to attempt in the interest of our literature. I passed much time in gathering historical and geographical materials for this romance, and still more in maturing the conception, disposing the masses, and combining the details. I employed in this composition all my humble faculties; so that when I wrote the first line, I already knew the last. I had hardly commenced when a hideous misfortune dispersed all my ideas and destroyed all my projects. I forgot the work. * * *"

M. de Chateaubriand was appointed master of the Jeux Floraux. His letters had to be sent to him by an academician. There were six in Paris, one of whom was a colleague of the new master in the Chamber of Peers. Victor was chosen, being the youngest.

He had continued the correspondence with M. Alexander Soumet. One day he saw a man about forty years old enter his lodgings. He was handsome, genial, and showed fine teeth when he smiled. It was M. Soumet, who had come to Paris to reside. He was already a friend. M. Soumet realized the ideal that is commonly understood by a poetic face; long, black lids shaded his eyes, which he cast upwards while talking; his mouth had a seraphic expression; his absent hair was replaced by a toupet, to which he gave the wildness of inspiration. He had something of the cavalier and of the bard, a little of the provincial, not a little of the poet, and, under this superficial insipidity, much of justice, rare generosity, and a probity beyond all temptation.

During the same week, Victor had a visit from the Duke de Rohan, whom winter had brought to Paris and made a simple seminarist. One evening when Victor had gone to see him in his cell, an old, decrepit priest came in. His head, which he could no longer hold up, was sunk upon his breast; he walked with tremulous steps, leaning upon a staff which was

two feet higher than his bald skull. A shabby coat and small-clothes, the threads of which could be counted, completed his wretched appearance. The old man was radiant.

"You seem very happy," said the Duke to him; "you have met with some good fortune?"

"Yes," said the old man, "I had, as vicar of Saint-Nicholas-du-Chardonnet, four hundred and fifty francs a year. My salary has been reduced to three hundred and fifty: I thank God. I had not hoped to be tested during the short time which I have to live."

Victor looked at the man to see if he were speaking seriously, but this dying man would not have jested with the grave, and Victor saw in his eyes that he was sincere.

Some days afterwards the Duke, coming to see him, and finding him abstracted and sad, spoke of the old priest.

"See," said he, "he is old, he is infirm, he is wretched, he has only a mouthful of bread, half of it is taken away, and he is radiant! That is religion. If you can see nothing in it but philosophy, is not that the best of all which makes us happy through misfortune?"

"But I am religious."

"Have you a confessor?"

"No!"

"You must have one; I will take charge of that."

Victor was in one of those despondent hours in which we give ourselves up and yield to others. He was, moreover, quite willing to confess a life which had nothing to conceal. The Duke had not much difficulty in determining him, and that he might not change his mind, came for him next morning.

So in the morning, as Victor was about breakfasting on a couple of eggs in the shell, and a glass of water, the Duke came in.

"Do not breakfast," said he, "we will breakfast together with Abbé Frayssinous."

Abbé Frayssinous was that winter the fashionable preacher. He called his sermons *conferences*, and said *Messieurs* instead of *my brethren* and then the church of Saint-Sulpic was not large enough.

He lived at the Abbaye-aux-Bois in which he had a single room, serving at the same time for bed-chamber, dining-room, and drawing-room He was waiting for his two guests, and gave them a breakfast which did not differ much from the one that Victor had prepared for himself. The conciseness of viands was amply made up by the abundance of words.

The preacher commenced his part as Victor's director by tracing out to him the line of conduct which he should follow; religion did not condemn people to solitude or to detachment from earthly concerns; God did not give talent to be buried, but, on the contrary, to be employed to the triumph of truth and the propagation of good doctrine; one of the best means of propagating the faith was to mingle with the world, there to disseminate piety by word and by example. Success was a power; everything, therefore, might be done in order to succeed. Victor should not confine himself to literature; he ought to aspire to the direct authority of politics. The clergy counted on him and would aid him.

This worldly and convenient religion was not what Victor wanted. The Abbé completed his disgust by speaking well of the Jesuits and ill of M. de Chateaubriand, whom he abused as a Jacobin in disguise, the more dangerous for his mask.

On leaving, Victor told the Duke de Rohan that Abbé Frayssinous was little like the old vicar, and that he could never be his director.

"But you ought not to take the first comer; if you have a good common curé, you will direct him; you must have an intelligence. Let us see, you want an austere priest, would you like Lamennais?"

"Lamennais, indeed I would!"

They arranged to go next day.

When Victor returned, he found M. Soumet on his staircase.

"My friend," said M. Soumet, "I have come to tell you that you dine to-day with Mademoiselle Duchesnois. That astonishes you; you do not know her, but she knows you; her head is full of your verses."

Victor preferred to refuse, and said that he was in no humor to be an agreeable guest.

"Another reason why you should be amused. Besides I have promised you, and, if I do not bring you, Mademoiselle Duchesnois has threatened to return me my piece."

He was having rehearsed at the Théâtre-Francais a play called *Clytemnestre*, the Orestes of which was Talma.

Victor yielded. The two friends went to a little house in the Rue de la Tour-des-Dames, at which they knocked. A winding staircase lighted by an alabaster lamp conducted them to a suite of rooms, the furniture of which, after the fashion of the empire, as it could not be handsome, was rich; they crossed a first salon and entered a second, where M. Soumet cried:

"Here he is."

Immediately a curtain was lifted and a woman appeared in a very low-necked dress. She thanked Victor warmly and introduced him, while speaking of his odes, into a boudoir where was another actress, Mademoiselle Leverd, plump, beautiful, although marked by recent small-pox, and not less extreme in dress than the mistress of the house.

A third woman dined with them, Madame Sophie Gay, who was to have a comic opera played for the first time that evening, entitled, *Le Maitre de Chapelle.* She complimented Victor, but was not astonished at his student's appearance, having herself, she said, a daughter, Delphine, very young, who also wrote admirable odes, and she proposed a soiree in which these two children of genius should repeat poetry in turn.

The dinner was exquisite. Victor was placed between Mademoiselle Duchesnois and Mademoiselle Leverd, and occasionally thought of the singularity of the day which had begun with a breakfast between two curés, and ended with a dinner between two actresses.

M. Soumet, a Southerner, and a free companion, called the two actresses by their last name only. "Say now, Leverd ***" "Has any one told you, Duchesnois? ***" This shocked Victor, who had never spoken familiarly even to an actor, nor addressed an actress otherwise than as *Madame.*

Madame Gay had a box for her first representation. So they went to see *Le Maître de Chapelle.* The box fronted full on the audience and had three places in front. The tragedienne and the comedienne seated Victor between them. His youthful celebrity and especially his grave and modest air incited them to conquest, and they did a thousand alluring things which annoyed rather than flattered his reserve. He thought the piece long and liked only its termination.

"Well," said M. Soumet to him, while returning home, "I hope you have enjoyed the evening. The greatest tragedienne, the most vivacious comedienne, the most literary woman of the day, have seen none but you. With what ardor Duchesnois and Leverd asked you on leaving, what day you would come and see them. Let us see, to which will you go to-morrow?"

"To-morrow," said Victor, "I shall go to the Abbé de Lamennais."

These half-naked women, who were treated familiarly in public, belonged to another world than that in which mused his sorrowing youth. He woke next morning more disposed to a severe and religious life, and was happy to see the Duke de Rohan arrive. They got into a cabriolet which drove towards the Faubourg Saint-Jacques.

Victor saw a great tree which

towered above the court of the asylum for deaf mutes.

"Do you see that tree," said he to the Duke, "it is an old acquaintance of mine. I passed the best part of my infancy in this quarter. Does the Abbé de Lamennais live near here?"

"We are there!"

The cabriolet entered the cul de sac of the Feuillantines. It stopped before the gate.

"What," cried Victor, "does the Abbé de Lamennais live at the Feuillantines?"

"Certainly. Why does that astonish you?"

Victor explained to him that it was at the Feuillantines that he had spent his childhood. They entered the suite of rooms which Madame Hugo had occupied. Nothing was changed in it, except that just then everything was in disorder. The dining-room was encumbered with trunks and packages, among which was a puny little man passing to and fro, with a bilious face, large restless eyes, and a nose which almost concealed his chin. Still more striking was the contrast between the almost infantile expression of his mouth and the other features of his countenance, strained and nervous.

This little man was poorly clad. He wore a threadbare coat of coarse grey cloth, which exposed a brown linen shirt and a cravat once of black silk, now a string. The short pantaloons scarcely reached his thin ankles, and were continued by a pair of faded blue stockings; at every step you heard the sound of the triple row of nails which gave cumbrous solidity to his peasant's shoes.

"My dear Abbé," said the Duke, "I bring you a penitent."

He introduced Victor, to whom M. de Lamennais extended his hand.

Victor found it difficult to confess in the midst of such confusion. Abbé Caron, with whom M. de Lamennais lodged, was leaving the Feuillantines, and M. de Lamennais was to leave that evening. He gave his new address, and appointed a meeting.

Victor went to his confession very seriously, and with all the scruples of a conscientious examination. His great sin was the enticements which Mademoiselles Duchesnois and Leverd had lavished upon him. M. de Lamennais, seeing that these were his great crimes, thenceforth replaced confession by conversation.

XXXIX.

MARRIAGE.

We find our poet installed at No 30 Rue du Dragon. He lived with a young cousin, son of Madame Hugo's brother, who had come from Nantes to study law. They together hired an attic with two apartments. One was their reception room; its splendor consisted of a mantel of Sainte-Anne marble, upon which was hung the golden lily of the Jeux Floraux. The other apartment was a long and narrow place, poorly lighted, which barely contained their two beds.

Victor had seven hundred francs, upon which he lived a year. Those who would know how he did it have only to read the budget of Marius in *Les Misérables*. Without borrowing a sou, and even while more than once lending five francs to a friend, he found means to purchase a superb blue coat with gilt buttons, and to revenge himself by a forty-franc dinner upon M. Henri Delatouche, who, having invited him to a comfortable lodging, prettily ornamented with tripods and statues, had regaled him upon boiled potatoes and a cup of tea.

The cousins had one closet between them. This will be thought too much. It was too much for Victor, who had in all three shirts. But his cousin revelled in linen, like a provincial. The shelves were bent under the enormous weight of his shirts, for which he had respectful care, and which he sent to Nantes to be washed. He was an orderly youth, and he made it a rule to wear his shirts by seniority, in the order in which

they came from the wash; he had so many that the first washings had time to get yellow, and contrasted with Victor's, who, having only three, and being obliged to put them on as soon as they came home, always wore linen of dazzling whiteness.

Victor got along admirably with his cousin, who was good-hearted and industrious. He went once a week to the court-martial. M. Foucher did not wish him to come oftener, so far from the wedding-day. But Madame Foucher tempered the paternal severity a little by going often to walk in the garden of the Luxembourg with her daughter, and allowing him to meet them there. On the other hand, his attic began to be sought after. M. Soumet brought many of his friends, MM. Alexandre Guiraud, Pichat, Jules Lefèvre, Emile Deschamps, etc. MM. Soumet, Guiraud, and Pichat wrote plays; having the presentiment of a new art without the power to realize it, they rejuvenated tragedy. They had more of inclination than of will; they did not dare to dare.

The constellation was augmented by M. Alfred de Vigny, then Captain in the fourth regiment of the Guard. He took MM. Emile Deschamps and Victor one morning, and drove them in an old one-horse chaise to Courbevoie, where his regiment was stationed. The three poets agreed to speak only in verse during the route, and they gave themselves up to a ridiculous dialogue and to oddities of improvisation which made the driver think them three fools.

M. Soumet took Victor to see Madame Gay, whose daughter, Delphine, received him fraternally. Madame Gay told him that poetry had come all of itself to her daughter at fourteen, one autumn when she was in the country alone walking beneath tall trees. Madame Gay, who was a writer herself, had not dissuaded her daughter from writing; she had only given her two pieces of advice, one to make a thorough and not a superficial study of the language, and the other to imitate none of the eccentricities of the "blue-stockings," to dress like other people, and to let her distinction be entirely mental. She constantly repeated to her: "Be a woman in dress and a man in grammar."

Mademoiselle Delphine Gay went much into society. She was always dressed very simply, generally in a white muslin robe; a blue gauze scarf covered her ample shoulders and her slender waist; her beautiful blond ringlets needed no flowers. There was nothing odd or affected about her. When asked for a poem she recited it, but she immediately afterwards became a girl again, like all the rest. One night when complimented by a pretty, fashionable woman, she replied: "I have rather to compliment you, Madame; for us women, it is better to inspire poetry than to write it."

Victor had already published his odes one by one, in the *Conservateur Littéraire* or in pamphlets, through a publisher of the Palais Royal, named Delaunay. Abel advised him to unite them in a volume. But no publisher would bear the expense of a volume of verse, and Victor had not the means to pay for printing it. He gave up this too lofty ambition, and was therefore very much surprised to receive one day a proof sheet of his verses, with the figure 1 at the bottom of the leaf, which signified that more were to come. Abel, without saying anything to him, had taken his manuscript and carried it to a printer.

It was now necessary to find a seller. Booksellers did not care to have the poems upon their stands. They pretended that they took up room needed for books. The uncle of a friend of Abel consented to offer the book for sale, to please his nephew.

The volume entitled *Odes et Poésies Diverses* had not been in the window a quarter of an hour when a stranger entered and bought it. The buyer was M. Mennechet, Louis XVIII.'s reader.

Louis XVIII. took the volume, looked at it, opened it, and said: "It is badly got up!" The volume was not, in fact, made for bibliophiles. It was an 18mo., on dim grey paper, printed with refuse type, good enough for poetry. The cover, altogether too small, was ornamented with a design representing a vase entwined by serpents, which were intended, doubtless, for the serpents of envy, but which seemed rather to be an apothecary's leeches escaping from their decanter.

This common appearance did not prevent the king from reading and re-reading the *Odes*, and even annotating them with his own hand. His annotations were, in general, puristic, offended at innovation, and oftener hostile than eulogistic. The ode which seemed best to him, was that which spoke of him. He had written in the margin of *his* stanza "*Superb!*"

Victor, while his book was appearing, was at Gentilly, where Madame Foucher had taken lodgings that season. He had obtained permission to pass the summer with his betrothed. Madame Foucher occupied a story of what had been a presbytery, in which there was a spare room, but the house, rebuilt and entirely modernized, had left standing an old tower in which there was a chamber, a real bird's or poet's nest. Four windows looking to the cardinal points let in the sun at all hours.

The tenants had extensive grounds, bordered by two avenues of poplars, extraordinarily high and thick. A portion of these grounds was cultivated, and had the charming appearance of the country; the rest was devoted to flowers. One of the rows of poplars was along the Bièvre, which separated the old presbytery from the church. On the other side they could see the valley gay and green.

The proprietor was an old woman, lively, red, and rosy, sharp for economy, making use of everything, even of the insane of the Bicêtre, near by. Some of them whose mania was harmless, were allowed to go out; they split her wood and weeded her garden; one among others, stuttering, squint-eyed, broken-toothed, yet always gay, whom she called Coco, and one of a silent and gloomy stupidity.

The two lovers walked in the garden and talked of their future, now so near, as they watched the sun setting behind the hill. Another couple promenaded also; the grandson of the proprietor and Dr. Pariset's daughter, who were also to be married in a few weeks; they stopped at every flower-bed, and the groom made huge bouquets for his future bride, which she could hardly carry. The four lovers went, came, were radiant, and met here and there the dismal fool who with head bowed down was spading the ground, or Coco, who, sadder still, was bursting with laughter.

One day Victor brought his betrothed a paper, carefully folded and pinned. She thought that it contained some precious flower, and opened it with precaution; a bat escaped. She was very much frightened, and only pardoned the naughty surprise on reading the poem written upon the paper: *The Bat.*

The poor paper did not injure the sale of the volume. The edition, fifteen hundred copies, was exhausted in four months. The price was three francs fifty centimes. The printer and the seller took three francs. Victor had therefore seven hundred and fifty francs, less something, as the bookseller paid him in six franc crowns, upon which there was a discount of four sous. But when he received this great sum he was rich. The king had given him an annuity of a thousand francs from his private purse.

With a thousand francs a year they could marry. They came to Paris, therefore, and prepared for the great day. The first necessity was the consent of the General. Victor did not ask this without anxiety and fear, the General was married again, this had brought him no nearer to his chil-

dren, devoted to the memory of their mother. Would not his new wife urge him to refuse? But the goodness of the General was stronger than any influence or any rancor. Not content with sending his son his consent, himself made the formal request of her parents.

I extract a few passages from the letter which he wrote to M. and Madame Foucher:

"* * * * The manner in which I have passed through my long career, has not allowed me to become so well acquainted as you with my children and their qualities. I know that Victor has an exquisite sensibility and an excellent heart, and everything leads me to believe that his other moral qualities answer to these. It is this heart and these qualities which I dare place at the feet of your lovely daughter. * * * Victor charges me to ask of you the hand of this young girl, whose happiness he hopes to make, and from whom he expects his own. * * * Already, to remove the first difficulties, he has alone opened a brilliant career with rare distinction; he is, to some extent, able to offer your daughter a suitable position, hopes, and a future; you know what he is, and what he has. If more fortunate times should permit the accomplishment of the treaty of May, 1814, if the mixed commission on sequestrations and indemnities should at length present conclusions which the government should adopt, Victor will receive from his father the means of furnishing his house modestly. * * * Immediately on receiving your answer, if it is such as I venture to hope, I shall send Victor the consent required by the 76th article of the Civil Code. * * *"

I copy also a few lines of M. Foucher's answer:

"Your Victor has placed in our hands the letter you have done us the honor to write. Victor is what you suppose him. He has, besides, that gravity which in young men so well supplies the experience of age; and what is still more rare, in him disinterestedness is united with the spirit of order. * * * The union, therefore, which you are so kind as to propose, seems as advantageous for our Adèle as it is flattering to the whole family. We give our consent very willingly, and, for my part, the pleasure is the greater, as it will revive an old bond of union which has always been very precious to me, and which, General, you are so kind as to remember. * * * I regret that I cannot do for our young people all that they deserve. Adèle will bring to her new home 2,000 francs in furniture, apparel, and money, and they will have with us a home and our care so long as they think they are not far enough along to furnish a house. This arrangement will be pleasant to them, doubtless, and it will suit us all the better, as we shall still enjoy the presence of all our children. * * *"

On hearing of the approaching marriage, M. de Lamennais wrote a very touching letter to Victor, and he soon afterwards came to Paris, and gave him the requisite certificate of confession.

The seven hundred francs which Victor's *Odes* had brought him did not serve this time to support him a year; he spent them at once in the purchase of a French cashmere, which was the splendor of the corbeille.

The General did not come to the wedding. Victor's witnesses were MM. Soumet and Ancelot. The religious ceremony took place at Saint Sulpice, in that same Chapel of the Virgin whither, eighteen months before, they had borne the body of his mother. Another Madame Hugo put her *prie-Dieu* on the spot where the bier had been, and covered with her white veil the place of the black pall.

Madame Foucher's dining-room being too small, they dined in a hall of the Court-Martial, separated by a

movable partition from that in which Lahorie had been tried and condemned. After the death of his mother Victor was confronted by that of his godfather.

Next day there was something sadder than death. Biscarrat, the worthy usher of the Cordier school, was of course at the wedding. At dinner he had been struck by some incoherent words of Eugène, whose strangeness had been increasing for some time past. He had spoken of it to Abel, and the two, on leaving the table, had taken him away without saying a word. At midnight insanity became very evident. In the morning, Biscarrat came, much agitated. Victor followed him hurriedly, and found the poor companion of all his infancy completely wandering in mind. All thought was now centred on him. The General, who had not come to take his part in the happiness, would share the grief, and came to Paris. The crisis abated, and there was a little hope. They endeavored to watch the dear invalid, but soon perceived that he would be better cared for in a private asylum. They took him to M. Esquirol. But reason was not to return, and his cure was death.

XL.

M. ALPHONSE RABBE.

Victor Hugo returned to *Han d'Islande*. He finished this in the first few months after his marriage, and sold the first edition for a thousand francs, to a ruined Marquis turned bookseller. This Marquis M. Persan bought at the same time the second edition of his *Odes*, which now appeared under a more suitable dress, and replaced their decanter by a lyre.

I suppose the noble bookseller preferred verse to prose, for he took far less pains with *Han d'Islande* than with the *Odes*. Perhaps it was, however, that he thought the verse needed a more beautiful exterior, to attract buyers, and that the prose would be bought for itself. Whatever idea he may have entertained, *Han d'Islande* was obliged to content itself with coarse grey paper, printed on nail-heads, and appeared in four small volumes, without the name of the author, following the example given by *René*, *Werther*, *Adolphe*, the *Voyage autour de ma Chambre*, etc., the first editions of which did not bear the names of Chateaubriand, Goethe, Benjamin Constant, Xavier de Maistre, etc.

The journals, which had been, for the most part, very favorable to the *Odes*, were much less so to *Han d'Islande*. People began to range themselves into two camps, the classicists and the romanticists, the latter being the least numerous, especially among the journals. There was much feeling and as much astonishment. I find, in an old number of *La Quotidienne*, an article by M. Charles Nodier, which gives a good picture of the literary condition of the time, and the impression of the anxious and violent pleasure which the new works produced among those kindly disposed. I make some extracts:

"The classicists continue to reign, in the name of Aristotle, over European literature; but they reign like those dethroned kings who have preserved of their power nothing but acknowledged rights and the vain apparel of a title without authority. Their domain is but a vast desert, the productions of which, languishing and withering in their birth, attest only the arid poverty of an exhausted soil and a decrepit nature. If the arts undertake any monument worthy of posterity it must be upon another foundation. If some genius, abounding in rich hopes, arises, it will be under another banner. The classicists find favor with the journals, the academies, the literary circles. The romanticists are successful in the theatre, in the book-store, and the salon. The first are approved; the

others are read; and the most distinguished work which can arise today from the good school will not for a moment share the irresistible success of the dreams—often very extravagant—which swarm in the bad. What must we conclude from this, except that the state of society is changed, that its needs are also, that this order of things is irreparable as it was inevitable, and that if we do not take literature as it is, we run great risk of having none at all. One of the characteristics of this new literature, and one which probably will not cause it to be disdained by a patriotic people, is that religious fidelity to customs and localities which transports into the fictions of imagination even, the teachings of history.

"The reverend Mathurin has become celebrated in this school by his monstrous fables of *Melmoth* and *Montorio*, and it was believed that the author had exhausted in his atrocious combinations all the horrors by which the mind can be terrified by that poetry of the Court of Assises and of *pandemonium*, which has received the appropriate name of the *phrenetic school*, and which it will keep, perhaps, although it has been given by a critic without authority. Meanwhile there has been found, in that new generation of poets which has made the fortune of the romantic school in France, a rival of this gloomy English romance, unfortunate enough to surpass him in the horrible exaggeration of circumstances, and who, eager, as is natural at his age, to exhaust all the resources of his imagination, appears still more zealous to avail himself immediately of the faculties with which nature and study have furnished him, than to economize them skilfully for his reputation. There are in men, of a certain organization, temptations which have glory for their object, like those which aspire to happiness or to pleasure. Precocious intelligences and profound sensibilities do not calculate the future, they dey our it. The passions of a young and powerful soul know no morrow. They think they can satisfy all ambition and all hopes in the renown and the pleasures of a day. *Han d'Islande* is the result of a like combination, if we may call combination the unreflecting instinct of an original genius which obeys, unconsciously, an impulse foreign to its true interests, but in which a beautiful and vast career may justify all of good that the fortunate fault of its beginning has promised and make up for all of ill which this beginning has given cause to fear. It is vouchsafed to very few men to commence by like errors and to leave no faults open to criticism but those which they have voluntarily committed. I shall not analyse *Han d'Islande*, or rather I shall give a much tŕuer idea of it than could be done by a more exact analysis, in saying that *Han d'Islande* is one of those works which cannot be delineated after the usual manner without falling into a caricature as unjust as it is easy. Imagine an author condemned by his own will to search carefully for all the moral infirmities of life, all the horrors of society, all its monstrosities, all its degradations, all the hideous exceptions of the natural condition and of the civilized condition, that he may choose from this horrid refuse disgusting anomalies to which human tongues have hardly accorded a name, the dead-house, the scaffold, the gallows, the cannibal, and the hangman, and something yet more nameless, for he attaches to these last conditions execrable ambitions and incomprehensible joys. * * * And wherefore is it necessary that such talent should believe itself obliged to have recourse to such artifices? It would have been so easy for him to forego them!

"Special acquaintance with places or studies faithfully made, have given, up to a certain point, to the author of *Han d'Islande* that lively truthfulness of local coloring which distinguishes the author of Waverley; I say up to a certain point because,

more familiar than he perhaps with the sky of the latitudes which he describes, I looked in his descriptions for some of the effects which it would have been so easy to draw from the unaccustomed measure of the days and the oddity of the polar seasons. We recognise, however, in *Han d'Islande* a faithful reading of the Edda and of history, much erudition, much vivacity, even that which is born of happiness and which we call gaiety, even that which comes of experience and which the author has not had time to owe to observation and to contact with the world. We find in it, in short, a lively style, picturesque, nervous, and what is more astonishing, that delicacy of tact and that fineness of sentiment which are the acquisitions of life, and which are contrasted here in the most surprising way with the barbarous play of a sickly imagination. Yet these are not all the qualities which will make the success of *Han d'Islande*, and which will force the inflexible and wise Minos of the book-trade to acknowledge the authentic and legitimate debit for twelve thousand copies of this romance, which all the world will wish to read. These will be its faults."

The author of *Han d'Islande* knew M. Charles Nodier only by name; he went to thank him; mounted to the third story in the Rue de Provence and knocked. A young girl with a smiling countenance opened the door.

"M. Charles Nodier?"

"Papa is out, Monsieur."

"Can I write a word?"

While the young girl went for the writing materials Victor Hugo examined the antechamber, which was at the same time the dining-room, and the furniture of which, wicker chairs, table and buffet of black walnut, set off its comfortable look with a Flemish neatness.

The next day M. Nodier called. Victor Hugo did not now live at the court-martial. The King had, of his own accord, given him a second annuity of two thousand francs, drawn upon the Minister of the Interior. Then, being rich, he had desired a home of his own, and had hired No. 90 Rue de Vaugirard. The romancer and his critic felt that they were friends at first sight. It was settled soon that M. Nodier should come to the house-warming, and should bring his wife and daughter. Madame Nodier, who had never seen Madame Hugo, accepted the invitation with that intelligent simplicity which characterized her in everything. She and her daughter, Marie, came without further urging, and this was the commencement of a life-long affection between the three women.

Among the few defenders of *Han d'Islande* one of the most valiant was M. Méry. The *Tablettes Universelles*, of which he was the principal editor, lent to the romance the double support of energy and talent. M. Méry's colaborer was M. Alphonse Rabbe, from Marseilles, like himself. M. Rabbe had been very beautiful; but a frightful disease had disfigured him. His eyelids, nostrils, and lips were badly scarred; he had no beard, and his teeth were like charcoal. He had preserved nothing but his hair, the blond ringlets of which fell upon his shoulders, and one eye also, whose proud look and firm, frank smile, still cast a flash of beauty upon this hideous mask. He had, at Marseilles, founded an opposition journal, *Le Phocéen*, and then had come to Paris, where he worked on the *Courrier Français* and the *Tablettes Universelles*. A *feuilleton*, in which he vigorously sustained *Han d'Islande*, brought him into relations with the author, for whom he soon conceived a paternal affection, being twenty years older. He pleased Victor Hugo very much, by his rounded and resolute character. They saw each other very often, mostly at the house of M. Rabbe, for he avoided going out on account of his appearance; Victor Hugo prevailed on him

sometimes, however, to come to his house.

Once he even induced him to accept an invitation to dinner. M. Rabbe desired to know M. de Lamennais.

"Well," said M. Victor Hugo, "I will invite him to dinner, and you shall come and dine with us."

"So be it," said M. Rabbe.

But in the course of the conversation a word apprised him that Madame Hugo was enceinte. He said nothing, but on the day fixed for the dinner he wrote that he was sick, and for some months he did not show himself in the Rue de Vaugirard. M. Victor Hugo reproached him for not coming to see him, and insisted upon knowing the reason.

"Your wife is enceinte," responded the poor disfigured man.

He was very shy, and saw in everything allusions to his deformity. He was almost angry with M. Victor Hugo for the ode to his comrade of the College of Nobles, Ramon de Benavente, which appeared at first with the initial only: *A mon ami R * * *.* The poem speaking of a mysterious misfortune, he thought that R * * * meant Rabbe, and he was not satisfied till the ode was republished with Ramon in full.

M. Rabbe was a fatalist. One day he was maintaining his belief in fatality against M. Victor Hugo, who had met him in the garden of the Luxembourg.

"Here," said he, "here is a fact which I defy you to answer. Some months since, it was winter, in a thick fog, accompanied by fine rain, during which the Luxembourg was almost deserted, five men were in the walk in which we now are. Four were engaged in a conspiracy, and the fifth was their confidant. They were discussing the means of action and the opportunity. Three were for immediate action; the other for delay. The three impatient to end the work said to the fourth that if he would not join them they would go on without him. He hesitated. A card, the back of which they saw, soiled with mud, lay upon the ground before them. "Well," said he, "if that card is a queen of hearts I am with you." There were thirty-one chances out of thirty-two that it was not. He took up the card. It was the queen of hearts."

The four conspirators were the Sergeants of La Rochelle. The confidant was M. Rabbe himself. He related the incident more at length in the *Tablettes Universelles.* He had seen, he said, "the head of the predestined fall."

M. Victor Hugo was one day at the lodgings of M. Rabbe. A discussion arose between them on the subject of M. de Chateaubriand, whom M. Rabbe did not like. The conversation, courteous between the two friends, became animated by the intervention of some one whom M. Victor Hugo had not seen on entering, and who was concealed by a desk upon which he was writing. This person, in a voice peremptory and imperative, declared that Chateaubriand was an affected and inflated writer, whose overestimated reputation would not last twenty years, and that all he had written was not worth a page of Bossuet. M. Victor Hugo replied with spirit to this unknown interlocutor, who gave his opinions as orders, and M. Rabbe had some difficulty in calming the dispute.

When M. Victor Hugo was gone, the man behind the desk asked M. Rabbe who that young gentleman was who had opposed him so stoutly.

"It is Victor Hugo," said Rabbe.

"He who writes royalist poetry?"

"Yes; I was waiting for you to finish your writing, to introduce you to each other. But you plunged into the conversation so that I could not. You must know each other, however. I will find an opportunity."

"It is already found," said the interlocutor.

He wrote a few words upon a sheet of paper, which he handed to M. Alphonse Rabbe:

"Will you carry that to M. Victor Hugo on my behalf?"

It was a challenge, signed *Armand Carrel.*

"Are you mad?" said M. Rabbe. "A duel because a man does not think as you do about a page of Bossuet. Besides, this occurred at my house, and it is my fault; I ought to have made you acquainted with each other; you would then have conducted your discussion with that regard which men of talent always have for each other. If there is any blame, it is mine, and from me that you receive satisfaction. We will fight, if you wish."

M. Carrel, returning from Spain after the French expedition, and finding his military career terminated, had become a journalist, and was grateful to M. Alphonse Rabbe, who had procured him an engagement on the *Courrier Français.* He yielded to the firm will of his friend, and tore up the letter.

M. Rabbe died suddenly on the night of January 1st, 1830. His death was attributed to his imprudence. He had turned too much laudanum upon a poultice which he was applying to his face. In looking over his papers after his death, these words were found written in his hand: "The man who has arrived at a certain degree of suffering may, without remorse, take his own life."

XLI.

VISIT TO BLOIS.

MM. Soumet, Guiraud, and Emile Deschamps, started the idea of founding a review, and invited M. Victor Hugo to join them. He refused, having unfinished works on hand; but the capitalist made his collaboration an indispensable condition, and he yielded through friendship. Thus the *Revue Française* came to light. He saw very soon that it could not live. The moderate and pacific criticism of his associates had not the sharpness and passionate audacity essential in periods of literary revolution. Controversy was carried on in a timid and insipidly amiable manner; questions, instead of being discussed openly, were merely glanced at, and no decisive conclusion announced. Yet little aggressive as was the *Revue,* it terrified the Academy. M. Soumet presented himself for its suffrages. He was told he could not be chosen while the *Revue Française* lived. He asked, therefore, that it be discontinued. MM. Guiraud and Emile Deschamps consented, but M. Victor Hugo said that the others might retire, that he would continue it alone. This was not what the Academy desired. It would have gained nothing by replacing a parlor opposition by a war to the knife. M. Soumet came to M. Victor Hugo, and asked him, as a personal favor, not to follow out his idea. The *Revue Française* was discontinued.

The publisher of the Review, M. Ambroise Tardieu, was publishing a selection of celebrated letters. He asked M. Victor Hugo to undertake the selection and annotation of Voltaire and Madame de Sévigné. M. Victor Hugo accepted, at first, but he had hardly commenced, when this labor of amputation became repugnant to him and he abandoned it, and wrote nothing but the notice of Voltaire in *Littérature et Philosophie mêlées.*

Der Freyschütz was represented at the Odeon that year with great success. All who were called Romanticists went to sustain the grand music of Weber by their enthusiastic applause. M. Victor Hugo and his wife, while awaiting the opening of the box-office, found themselves beside a tall young man with a firm and genial countenance. From poet to painter acquaintance is easy to make. The young man was M. Achille Devéria, who came for the twelfth time to applaud Weber, and to encore the drinking song and the hunting-chorus.

He asked Madame Hugo if she had an album.

"I shall have one to-morrow," said she.

He came next evening and improvised a charming design. He added to genius an incredible facility. His sketch was pronounced so charming that he promised to come and make more, and the album became the means of an acquaintance.

M. Achille Devéria had two pupils, his brother Eugène and M. Louis Boulanger. All three on leaving their studies often came to dine with M. Victor Hugo, without need of an invitation. The dinner, generally a modest one, was enriched by the providential omelet, which was covered with rum, and which they endeavored to light; there was the difficulty; they used up whole boxes of matches; everybody attempted and succeeded only in blacking the bottoms of the spoons, or in covering with blackened fragments the obstinate liquid. The omelet always had time to cool, but it was warmed by bursts of laughter.

The young household of the Rue Vaugirard sometimes went to M. Achille Devéria's; it was only a few steps; he lived in the Rue Notre-Dame-des-Champs. The house, hidden among gardens, had the quiet of a retreat and the gaiety of a nest. He lived there with his family. His grandmother, fresh and nimble, as young in heart and soul as her grand-children, was almost their playmate. Her mother, on the contrary, was an indolent and sleepy person; you might be two years without seeing her, you might go to China, you would find her immovable in her great velvet easy chair; she did not seem even ever to be in undress; she always wore, winter and summer, a double skirt of white piqué, and on her head a large white muslin handkerchief, à la Creole; being very fat she had the appearance of a bundle of snow. Her only motion was in making a few points of a piece of embroidery which she never finished, and in nibbling bonbons.

She had five children, Achille, Eugène, and the son in the Indies, and two daughters. The younger, Laura, admired and adored by all her family, was fêted, adorned, and served like an idol. Her sister, ill-favored, active, and devoted, was the housekeeper, and economised the money which Achille earned. This brave boy was the support of the family; his great facility served him to multiply his productions; he threw off rapidly easy and spirited lithographs for which he got a hundred francs; he felt that he was wasting his genius, superior to this trade, but he found consolation in thinking that what he lost in reputation, his mother and sisters gained in comfort.

Eugène could not yet aid him in his pious task, he was but a dabster, and announced only by his broad-brimmed hat, his full Castilian cloak, and his flowing beard, the originality which in 1827 made the success of his fine painting of the *Birth of Henry Fourth.*

Nothing could be more hospitable, more lively, and more delightful than this household of art. You were always expected to dinner. In summer the garden belonged to you with its fine fruits and its green almonds. In winter evenings Laura went to the piano and sang airs of her own composition; the conversation was lively and fresh; as soon as there was a dozen they danced. Time, age, and death have passed over these delights.

The cruel malady of Eugène Hugo kept the General in Paris. Victor saw his father and came to know him. Like frost in sunshine, the bitterness of the son evaporated in the rays of the goodness of that excellent man. He comprehended the grandeur of those soldiers who had carried the flag of France into every capital, and without ceasing to hate him who had led them thither from motives of personal aggrandizement, he distinguished their heroism from his ambition. This progress is manifest in his *Ode à mon père.*

Some months later he celebrated in song the Arc de triomphe de l'Étoile. In June, 1824, he took part energetically for M. de Chateaubriand, who had been dismissed from the Ministry. What General Hugo had predicted to General Lucotte, came to pass, little by little; the opinions which the mother had implanted in the mind of the child, yielded one by one to the intelligence of the man.

The General did not return to Blois without a promise that his son and daughter-in-law would come and see him there. That promise could not be fulfilled until the spring of 1825.

They set out, three of them, for a little daughter had come which the mother was nursing, and from which she could not be separated. The best conveyance was the mail, but it went to Bordeaux, and the whole trip must be paid for, which was dear for the modest purse of the household. Victor was advised to see the director of the post, who would allow him to take seats to Blois only.

The directeur was the Academician Roger, who was understood to have great influence upon the academical elections, which caused it to be said, that he at the same time controlled letters and belles-lettres.

He received M. Victor Hugo graciously, and accorded to him instantly what he asked.

Then they talked.

"A propos," said the director, "I will wager that you do not know to what you owe your first annuity. You think, do you not, it is to your poems?"

"To what then?"

"Well, I will tell you. You had a friend named Édouard Delon?"

"Yes."

"This friend became Captain, conspired, was sentenced to death for contumacy."

"Well?"

"Then you wrote to his mother?"

"How do you know that?"

"I know that you wrote to her, and I know what you wrote to her; wait a moment."

He rang, and had a bundle of papers brought him, from which he took one that he handed to M. Victor Hugo, which read as follows:—

"Madame,

"I do not know whether your unfortunate Delon has been arrested. I do not know what penalty would be incurred by any one who should conceal him. I do not inquire whether my opinions are diametrically opposed to his. In the moment of danger I know only that I am his friend, and that we cordially embraced each other a month ago. If he is not arrested, I offer him an asylum at my house. I live with a young cousin, who does not know Delon. My profound attachment to the Bourbons is known; but that very circumstance is a means of security, for it will relieve me of all suspicion of harboring a man charged with conspiracy, a crime of which, moreover, I am happy to believe Delon innocent. However that may be, have the kindness, Madame, to let this reach him, if you have the means of doing so. Guilty or not, I expect him. He can trust himself to the loyalty of a Royalist, and to the devotion of the friend of his childhood.

"In making this proposition to you, I but fulfil a legacy of affection which my poor mother always preserved for you. It is pleasant to me, in this mournful affair, to give you this proof of the respectful attachment with which I have the honor to be, etc."

"It is indeed a copy of my letter," said M. Victor Hugo; "but how comes it to be here?"

"Young innocent," responded the functionary, "you write to the mother of a conspirator who is sought for, and you put the letter in the post-office!"

"Then my letter was retained?"

"Oh! no; it was copied, and then

carefully resealed, so that it had no appearance of having been opened, and Madame Delon received it."

"So, then, my letter became a trap to which Delon might have believed me an accomplice! But what you tell me is simply abominable."

"Come, be calm; Delon was not in France, so he could not have come to your house, and your letter resulted only in good. The King, to whom it was read, said: 'He is a noble young man; I will give him the first vacant annuity.'"

Nevertheless, this was a new blow to the royalism of M. Victor Hugo. He had up to this time shrugged his shoulders when the journals of the Opposition denounced the *black cabinet;* his illusions fell when he saw with his own eyes that royalty broke open his letters.

Some days after his interview with the Director of the Post, M. Victor Hugo was about to get into the coupé of the mail, in which his wife and little girl were already installed, a messenger came to him, out of breath, and gave him a large letter, sealed with red, which had just arrived at his house, and which his father-in-law sent him in all haste. It was a commission as Chevalier of the Legion of Honor.

At Blois, the General was awaiting them when they descended from the carriage. M. Victor Hugo, knowing the pleasure that he should give his father, handed him immediately his commission, saying:

"Here, that is for you!"

The General, delighted indeed, kept the commission, and, in exchange, detached from his buttonhole his red ribbon, which he tied in that of his son.

On the third day he received the new chevalier with the usual ceremony.

The young couple saw the house, "white and square, making merry between its two orchards," spoken of in the *Feuilles d'Automne.* The General had besides, in Sologne, a tract of 1,800 acres, which was the object of an excursion. A square building of one story had nothing remarkable about it but a stone balcony, the only remains of an old chateau, where you had at your feet a poisonous pool, surrounded with yews and oaks. Beyond there was nothing but sand, marsh, and heath, with here and there a clump of oaks and poplars.

XLII.

THE CORONATION OF CHARLES X.

THE son completed his acquaintance with, and his love for, the father. He was obliged to leave him to go to the coronation of Charles X., to which he was invited, but he left with him his wife and child.

On returning to Paris, M. Victor Hugo found a note from M. Charles Nodier, and went to the library of the Arsenal, where M. Nodier had recently taken lodgings. The librarian was breakfasting with two friends, M. de Cailleux and the painter Alaux, called the Roman, because he had taken the prize at Rome. All three had been invited to the coronation, and were discussing the means of getting there. There were no places to be had in the diligences, all these having been engaged for three months. M. Nodier proposed a carrier, who ordinarily served him in his excursions, and who offered a sort of large cab for a hundred francs a day. There were four places. M. Victor Hugo would have one of them. They could go by easy stages, stopping where they pleased, and sleeping at night in beds; it would be charming.

This arrangement was made, and the journey went off gaily. The way from Paris to Rheims was as smooth as the walk of a park; turf seats had been made under the trees at intervals, and diligences, armorial carriages, chaises, and waggons, all species of vehicles, hastening on, gave to the road the noise and animation of a street.

M. Victor Hugo watched the trees, the plains, the villages, and quarrelled with the Roman, who, infatuated with the noble and stately style, accused the windmills of breaking up the landscape with their moving arms. When M. Nodier was asked his opinion as to the mills, he replied that he was very fond of the king of trumps; he had put his hat between his knees, and it made an excellent card-table, and the whole journey was to him and M. de Cailleux nothing but a game of écarté.

The game was interrupted by hills, up which they walked, to spare the horses. At one of these ascents M. Nodier saw a five-franc piece on the ground.

"Heigho," said he, "the first beggar we meet will be well satisfied."

"And the second too!" said M. Victor Hugo, who saw a second piece.

"And the third," continued M. Alaux, after a moment.

It was soon M. de Cailleux's turn. The waifs constantly became more abundant.

"Ah, now," said one, "who is the fool who is amusing himself in this way, by scattering his treasure?"

"It is no fool," said M. Victor Hugo; "it is some generous millionaire, who adds to the magnificence of the festival by keeping open purse."

"For my part," M. Nodier answered, "I think it is an idea of the King, who must have desired that at the approaches of Rheims the road should be paved with silver."

"We are entering upon a fairy story," exclaimed the chorus. "We will never get into our carriage again; this is for travellers on foot; to-night our fortunes will be made."

Unfortunately, with the five-franc pieces they picked up a cross of the Legion of Honor, and the silver shower was explained. M. Victor Hugo's valise had a hole in it, and was emptying at every jolt.

On the fourth day they arrived. They could get no rooms at any of the hotels, and were about to conclude that they would have to make a sleeping and a dressing-chamber of their cab, when the manager of the theatre, whom M. Nodier knew, prevailed on one of his boarders, Mdlle. Florville, who had two rooms, to give up her parlor to the four travellers.

The next morning, the guests of the actress, in full dress, swords by their sides, a little uncomfortable in their marquis costume, presented themselves at the door of the cathedral. A door-keeper, who was a life-guard, asked for their tickets of invitation, and showed them their box. The ceremony was grand. The throne, at the foot of which were the Princes, then the ambassadors, had on its left the Chamber of Deputies, and on its right the Chamber of Peers. The Deputies, soberly clad in cloth coats, buttoned up to the chin, with a single ornament, an embroidery of green silk on the facing, contrasted with the Peers, bedizened with lace, in coats of sky-blue embroidered velvet, mantles of the same covered with fleurs de lys, blue satin waistcoats, white silk stockings, black velvet shoes, with heels and bows, and Henri IV. hats trimmed with white plumes, the lining of which was rolled up with a golden cord.

On returning from the church, M. Victor Hugo told his impressions. Except the decoration of the cathedral, he had thought the whole thing imposing. One detail only made him laugh. It was when the king laid himself at full length at the feet of the archbishop.

"What are you saying?" interrupted M. Nodier. "Where the devil did you see anything like that?"

A controversy ensued, M. Charles Nodier affirming that no such thing had taken place, and M. Victor Hugo affirming that he had seen it.

M. Victor Hugo left M. Nodier to go to M. de Chateaubriand's. He found him entering his lodgings, and furious at the cathedral and the ceremony.

M. Victor Hugo related to him his discussion with M. Charles Nodier.

"Here," said M. de Chateaubriand, "show him that."

He took from his table the programme of the ceremony in which it was announced that at a certain period of the ceremonies the king should lie down at the feet of the archbishop.

"Well?" said M. Victor Hugo to M. Nodier, on showing him that passage.

"Faith," said M. Nodier, "I paid close attention, and my eyes are no worse than others. See how we may look upon the things which are passing under our eyes in broad daylight. Had I been in a court, I would have sworn, with the best faith in the world, contrary to the truth."

"And," said M. Victor Hugo, "the testimony of one witness is often enough to hang a man."

The four travellers remained at Rheims until the reception of the chevaliers du Saint-Esprit, which took place on the second day after the coronation. M. Victor Hugo employed the intermediate day in visiting the town, which served him afterwards for the story of Chantefleurie in *Notre-Dame de Paris.*

The reception of the chevaliers, like the coronation, took place in the cathedral. Charles X. made his entry with his crown on his head, followed by the Princes of the blood, who ranged themselves upon the steps of the throne. The apsis admitted only the royal family and the chevaliers.

Of the chevaliers M. de Chateaubriand and M. de Villèle, who were mortal enemies, were placed side by side, which attracted general attention. The heavy hat covered M. de Chateaubriand's head, which was his beauty, he appeared sour and impatient to end the tête-à-tête. M. de Villèle, on the contrary, triumphant, president of the council, seemed perfectly at his ease. He looked at his companion without seeing him, with the profound indifference and the natural disdain of a man who has a portfolio for a man who has nothing but genius.

CHAPTER XLIII.

A VISIT TO M. DE LAMARTINE.

M. DE LAMARTINE had also come to the coronation.

Four years before, when the *Méditations Poétiques* appeared, M. Victor Hugo had saluted the new poet. He had exclaimed in the *Conservateur Litteraire:*

"Behold now at last the poems of a poet, poetry which is poetry.

"I read the whole of this singular book; I re-read it, and, notwithstanding the negligences, the neologisms, the repetitions, and the obscurity which I could sometimes find in it, I was tempted to say to the author: 'Courage, young man! you are one of those whom Plato wished to load with honors and to banish from his republic.' You ought also to expect to see yourself banished from our earth of anarchy and ignorance, and your exile will lack the triumph, which, at least, Plato accorded to the poet, the palms, the sound of the trumpet, and the crown of flowers."

Some time afterwards, the Duke de Rohan had brought to the house of M. Victor Hugo, a young man, tall, with a noble and knightly figure. It was M. de Lamartine. Thus there was formed between the two poets a friendship which even absence did not relax.

In winter they saw each other frequently; when summer took M. Lamartine to Saint-Point, they wrote to each other. They kept one another informed of their work; they discussed questions of art, they differed in opinion on correction, which M. de Lamartine disdained. "Grammar destroys poetry. Grammar is not made for us. We ought not to know languages by principles. We ought

to speak as the word comes to our lips!"

I read in another letter of M. de Lamartine:

"I hope that your troubles are only concerning rhymes, and that your first letter will tell me that all goes well in your little retreat of the Rue de Vaugirard. As for me, all goes better, without going well. But lately I have been making verses, and that consoles me. I shall send you immediately a few hundreds. It is a sort of serious badinage. But what pleasure to think one's self in the mood and to give one's self up to it. The ode will be dedicated to you, so dedicate yours to me when it is done. Let our commingled names certify to the future, if we go so far, that there are poets who have loved each other. * * *"

Another time, it was an invitation to come and see Saint-Point. That the invitation might be irresistible, it was in verse.

M. Victor Hugo promised to go. At Rheims, M. de Lamartine reminded him of his promise. M. Nodier was present, and M. de Lamartine invited him also.

"We will not only go," said M. Nodier, whom his journey to Rheims had given a taste for locomotion, "but we will take our wives and children with us. And I have a plan by which it shall not cost us anything."

"What plan?" asked M. Victor Hugo.

"It is to take advantage of the occasion to visit the Alps."

"What then?"

"And then we will relate what we have seen. If that would be irksome to you I will undertake it. You shall give me some poems only; Lamartine also, if he likes to join us. We shall easily find some one to make drawings for us. And the estimable publisher, Urbain Canel, will pay the expenses of the journey."

"We will do it," said the two poets.

M. Urbain Canel acquiesced with the same eagerness. A contract was signed on the return to Paris by which MM. de Lamartine, Victor Hugo, Charles Nodier, and Taylor joined in the publication of a work provisionally entitled: *Voyage poétique et pittoresque au Mont Blanc, et à la Vallée de Chamonix.* M. de Lamartine had two thousand francs for four meditations, M. Victor Hugo had two thousand francs for four odes, M. Taylor two thousand francs for eight sketches, which he undertook, not to make, but to furnish, and M. Charles Nodier two thousand two hundred and fifty francs, for all the text.

The book was sold completely. M. Victor Hugo wished to reserve the right of putting his four odés in his next volume. The publisher consented, on condition that he would write in addition two or three sheets of prose which should belong for ever to the *Voyage.*

MM. Charles Nodier and Victor Hugo received immediately on account seventeen hundred and fifty francs each; they had nothing more to do but to prepare for their departure. They made the same arrangement as for the coronation, except that instead of one vehicle they hired two. M. Nodier took a calèche, in which he gave one place to the designer of views, M. Gué; M. Victor Hugo, who, on account of his little girl, took a cradle and a servant, engaged a berline.

The two vehicles met at the Barrière de Fontainebleau, came side by side, and set out talking from one carriage to the other.

On entering Essonne M. Nodier stopped before the first inn on the right.

"Let us breakfast here," said he; "this inn shall have a place in our book. It was here that Lesurques was taken."

The assassination of the mail carrier of Lyons became therefore the

subject of conversation at breakfast. M. Nodier, who had known Lesurques, spoke of that victim of judicial fallibility with an emotion which drew tears to the eyes of the women. He saw that he had saddened the breakfast, and wished to restore smiles again.

"Yes," he continued, "this tavern has none but gloomy associations. It is generally acknowledged that nobody is sure of being the father of his children; now I say, for my part, that nobody is certain of being the mother of her children."

"Where have you seen that?" asked the whole company.

"On this billiard-table?"

There was a billiard-table in the next room.

An explanation was demanded, and he told how two years before a wagon-load of nurses, bringing children from Paris to Burgundy, had breakfasted in the tavern. To eat more comfortably they had put down their living bundles on the billiard-table. While they were in the dining-room the wagoners had come, taken the children and laid them hap-hazard on the seats. The nurses on returning had been very much embarrassed; how could they recognise their charges? All babies resemble each other. They had said: "Faith, no matter!" had picked up any out of the heap, taking account only of sex, and there were at present a score of mothers who were tenderly saying, "my son!" or, "my daughter!" to the child of another.

"Come, come!" objected Madame Nodier, "was not the linen marked?"

"Ah indeed!" answered her husband, "if you seek for probability you will never find truth."

M. Nodier was an exquisite conversationist. His quick and picturesque wit contrasted with his sleepy, drawling accent. He had the rare faculty of allying the broad views of the philosopher to the artless grace of the believer. The stories that he told, oftener from his imagination than from his memory, had in fiction the veracity of truth, and in reality the charm of the impossible.

M. Victor Hugo had forgotten his passport at Paris; his forgetfulness came near costing him a disagreeable adventure. He got out to walk up the hill of Vermanton and scaled an embankment like a scout; he was fair and delicate; his dress of grey drilling made him look still younger than twenty, and gave him the appearance of a school-boy in vacation time. Some gendarmes whom he met asked him what the ribbon he had in his buttonhole meant. At the reply that it meant Legion of Honor, they said that the cross was not given to children and demanded to see the passport, in which the right to the ribbon would be stated. The lack of passport confirmed their suspicions, and they arrested this usurper of insignia. Fortunately M. Nodier was forty. He ran up and said to the gendarmes:

"Monsieur is the celebrated Victor Hugo."

The gendarmes, to whom this name probably signified nothing, had no wish to be considered ignorant, and released their prisoner with many excuses. The passport, sent on from Paris, reached the traveller at Verdun, and M. Victor Hugo could be young without danger.

Thus they came to Mâcon, where they were to find M. de Lamartine at an inn which he had indicated. M. Nodier asked for him on descending from the carriage.

"M. de Lamartine?" said the host. "You mean M. Alphonse?"

They were not yet accustomed at Mâcon to the new name of the poet, who had borne it only since the *Méditations*, and they knew him better under his baptismal name. M. de Lamartine was at Mâcon, but he did not lodge at the inn; he had a house where he stopped when he came to the town. M. Nodier went and brought him.

"I will take you immediately to Saint-Point," said the great poet, graciously.

"To-morrow," said M. Nodier; "our wives have to get rid of the dust, and we have to see the town."

M. de Lamartine accompanied them to the theatre, the prefect sending his box, and next morning the two carriages took the road to Saint-Point, and in an hour reached the house of the poet. M. de Lamartine had preceded his guests, and received them, with his wife, in the front court.

They entered a large parlor with deep recesses, in which were the two sisters of M. de Lamartine, slender, fair, smiling, elegant, and his mother, an amiable and venerable woman. They breakfasted, went out to walk, came in again, and M. de Lamartine read his admirable poems. At dinner they had a glimpse of the daughter of the poet, one of those angels which God lends to mothers to give them an instant of happiness and a life of mourning.

Madame de Lamartine, who was English, dined in full dress. She and her sisters-in-law wore dresses, low-necked and adorned with ribbons; the poor high-necked silk dresses found themselves very much out of place.

Little dressed as she was, compared with her hostesses, Madame Nodier was too much so for herself. In a silk dress since morning, she felt very much fatigued and indisposed, and wished to return to Mâcon that evening. M. de Lamartine, hospitable with that true hospitality which leaves the door open as well for exit as for entrance, had his horses harnessed to his carriage, for those of the travellers had been sent back in the morning.

There was room in the carriage only for the women, Madame Hugo having come with her daughter and servant. MM. Victor Hugo and Charles Nodier went on foot, accompanied by M. de Lamartine, who shortened the road for them by directing them over the mountain. The road became very difficult at the highest point, the walkers halted, the rich country of Burgundy lay at their feet, the setting sun empurpled the horizon, the woods had the softening and expiring tranquillity of fine summer evenings; they felt all around one immense effusion of nature, and the souls of the three friends were mingled together.

M. de Lamartine saw his visitors to the main road. They had only to go straight on and could not miss their way. He pressed their hands and returned to his home.

XLIV.

GENEVA.

They left Macon the next morning at five o'clock; the following morning they passed out of France in a thick fog, which the sun suddenly dispersed, and they beheld the dazzling sight of Mont-Blanc, the Alps, and Geneva.

The police regulations of Geneva were extremely harassing. Each hotel had a register in which every traveller had to write his name, age, condition, whence he came and why. This investigation exasperated M. Nodier, who, to the last question, responded: "*Come to overthrow your Government.*"

The caleche and the berline made but one excursion, to Lausanne to see a public fête in honor of William Tell; they saw Coppet on the way. The lake was covered with boats decked with flags; its azure repeated that of the sky. Lausanne was too small for the joyous multitude which came together from all the Cantons. Geneva, on their return, appeared yet more disagreeable, and they concluded to depart on the morrow.

In the morning, when they wished to set out, the gates of the town were shut. It was Sunday and the sermon hour. During the services Geneva is a prison. To employ his time, M. Victor Hugo attempted to visit the Church of Saint Peter; scarcely had he entered when he was asked to depart as troubling the faithful. He

came away and shut himself in the berline, irritated against these Protestants who allowed people neither to come in nor to go out.

Finally the last psalm was sung and the town opened again. The horses, smartly urged, went to Sallanches at a single stage, where they breakfasted. At table MM. Victor Hugo and Nodier began to talk about Urbain Canel's book.

"What a fine book it will be," said Madame Nodier.

"If it is written," said Madame Victor Hugo.

"How! if it is written!" cried the two writers, offended at the doubt. "Do you think we shall not write it after having been paid almost entirely?"

"Why you are eating a wing of it even now," added M. Nodier, showing Madame Hugo the breast of a chicken on her plate.

That there might be no doubt about the book, M. Victor Hugo began next day the two sheets which he was to furnish, and wrote upon the passage from Sallanches to Chamouni. The reader will prefer that this journey be narrated by him, and will thank me for saving some of these notes of travel, the publication of which the unforeseen failure of M. Urbain Canel prevented, and which M. Victor Hugo has never yet added to his works.

XLV.

VICTOR HUGO'S STORY.

"At Sallanches you leave your carriage. From the village to the priory of Chamounix the journey is made in a rough car drawn by mules. * * * This new mode of travel warns you that you are passing, as it were, from one nature to another. Here you are penetrating into the mountain. The round, flat foot of the horse is no longer fit for these sharp, steep, slippery roads. The wheels of ordinary carriages would be broken in these narrow paths, torn constantly by points of rock and broken by torrents. Light but solid cars are needed, which can be taken to pieces in difficult places and carried over with you on the shoulders of the guides and muleteers. Hitherto you have only seen the Alps, now you begin to feel them.

"* * * It is difficult not to experience some deep emotion, when on a fine August evening, descending the slope on which Sallanches is seated, you see stretching away before you this vast amphitheatre of mountains, all differing in color, form, height, and attitude. Enormous masses, by turns dazzling and dark, green and white, distinct and confused, every interval between which is flooded by a broad beam of sunlight still oblique, while above, like the stone of the oath in a druidic circle, Mont-Blanc rises royally with its tiara of ice and its mantle of snow. * * *

"* * * Suddenly the copse opens and a spectacle full of unexpected charm is before your eyes. It is a little lake, called, I believe, *Green Lake*, because of the thick sward which carpets its banks and makes it like a crystal mirror bordered with green velvet. This lake, the water of which preserves an imperturbable limpidity, presents in the freshness of its aspect and the grace of its contour, a delicious contrast with the gloomy severity of the mountains in the midst of which it is thrown. You would believe yourself magically transported to another clime, under another sky, were not Mont Blanc standing in the horizon with its domes of snow, its glaciers, its terrible aiguilles, and did it not, as if jealous of the gentle impressions which dare to arise so near it, project its menacing image even into the peaceful waters of Green Lake.

"I know not by what invisible thread, by what electric conductor the things of nature are connected with the things of art; but at that very moment came to my mind those grand creations of old Shakspeare, in which some lofty and gloomy form is

always dominant, which in a nook of the drama, is reflected in a limpid soul, transparent and pure; works perfect like nature, in which there is always an Ophelia for Hamlet, a Desdemona for Othello, a Green Lake for Mont Blanc.

"* * * Add to this the eternal presence of Mont Blanc, one of the three highest mountains of the globe, and this character of grandeur which every grand thing impresses upon all its surroundings; meditate upon this summit, which is in actual reality, to use the fabulous expression of the poets, one of the *extremities of the earth;* imagine this striking accumulation in a circle so limited, of so many objects unique to sight, and you will believe on penetrating into the valley of Chamounix, that you are entering, if I may use a trivial expression which imperfectly expresses my idea, into the cabinet of curiosities of nature, into a sort of divine laboratory where Providence keeps in reserve specimens of all the phenomena of creation, or rather into a mysterious sanctuary, in which repose the elements of the visible world.

"* * * The valleys of the Alps are remarkable in this, that they are in some sort complete. Each of them presents, often in the most limited space, a kind of separate universe. All have their aspect, their form, their light, their peculiar sounds. You can almost comprise in one word the general effect of their physiognomy. The valley of Sallanches is a theatre; the valley of Servoz is a grave; the valley of Chamounix is a temple."

XLVI.

A LETTER OF LAMENNAIS.

ON their arrival at Chamounix M. Nodier busied himself in procuring guides for the next day, when they were to ascend Montanvert. He wished for his guide old Balma, whom he had known on his preceding visit, and of whom he had spoken since the previous evening with such contagious admiration that M. Victor Hugo, being invited to put his autograph upon the register of the inn at Chamouni, wrote:

"*Napoleon. Talma.*
Chateaubriand. Balma."

But old Balma was sick, and M. Nodier was obliged to content himself with one of his relatives whom he chose for the love of the name. M. Victor Hugo took the first comer, a very young man.

They rose at daylight, breakfasted on milk and honey fresh from the hive, which they found excellent, and then set out, the men on foot and the women on mules. They ascended, turning from time to time to look at the valley. The inhabitants and the habitations became imperceptible, and it seemed as though they were looking at the country of Lilliput. The houses almost all painted, appeared like toys. The Aveyron was a thread of silver upon green velvet. They went still higher, and when they again turned they saw nothing, the clouds were beneath the feet of the travellers and hid the earth.

They reached the summit. A building was erected upon the plateau, with this inscription: *Temple of Nature.* The priests of this temple were a household of innkeepers, who retailed a drink made of a mixture of milk and extract of wild cherry.

The Mer de Glace remained to be seen; the women, satisfied already with their journey, allowed the men to go alone. MM. Victor Hugo, Nodier, and Gué, with their guides ahead, directed their steps towards the glacier, helping themselves by their iron-shod poles, and at times catching hold of the rhododendrons, which are numerous and vigorous in the mountains.

The guide of M. Victor Hugo, new in the business, mistook the path, and ventured upon a tongue of ice between two clefts, which came closer

together at every step. The tongue soon became so narrow that the guide was uneasy, but he did not like to confess himself at fault, and went on, saying that the path began to widen very soon. It grew still narrower, until there was nothing but a slender strip between two precipices. The guide seized the hand of M. Victor Hugo, and said to him :—"Fear nothing." But he was quite pale. At some distance one of the clefts ended, and the little tongue joined the plateau again; but they must get there. Two could not walk abreast. The guide had only one foot upon the top, and walked with the other upon the slippery slope of the abyss; the young mountaineer, however, did not stumble, and supported the pressure of the traveller with the solidity of a statue. They arrived at the plateau, but the danger was not over. The plateau to which the edge was joined was five or six feet higher than it and perpendicular.

"I must let go your hand," said the guide; "rest supported on your staff, and shut your eyes for fear of vertigo."

He climbed the wall of ice, and after a few seconds, which appeared hours to M. Victor Hugo, leaned over, gave him both hands, and raised him up easily.

The plateau was known to the guide, who proceeded without difficulty. Besides, M. Victor Hugo very soon perceived MM. Nodier and Gué, who were in search of him, frightened. M. Nodier's guide, seeing whence the other had come, suspected the imprudence which he had committed, and reprimanded him severely. He had endangered the life of a traveller, and the honor of his profession, it was a stain upon the whole corps of guides, etc. The young Swiss, so firm before the abyss, was less so before the reproach, and great tears gathered in his eyes.

The women were rejoined at the Temple of Nature, and shuddered at the recital of the peril. It made them see precipices everywhere. They did not dare to descend on the mules. But their feet were less sure than those of the beasts, and they were carried more quickly than they could wish down the steep slopes of the mountain. They slipped, sat down, refused to get up, scolded the men for having brought them, were angry, wept. On reaching the valley, they laughed at their terror, and their tears, those of the guide, and the danger of M. Victor Hugo, all became subjects of joy.

The guides of MM. Nodier and Gué, and those of the ladies, presented their little books; they are obliged to have the traveller attest the manner in which they have served them. The guide of M. Victor Hugo had also to present his; he was downcast, and trembled very much when M. Hugo returned it to him; he was radiant with happiness on reading:—"*I recommend Michel Devouassous, who has saved my life.*"

MM. Nodier and Victor Hugo began to see the last of their seventeen hundred and fifty francs, and were compelled to think of a return. Sadly enough they took the road to France again. They travelled slowly, stopping wherever there was a ruin or a library, for M. Nodier preferred books to stones.

At every stopping-place the two friends seized upon the tavern-keeper and questioned him both at once, one on the ruins of old architecture, the other on the whereabouts of the old book men. Mine host became embarrassed and M. Nodier impatient.

"My dear sir," said he to M. Victor Hugo, "you are possessed by the demon Ogee."

"And you are by the devil Elzevir."

At Satoris they were enjoying a fine breakfast, in a room through the window of which a clear August sun was streaming. A poor girl of fifteen appeared before the window, in the street, ragged, thin, suffering, and degraded, in this glory of the sky. M. Nodier pulled out the first piece of money which he found in his

pocket; as he was handing it to her, Madame Nodier remarked that it was a twenty franc piece.

"Pshaw!" said he, "I shall never be poorer for it in eternity," and he gave the louis.

The two carriages reëntered Paris on the 2d of September; it was time; M. Charles Nodier had in all but twenty-two francs, and M. Victor Hugo but eighteen. They shook hands at the barrière, and the calèche returned to the Marais, and the berline to the Faubourg Saint-Germain.

M. Victor Hugo received a letter from M. de Lamennais on the occasion of this journey, in which occurs this passage:

"Geneva, on the bank of its lake, sad, cold, heavy, raising from time to time a piercing and discordant cry, seems like a cormorant on a rock. It would be honoring it too much to offer it a sacrifice to the Eternal City. When industry shall be entirely divinized, it may at most be dragged to its altar."

XLVII.

THE ODE TO THE COLUMN.

Madame Hugo had no suspicion that she spoke so truly at the breakfast at Sallanches; the book never was made. M. Victor Hugo alone did his part; M. Nodier waited before commencing his till the designs were ready; the engraving occupied months, and gave the publisher time to fail, which freed M. Nodier from his engagement.

In January, 1826, M. Victor Hugo published, after having altered and re-written it in great part, *Bug Jargal*, which had first appeared in the *Conservateur Littéraire*; in October, a new edition of his first *Odes*, increased by new Odes and *Ballades*, with a preface which resolutely hoisted the flag of literary liberty. The partisans of the established rules cast themselves with violence upon the preface and the verses, which had also their partisans, less numerous, but as energetic.

Soon afterwards M. Victor Hugo removed to the Rue Notre-Dame-des-Champs. The house was separated from the street by an avenue planted with trees, which was continued by a garden whose laburnums touched the windows of his rooms. A lawn extended to a rustic bridge, the branches of which grew green in summer.

M. Victor Hugo went sometimes to read the newspapers under the arcades of the Odeon. One day in February, 1827, he found the liberal press in great commotion. A scandalous thing had happened the evening before, at the house of the Austrian ambassador. The Duke de Tarente, invited to the ball of the ambassador, had been surprised to hear the usher announce: M. le Maréchal Macdonald. When the Duke de Dalmatie entered, the usher had announced: M. le Maréchal Soult. The two Dukes were considering what this meant, and whether it was a mistake of the usher, when the Duke de Trévise arrived and was announced as: M. le Maréchal Mortier. The same suppression of foreign titles was made in announcing the Duke de Reggio. It was no longer possible to doubt that it was the wilful premeditation of the ambassador. Austria, humbled by titles which recalled her defeats, denied them publicly; she had invited the marshals to degrade them of their victories, and slapped the Empire in their faces. They immediately withdrew from the hôtel in a body.

The soldier's blood which M. Victor Hugo had in his veins, mounted to his face. It seemed to him that they were insulting his father, and he was seized with an irresistible desire to avenge him. He wrote the *Ode to the Column.*

The ode, published immediately by the *Débats*, in Paris first, and copied by many journals, produced a deep effect. The Opposition press, thus

far hostile to the royalist poet, now lauded him. On the other hand, the Ministerial press ceased to praise him. To attack Austria was to attack the Bourbons, whom she had brought back to France. To glorify the marshals was to glorify the Empire. The ode produced upon the pure Royalists the effect of a desertion.

It was the beginning of the rupture. At the Austrian affront M. Victor Hugo had felt that he was no longer a Vendean; that he was a Frenchman. He had caught a glimpse of a France grander than parties, which should reject nothing of her history, and which should say to the imperial column:

"To Henry's bronze I proudly marry thee."

It was not only the army which he accepted, as in the ode "to his father," it was the Emperor also. "Buonaparte" has become "Napoleon, the "tyrant" is forgotten, and "the spur of Napoleon" equals the 'sandal of Charlemagne."

XLVIII.

CROMWELL.

M. Taylor was then royal commissioner of the Comédie-Française. He asked M. Victor Hugo why he did not write a drama.

"I am thinking of it," said M. Victor Hugo. "I have even commenced a drama upon Cromwell."

"Well, finish it, and give it to me. A Cromwell written by you can be played only by Talma."

To make it secure, he brought the poet and the tragedian together at a dinner in the *Rocher de Cancale.*

The dinner was a large one; but MM. Victor Hugo and Talma, placed side by side, could talk at their ease.

Talma was then sixty-five. He was worn out and sick. He died some months afterwards. He felt that his career was finished. He spoke of his profession with bitterness; actors were not regarded as men, not even he, notwithstanding his success and his reputation; applauded and treated almost as a friend by the Emperor, he had asked him for the cross, and the Emperor had not dared to give it to him. Even in his profession he had achieved nothing.

M. Victor Hugo remonstrated.

"No," insisted the great tragedian, "an actor is nothing without his part, and I have never had a real part. I have never had such a piece as I should have had. Tragedy is fine, it is noble, it is grand; I should have liked as much grandeur with more reality; a character which should have variety and naturalness, which should not always be the same, which should be tragic and familiar, a king who should be a man. Have you seen me in Charles VI.? I have produced an effect by saying: '*Bread! Give me bread!*' That was because there the King was in no royal suffering; it was a human suffering; it was tragic, and it was true; it was sovereignty and it was misery; it was a king and it was a beggar. Truth! That is what I have sought all my life. But what do you expect? I ask Shakspeare; they give me Ducis. For want of truth in the piece I put it into my dress. I have played Marius with naked legs. Nobody knows what I would have been if I had found the author that I sought. I shall die without having played once. You, Monsieur Hugo, who are young and daring, you might write me a part. Taylor has told me that you are writing a Cromwell. I have always had a desire to play Cromwell. I bought his portrait in London. If you will come to my house you will see it hanging in my chamber. What is your piece? It ought not to resemble the pieces of others."

"Your dream of a play is exactly what I dream of writing," said M. Victor Hugo.

And he explained to the tragedian some of the ideas which he purposed to give in the Preface to Cromwell; drama substituted for tragedy; the

man for the character; the real for the conventional; the piece free to vibrate between the heroic and the positive; the style embracing all charms, epic, lyric, satiric, grave, facetious; the suppression of *rant* and of *points*."

Here Talma interrupted him, eagerly.

"Ah! yes," cried he, "that is what I have continually said to them. No fine lines!"

He listened with great attention to the theories of the poet.

"And your *Cromwell* is written in accordance with these ideas?" asked he.

"So much so, that to indicate at the outset its desire to be natural, its first line is a date:

'To-morrow, June the twenty-fifth, sixteen hundred fifty-seven.'"

"You must know the scenes by heart," said Talma. "Be so kind as to recite one for us."

The other guests added their requests to his. M. Victor Hugo recited the scene in which Milton adjures Cromwell to renounce the attempt to make himself king. The scene was badly selected; it was, in substance, nothing but a long speech, which, irregular as it was by the emotion of the reasoning and the sharpness of phrase, was not absolutely in opposition to the tragic tirades; and, besides, Milton spoke all the time, and Talma would have had only to listen to him. He thought the lines very fine, which was a suspicious eulogy after his outcry against "fine lines," and asked for another specimen. M. Victor Hugo recited the scene in which the Protector questions Davenant concerning his journey. Now they were far from tragedy! At each local detail, at each touch of genuine reality, Talma applauded: "Just right! that is it! that is the way people talk!" And when the scene was finished, he held out his hand to the author, saying: "Make haste to complete your drama, for I am in haste to play it."

Talma died soon afterwards. M. Victor Hugo, having now no actor, did not hurry himself, and was able to give to his drama developments which would not have comported with representation.

Towards the end of summer, Victor Hugo was one evening at Madame Tastu's. She had asked him to recite a scene of Cromwell, which he had just finished. M. Tissot, who was present, thought the scene very fine, and asked the author if he had arranged with a publisher. Upon his replying in the negative, he offered to speak with his own. In fact, M. Ambroise Dupont came next morning to purchase the manuscript, and the author began to write the preface.

The success of Der Freyschütz had given the Odeon a taste for dramatic importations. After Weber came Shakspeare. These admirable dramas admirably played, deeply affected M. Victor Hugo, who was just then writing the preface to *Cromwell;* he filled it with his enthusiasm for "this god of the theatre in whom seem united, as in a Trinity, the three great characteristic geniuses of our stage, Corneille, Molière, Beaumarchais."

The preface assumed, like the piece, vast proportions. The volume, which might easily have made two, was printed very quickly, and appeared in the first days of December, 1827.

The effect of the drama was surpassed by that of the preface. It burst out like a declaration of war against the received doctrines, and provoked battles among the journals. Hostility attacked everything, the ideas and the style.

The defence was not less ardent. The young men declared energetically for the independence of the theatre, and the *Preface of Cromwell* became a rallying cry.

XLIX.

DEATHS.

The year ended sadly. Madame Foucher, long an invalid, had thought that summer and the country would cure her. She returned to Paris, given over by the physicians, and took her bed never to rise again. There was an appearance of improvement in her condition. "I feel better," said she, "I think that I shall soon be well."

That night the pain returned, and on the third day she rendered to God one of the best souls which ever passed away from earth.

Life is a perpetual meeting of weddings and funerals. At the marriage of M. Victor Hugo his brother Abel had seen a young girl, Mademoiselle Julie de Montferrier; he was not then in a condition to marry, but since then, his projects having succeeded, he had asked and obtained her. He was married by the same priest who came from officiating at Madame Foucher's funeral.

General Hugo, established for the moment at Paris, was present at the wedding. The reconciliation between the father and children was complete. Abel and Victor had retracted altogether, and accepted their mother-in-law. Victor had dedicated *Cromwell* to his father. The General was happy on all sides. The government had at last pardoned him the stubbornness of his resistance to the foreigner. He was no longer banished to a provincial town. He was recognised as General of division. Reëstablished in his rank, in his liberty, and in his family, he breathed a little after a life so laborious and so unappreciated. He had already two grand-children, Léopoldine and Charles. The new marriage promised more. He was yet young enough to see his grand-children grow many years, who, on their part, would be taught to love him.

To be nearer his children he took rooms in their neighborhood. He lived in the Rue Plumet. M. Victor Hugo went to see him almost every evening. He remained whole hours, wishing to regain lost time. On the 28th of January, 1828, he hurried through his dinner and took his wife with him. The General was in a gay and talkative mood. They did not separate until eleven o'clock. The son had returned and was partly undressed, when a loud ring was heard at the door. That ring at an hour when visiting was over, frightened him. He ran, opened the door, and saw a man whom he did not know.

"What do you wish?"

"I come from Madame the Countess Hugo, to tell you your father is dead."

M. Victor Hugo had just left his father, he had seen him full of life, he was astounded at this blow, he thought it must be a mistake or some horrible dream. Without knowing what he did, he dressed himself, and followed the messenger mechanically to the Rue Plumet.

He found his father extended on his bed, rigid and colorless, the collar of his shirt unbuttoned, one sleeve pushed up, and ligatures about the arm. Near him was a man whom he did not know at first.

This man was a doctor who lived near the General. They had sent for help to the nearest place possible; he had come and found the General a victim to a fearful attack of apoplexy; he had bled him and done everything possible, but with no result.

The General died the death of a soldier; apoplexy had struck him standing as suddenly as a ball.

The physician was found to be the same who had attended the son at the Cordier school for the wound in his knee.

The black clothes and the crape purchased for the death of the mother were not yet worn out, and served as well for that of the father.

L.

AMY ROBSART.

Six years before, being then nineteen, at the time when, his mother dead and his father at Blois, alone in the world, his marriage prevented by his poverty, M. Victor Hugo was seeking on all sides for the means which would bring him happiness, M. Soumet had proposed to him that they together should elaborate a piece from Sir Walter Scott's romance of *Kenilworth*. M Soumet would draw up the plan, M. Victor Hugo was to write the first three acts, and M. Soumet the two last. M. Victor Hugo did his part, but when he had read his three acts, M. Soumet was only half satisfied; he did not approve a mixture of the tragic and the comic, and he wished to blot out all that was not grave and serious. M. Victor Hugo referred to the example of Shakspeare; but then English actors had not yet been applauded in Paris, and M. Soumet responded that Shakspeare, though good to read, would not bear representation; that Hamlet and Othello were, besides, much rather sublime essays and beautiful monstrosities than masterpieces; that a piece must elect either to produce laughter or tears. The two collaborators not agreeing, had separated amicably, each took his acts and his independence, and completed his piece as he liked. M..Soumet wrote an *Emilia*, which, played at the *Théâtre Française* by Mademoiselle Mars, had a half-success. M. Victor Hugo finished his *Amy Robsart* after his fashion, mingling freely comedy and tragedy. But just when he thought of having it played Louis XVIII.'s annuity came in and dispensed with his literary speculations, and he had thrown the thing into his drawer.

In 1828, the youngest of his two brothers-in-law, Paul Foucher, left college. He felt an attraction towards literature, and especially towards the theatre. But the theatres made him the response which they invariably make to young men:—"When you have a name!" He sought then the means of making that name which alone opened the doors. One day, M. Soumet, whom he had gone to see, asked him if he knew *Amy Robsart*, and spoke to him of it as a singular and curious work, which would repay the trouble of reading.

"It shocked me a little at the time," said he, "and even now there are boldnesses in it which I would not risk myself; but since the English dramas have succeeded, I do not see why that should not succeed. If I were Victor Hugo I would not lose a piece in which there are very fine scenes. The fifth act, which is nearly all of his own invention, is a grand piece of originality."

M. Paul Foucher asked his brother-in-law to lend him the piece, and was astonished, like M. Soumet, that M. Victor Hugo did not put it on the stage. M. Victor Hugo explained that he had written it when he was nineteen on account of his poverty; but that now he did not like to borrow his subjects from others.

"And what, will you do with the piece?"

"I shall burn it."

"Will you give it to me?"

He represented that this would render him a real service; that a piece like that would open the theatre to him, and would create a name for him.

"Faith," said M. Victor Hugo, "I do not consider it a piece of mine. Do with it as you like. Walter Scott belongs to you as much as to me."

Amy Robsart, taken immediately to the Odeon, was received without difficulty and distributed to the best actors of the theatre. It was agreed that the name of M. Victor Hugo should not be pronounced, but some phrases or some indiscretions betrayed it, and the director, enchanted, took pains to spread the report that the drama was by the author of *Crom-*

well. M. Victor Hugo remonstrated in vain; the director, finding an attraction in the name, continued to proclaim it in the streets. The piece was hissed immoderately. "There was played last night at the Odeon," said the next morning's *Journal des Débats*, "a historical drama in five acts, entitled *Amy Robsart*, the subject being borrowed from Sir Walter Scott's *Kenilworth*, which, treated already at three different theatres, appeared again for the fourth time, without any improvement except that of having been stretched out beyond measure, and spoiled by a multitude of trivial expressions. Hisses and shouts of laughter did justice to this ancient novelty."

M. Victor Hugo, who wished to secure success, did not wish to secure ruin, and wrote immediately to the papers that the passages hissed were his own.

This was to the piece an involuntary reclamation. The young men, who had not disturbed themselves for a piece unavowed, came then to the rescue; they applauded, the hisses redoubled, the agitation of the pit extended to the Latin quarter, government intervened and suppressed the piece.

LI.

FRIENDS.

Among the most assiduous visitors of the house there were two who came, almost every day, M. Louis Boulanger, whose intelligence comprehended Shakspeare as well as Rembrant, and M. Sainte-Beuve, whose conversation was as charming as his writings. The rural pleasures of the summer of 1828 were to go and see the sun set on the plains of Vanvres and Montrouge. He often stopped at the *Butte-au-Moulin*. M. Victor Hugo, stretched at full length under the enormous fan, inhaled the whiffs of air as he watched the twilight veiling the horizon, and gave himself up to those reveries which became the *Soleils couchants* of the *Feuilles d'automne*.

They would come to the Rue Notre Dame des Champs to spend the evening. M. Victor Hugo, at the request of his two friends, would repeat the verses he had written during the day. Or he would ask M. Sainte-Beuve to repeat his, who, constrained to comply, and confused at so much egotism, endeavored to get little Leopoldine and big Charley to make a noise while he was reading. But they took care not to obey, and the fine poems of *Joseph Delorme* and the *Consolations* were recited.

At other times the poet of the evening was M. Alfred de Musset. He recited *Don Paës*, *la Camargo*, and the *Ballade à la Lune*.

M. Victor Hugo saw often M. Gustave Planche, who was brought by M. Sainte-Beuve, as knowing English. A fine edition of the *Odes et Ballades* was about to appear, with a frontispiece, which was a reduction of the beautiful lithograph of M. Louis Boulanger, *La Ronde du Sabbat*. The engraver who was to reduce it knew nothing of this fantastic and diabolical subject. As he was English, and did not know a word of French, he asked to have the ballad translated. M. Sainte-Beuve said that he knew somebody who would willingly do it, and would do it admirably, and he brought a tall young man, with a Greek profile, who would have been handsome if he had not had prominent eyes and a narrow head. It was M. Gustave Planche.

M. Merimée came sometimes. One day, when he was at dinner, and the cook had failed completely on a dish of macaroni, he offered to come and cook one, and a few days afterwards he came, took off his coat, put on an apron, and cooked a macaroni à l'Italienne, which was as successful as his books. He often went to the house of the English Misses Clark, who had a salon doctrinaire, liberal and classic. He took M. Victor Hugo with

him, who there became acquainted with M. Benjamin Constant, then an old man with white hair, careless dress, and a venerable and weary face; with M. Fauriel, M. Henri Beyle, etc.

One of those who frequented this drawing-room was M. Eugène Delacroix. The young chief of the revolution in painting had not that daring in words which he had in pictures. He strove to disarm, by the concessions of conversation, the enemies his wonderful talent made. Revolutionary in his studio, he was conservative in society, abjuring all connexion with the new ideas, disavowing insurrectionary literature, and preferring tragedy to the drama.

M. Béranger was condemned to three months' imprisonment for a song. M. Victor Hugo went to see him at La Force. His cell was not without visitors, good substantial bourgeois for the most part, proud to be near their songster, and to bring him substantial consolations. The poet of the people was surrounded with game, fruits, and wine.

"You see how I am spoiled," said he to M. Victor Hugo; "I lack nothing but a stomach."

M. Béranger had then the dress and appearance which he always preserved—hair floating over his shoulders, shirt-collar turned down, long coat, and double-breasted waistcoat. He was already the exquisite conversationist of his later years, concealing a very acute understanding beneath a solid good sense and a bonhomie to which you could not trust yourself more blindly than to the velvet paw of a cat. The claw was never far off.

His chamber looked out upon the thieves' court. His friends were much distressed on this account, and were astonished that he could live in the vicinity of all those wretches.

"Lafitte, who was here yesterday," he related to his visitor, "could not get over this, and told me that he would not endure it an hour. I answered: 'My dear Lafitte, pick a hundred men out of that court; when I am released, I will go to the first soirée you have at your house, and will pick out a hundred from your salon—and then we will balance them.'"

When you pass the Barrière d'Enfer and the Butte-au-Moulin, and descend into the valley of the Bièvre, a little beyond the cottages of Brinvilliers, you reach a gate which opens into a sandy and shady walk. At the end of that walk is a house of modest appearance, rather broad than high, of irregular construction, surrounded by a garden which, enlarging gradually, assumes the proportions of a park. This abode, called The Rocks, belonged then to the elder M. Bertin, chief editor of the *Journal des Débats*. He passed the summer there, and attracted around him all the renowned in literature. M. Victor Hugo was invited there. They asked him to recite poetry. He repeated *La Douleur du Pacha*. Bookseller Gosselin was present, and he came to him next day, and bought *Les Orientales*.

The poet and the journalist became firm friends, and in following years M. Victor Hugo passed a part of the autumn at The Rocks with his wife and children. Five or six friends and the principal editors of the paper were there frequently. M. Victor Hugo formed a very close intimacy with M. Jules Janin, whose noble affection has resisted time, and has been generously redoubled by exile. This house, so freely open, was closed but once, and that was to the King. Louis Philippe, thinking to do M. Bertin a great favor, sent him word that he would like to see The Rocks. M. Bertin declined the honor which so many others would have craved.

"The King is very comfortable at Versailles, and I am very comfortable at The Rocks," he answered; "if he comes here we shall both be uncomfortable."

In Paris once, M. Guizot, then minister, having to speak with him

about some pressing business, was announced just as he sat down to dinner. The minister was begged to wait until dinner was over, or to call again. This was by no means the pride of the journalist who desired to make his importance felt; it was the habit of seeing in a minister a man like any other.

All were free to do as they liked, to work or play, at The Rocks, until dinner, when there was very frank conversation and discussion, usually on literature. At dessert M. Victor Hugo's children appeared. The little family was increased by a second boy, named Victor. All three gathered an ample harvest of caresses and pastry.

The children were never anxious to return to Paris. They lived out of doors, going from the dairy to the poultry yard, drinking foaming milk from white bowls, frightening the chickens and the golden pheasants. These pleasures were interrupted only by Mademoiselle Louise, M. Bertin's daughter, who would call them to tell them a pretty story. Quickly they ran; she took Victor on her knees, made Léopoldine and "her Charley" sit down beside her, and improvised a story which was all their own, for she would let nobody come in. And you should have heard them at night, when their mother was putting them to bed, trying to repeat to her these wonderful stories.

LII.

THE SCAFFOLD.

M. Victor Hugo had, in 1820, met Louvel on his way to the scaffold. The assassin of the Duke de Berry had nothing which awakened sympathy; he was coarse and stubby, had a gristly nose above thin lips, and eyes of a glassy blue. The author of the ode on *The Death of the Duke de Berry* hated him with all the ultra royalism of his childhood. And yet, at the sight of that man who was alive and well, and who was about to die, he could not suppress a feeling of compassion, and he felt his hate for the assassin change to pity for the sufferer. He had reflected, had, for the first time, looked the death penalty in the face, was astonished to discover that society did to the guilty in cold blood and without danger, precisely the same thing which it was punishing, and had conceived the idea of writing a book against the guillotine.

At the close of the summer of 1825 one afternoon, as he was going to the library of the Louvre, he met M. Jules Lefèvre, who took him by the arm and drew him to the Quai de la Ferraille. The multitude filled the streets going towards the Place de Grève.

"What is the matter?" asked he.

"The matter is that they are going to cut off the head and hand of a man named Jean Martin who has killed his father. I have a poem on hand in which a parricide is executed; I am going to see this one executed, but I prefer not to be alone."

The horror which M. Victor Hugo experienced at the thought of seeing an execution, was a reason for compelling himself to go; the frightful spectacle would excite him to his projected war upon the death penalty.

At the Pont au Change, the throng was so dense that it became difficult to advance. MM. Victor Hugo and Jules Lefevre succeeded, however, in gaining the Place. The houses were crowded with people. The occupants had invited their friends to the fête; they saw tables loaded with fruits and wines; the windows had been rented at a high price; young women were leaning upon the window sills, glass in hand, and loudly laughing or coquetting with young men. But soon the coquetry ceased for a more thrilling pleasure; the cart arrived.

The sufferer, with his back turned to the horse, executioner, and assistants, his head covered with a black rag tied about his neck, dressed

in a pair of grey linen pantaloons and a white shirt, was shivering under a heavy rain. The chaplain of the prisons, the Abbé Montes, spoke to him and made him kiss a crucifix through his veil.

M. Victor Hugo saw the guillotine in profile. To him it seemed only a red post. A large space guarded by the troops isolated the scaffold. The cart entered it. Jean Martin descended, supported by the assistants, then, still supported by them, he mounted the stairs. The chaplain went up after him, then the clerk, who read the sentence aloud. Then the executioner lifted the black veil, exposed the affrighted and haggard countenance of a youth, took the right hand of the condemned and fastened it to the post with a chain, seized an axe and lifted in the air; but M. Victor Hugo could see no more, he turned away his head and became master of himself only when the *Ha!* of the multitude announced that the victim had ceased to suffer.

At another time he saw the cart of a highway robber named Delaporte. He was an old man, with his arms tied behind his back and his bald head glistening in the sun.

It seemed as though the death penalty would not allow him to forget it. He met another cart; this time the guillotine was doing double work; the two assassins, Malagutti and Ratta, of the banker Joseph, were executed. M. Victor Hugo was struck with the different appearance of the two prisoners: Ratta, blond, pallid, terrified, was trembling and shivering; Malagutti, dark, robust, with head erect and careless look, went to die as he would have gone to dine.

M. Victor Hugo saw the guillotine again one day about two o'clock, when he was crossing the Place de l'Hotel de Ville. The executioner was rehearsing his evening representation; the knife did not go well; he oiled the grooves, and then he tried again. This time he was satisfied. This man, who was learning to kill another, and was doing it in broad-day, in public, chatting with curious bystanders, while a wretched man was beating his prison bars in desperation, mad with rage, or was allowing himself to be bound in the powerlessness and lethargy of terror, was to M. Victor Hugo a hideous sight, and the rehearsal of the thing seemed to him as hateful as the thing itself.

Next day he set about writing *Le Dernier Jour d'un condamné*, and finished it in three weeks. At evening he read to his friends what he had written during the day. M. Edouard Bertin, having been at one of these readings, spoke of it to M. Gosselin, who was then publishing *Les Orientales*, and who came to ask the volume of prose as he had that of verse. The agreement being signed, he read the manuscript. When he came to that passage in which the author, desiring that his condemned should remain absolutely impersonal, in order that the reader might be interested for all instead of a single one, supposes that the leaves which contained the story of his life had been lost, M. Gosselin advised him, for the sake of the sale of the book, "to find the last leaves." M. Victor Hugo answered, that he had taken M. Gosselin as publisher and not as collaborator. This was the commencement of the coolness in their relations.

Les Orientales appeared in January, 1829, and the *Dernier Jour d'un condamné* three weeks afterwards.

LIII.

SEQUEL TO LE DERNIER JOUR D'UN CONDAMNÉ.

M. Victor Hugo did not confine himself to that protest against the death penalty. For thirty-three years, he has never met upon his path a scaffold or a gibbet without

affirming the principle of the inviolability of human life.

In 1832 he added to *Le Dernier Jour d'un condamné* a considerable preface which presented to the reason the question which the book had presented to the feelings; and which pleaded before the intellect, that which it had pleaded before the heart. In 1834 he wrote *Claude Gueux*.

On the 12th of May, 1839, which was Sunday, towards two o'clock in the afternoon, M. Victor Hugo, talking in his balcony in the Place Royale, heard a report: it was the insurrection of which MM. Barbès and Blanqui were the chiefs. The insurrection was quickly suppressed; M. Blanqui escaped and hid himself in the house of the Sculptor David; M. Barbès was taken and tried by the Chamber of Peers. M. Victor Hugo was present at a sitting; the open eye of the accused, his firm bearing, his dignified countenance, and his appearance of extreme youth interested him extremely. The next day at the Opera, where they were playing an act of *Esmeralda*, he entered the orchestra to hear "*l'air des cloches*." A Peer of France, M. de Saint-Priest, took a seat near him. When the act was over, they began to converse.

"We have just finished a task which is always mournful," said M. de Saint-Priest, "we have sentenced a man to death!"

"Barbès is sentenced!"

"And he will be executed, for the ministers demand it."

"When?"

"Probably to-morrow morning. You know that there is no appeal from the Chamber of Peers."

M. Victor Hugo left the Peer, went upon the stage, and ascended to the office. The manager was absent. He found upon his table a blotter upon which were some caricatures drawn with a pen, M. Nourrit with a cask for a belly, Mademoiselle Falcon with matches for legs, M. Levasseur dressed as a porteress, etc. He took a piece of paper, and wrote these lines:

"Par votre ange envolée ainsi qu'une colombe!
Par ce royal enfant, doux et frêle roseau!
Grâce encore une fois! grâce au nom de la tombe!
Grâce au nom du berceau!"*

He put these lines in one of those grey envelopes which are used for the bills of the theatre, sealed it with a big red wafer, and went to the Tuileries. He gave the letter to the porter, asking him to carry it immediately. The porter replied that it was too late for the King to get it that day, but that it should be sent to him in the morning. M. Victor Hugo explained that it concerned the life of a man who was to be executed in the morning; then the porter called his wife to keep the gate, and went to the château. M. Victor Hugo chose to await his return. After twenty minutes the porter returned.

"Monsieur," said he, "the King has read your letter, but you did well to write your name upon the envelope. It appears that M. France d'Houdetot, who is the aide-de-camp on duty, knows Monsieur; he was about to throw the letter upon the table, when he saw your name. Then he took your letter directly, and the usher saw, through the glass-door, that the King read it."

M. Victor Hugo breathed more freely next morning on learning that the execution had not taken place. The King had generously resisted his ministry. The ministers, one of whom was General Cubières, afterwards condemned by the Chamber of Peers, not however for a political cause, returned to the charge during the day. Louis Philippe stood firm, M. Victor Hugo received from him this response: "The pardon is granted, I have only to obtain it."

This proceeding of M. Victor Hugo afterwards gave occasion for the two following letters:

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* 'O by thine Angel dove-like flown away,
And by this royal child's sweet fragile bloom,
Pardon, yet pardon, by its cradle I pray!
And by her silent tomb!

"Dear and illustrious citizen:—

"The condemned of whom you speak in the fourth volume of *Les Misérables* must seem to you an ingrate.

"It is twenty-three years now that he has been in your debt, * * * * and he has not said a word.

"Pardon him! pardon me!

"In my prison, before February, I promised myself many times to come to see you, if ever I obtained liberty.

"Dreams of youth! * * * That day cast me like a blade of broken straw into the whirlpool of 1848.

"I could do nothing of all that I had so ardently desired.

"And then—pardon me this, dear citizen—the majesty of your genius has always prevented the manifestation of my thought.

"I was proud in my hour of danger to see that I was shielded by a ray of your flame. I could not die since you defended me.

"Would that I had the power to show that I was worthy that your arm should be extended over me! But each has his destiny; and all whom Achilles saved were not heroes.

"Old now, I have been for a year past in a sad state of health. I have often thought that my heart or my head must burst. But I congratulate myself, in spite of my sufferings, for having been preserved, since, under the spur of your new boon, I find the courage to thank you for the old.

"And since I have commenced, thanks also, a thousand thanks in the name of our holy cause, and of France, for the great book you have written.

"I say France, for it seems to me that that dear country of Joan of Arc and of the Revolution was alone capable of giving birth to your heart and your genius. Happy son, you have placed upon the glorious brow of your mother a new crown of glory!

"Yours with profound affection,

"A. Barbès.

"The Hague, July 10, 1862."

"Hauteville House, July 15, 1862.

"My brother in exile:—

"When a man has, like you, been the soldier and the martyr of progress, when he has, for the sacred cause of democracy and humanity, sacrificed his fortune, his youth, his right to happiness, his liberty, when he has, to serve the ideal, accepted every form of struggle and every form of ordeal, calumny, persecution, defection, long years of prison, long years of exile, when he has suffered himself to be led by his devotion even beneath the axe of the scaffold, when a man has done this, all are indebted to him and he owes nothing to anybody whomsoever. He who has given all to the human race is under no obligations to the individual.

"It is not possible for you to be an ingrate towards any one. Had I not done twenty-three years ago what you thank me for, I myself, as I now see distinctly, would have been an ingrate towards you.

"All that you have done for the people I feel is a personal service to myself.

"I fulfilled, at the period which you recall to me, a duty, a strict duty. If I was so fortunate as to pay you then a little of that universal debt, that minute is nothing compared with your whole life, and we all remain none the less your debtors.

"My recompense, even admitting that I merit a recompense, was the action itself. I accept, nevertheless, with tenderness, the noble words which you send me, and I am deeply touched at your magnanimous acknowledgment.

"I respond to you in the spirit of your letter. It is a beautiful thing, this ray which comes from your solitude to mine. May we meet ere

long, upon this earth or elsewhere. I salute your great soul.

"V. H."

M. Victor Hugo, in his capacity of Peer of France, was called upon to pronounce sentence in two capital cases. He tried, in 1846, Joseph Henry, and, in 1847, Lecomte, who had both fired upon the King. He voted for the temporary imprisonment of Joseph Henry, who was condemned to hard labor for life, and for the perpetual imprisonment of Lecomte, who was condemned to death and executed.

In 1848 the question of the death penalty was suddenly presented to the Constituent Assembly. M. Victor Hugo immediately ascended the tribune and energetically opposed it.

In March, 1849, the counsel of Daix, one of the victims of the Bréa affair, came to Victor Hugo and asked him to intercede for his client, who was to be executed. M. Victor Hugo applied to the President of the Republic, who did not grant the pardon.

In 1851 the eldest son of M. Victor Hugo was arraigned in the Court of Assizes for having protested, in the journal *L'Evénement*, against an execution which was accomplished with horrible details. M. Victor Hugo obtained from the President of the Assizes permission to defend him. M. Charles Hugo was sentenced to six months' imprisonment.

In 1854, M. Victor Hugo, then living in Jersey, wrote a letter to the inhabitants of Guernsey in behalf of a man condemned to be hung. The people of Guernsey petitioned for the pardon of the condemned; but it was refused them, and the execution of Tapner caused M. Victor Hugo to write another letter to Lord Palmerston.

Three years ago, M. Victor Hugo endeavored to save John Brown. On the 2d of December, 1859, he published this:

"A WORD UPON JOHN BROWN.

"When we think of the United States of America, a majestic form arises before the imagination, Washington.

"Now, in that country of Washington behold what is taking place at this moment.

"There are slaves in the States of the South, which, as the most monstrous of contradictions, outrages the pure and logical conscience of the States of the North. These slaves, these negroes, a white man, a free man, John Brown, desired to free. Certainly if insurrection is a sacred duty, it is against slavery. John Brown desired to commence the work of salvation by the deliverance of the slaves of Virginia. A Puritan, religious, austere, full of the Gospel, *Christus nos liberavit*, he threw out to these men, to these brothers, the cry of liberty. The slaves, enervated by servitude, answered not to the appeal. Slavery produces the deafness of the soul. John Brown abandoned, fought alone; with a handful of heroic men he struggled; he was riddled with balls; his two young sons, holy martyrs, fell dead by his side; he was taken. This is what is called the affair of Harper's Ferry.

"John Brown taken was tried with four of his men, Stephens, Copp, Green, and Copland.

"What was this trial? Let us tell it in two words:

"John Brown, on a stretcher, with six wounds, scarcely closed, one shot in his arm, one in his back, two in his chest, two in his head; hearing with difficulty; the blood dripping through his mattress; the shades of his two dead sons near him; his four fellow prisoners, wounded, dragging themselves along by his side, Stephens with four sabre cuts; 'justice' eager and hurrying on; an attorney Hunter who wishes to be quick; a Judge Parker who consents to this; the pleadings cut short, almost all delay refused; forced or mutilated documents produced; witnesses for the

prisoner driven away; the defence trammelled; two guns loaded with canister in the yard of the tribunal; orders to the jailers to shoot the accused if there is an attempt to rescue them; forty minutes for deliberation; three men sentenced to death. I affirm upon my honor that that did not come to pass in Turkey, but in America.

"These things are not done with impunity in the face of the civilized world. The universal conscience is an open eye. Let the judges of Charlestown, let Hunter and Parker, let the slaveholding jury, let the whole people of Virginia remember it; they are seen. There is Some One.

"The gaze of Europe is fastened at this moment upon America.

"John Brown, condemned, was to be hung on the 2d of December (this very day).

"The news comes on the instant. A reprieve has been granted him. He dies on the 16th.

"The interval is short. Has a cry of pity hence time to make itself heard there?

"It matters not, our duty is to raise our voice.

"A second reprieve will perhaps follow the first. America is a noble land. The sentiment of humanity is easily awakened in a free country. Let us hope that John Brown will be saved.

"Should it be otherwise, should John Brown die the 16th of December, upon the scaffold, what a terrible thing!

"The executioner of Brown, we declare it aloud (for kings are passing away, and the peoples are coming, and we owe the truth to the peoples), the executioner of Brown will be neither Attorney Hunter, nor Judge Parker, nor Governor Wise, nor the little State of Virginia; it will be, we tremble to think and to speak it, the great American Republic entire.

"Before such a catastrophe, the more we love that Republic, the more we venerate it, the more we admire it, the more we feel oppressed at heart. A single State cannot have the power to dishonor all the rest, and here federal intervention is an evident right. Otherwise, when a crime is being committed which may be prevented, the Union becomes complicity. Whatever may be the indignation of the generous States of the North, the States of the South force them to participation in the opprobrium of such a murder; we all, whosoever we may be, who have for our common country the democratic symbol, feel ourselves stricken, and to some extent compromised. Should the scaffold be erected on the 16th of December, henceforth, before incorruptible history, the august Federation of the New World would add to all its holy solidarities a bloody solidarity; and the radiant fasces of that splendid Republic would have for its bond the running noose of the gibbet of John Brown.

"This bond kills.

"When we reflect upon what Brown, this liberator, this soldier of Christ, attempted, and when we think that he is about to die, and that he dies slaughtered by the American Republic, the crime assumes the proportions of the nation which commits it; and when we reflect that this nation is a glory of the human race, that like France, like England, like Germany, it is one of the organs of civilization; that often she even surpasses Europe in certain sublime audacities of progress; that she is the apex of a world; that she bears upon her brow the vast light of liberty, we affirm that John Brown will not die, for we recoil terrified before the idea of so great a crime committed by so great a people!

"From the political point of view the murder of John Brown would be an irreparable blunder. It would be a latent fissure in the Union which would end in severing it. It is possible that the execution of Brown might consolidate slavery in Virginia, but it is certain that it would

shatter the whole American democracy. You save your shame, but you destroy your glory.

"From the moral point of view, it seems as though a portion of the light of man would be eclipsed, that the notion even of justice and injustice would be obscured upon the day when men should see the consummation of the assassination of deliverance through liberty.

"As for me, who am but an atom, but who, like all men, have in me all the human conscience, I kneel with tears before the great starry flag of the new world, and I supplicate with clasped hands, and with profound and filial respect, that illustrious American Republic, sister of the French Republic, to think of the safety of the universal moral law, to save John Brown, to cast down the threatening scaffold of the 16th December, and not to permit that under its eyes, and I add with a shudder, almost by its fault, the first fratricide should be surpassed.

"Yes, let America know it and look to it, there is something more frightful than Cain killing Abel; it is Washington killing Spartacus."

Last year a Belgian jury having condemned nine persons to death for a single crime, some one, doubtless astonished that the continual enemy of the death penalty did not speak, did so in his name, and the Belgian journals published a poem asking of the King the pardon of the nine victims. This elicited from M. Victor Hugo a letter to the *Indépendance Belge*, in which he thanked the author of the poem, approved the use or even the abuse of his name in such a cause, and says of the death penalty "America is fighting because of it and for it. The scaffold is the friend of slavery. The shadow of a gallows is projected over the fratricidal war of the United States." The letter concludes with this phrase :—

"* * * * to thrust for ever into the realms of darkness this monstrous penalty of death, the glory of which it is to have raised upon the earth two crucifixes, that of Jesus Christ in the old world, and that of John Brown in the new."

Two of the prisoners were executed, and the sentence of the other seven was commuted to hard labor for life.

At the close of 1862, the people of Geneva revised their Constitution. The principal question to be decided by the Convention was the abolition of the death penalty. A member of the Church of Geneva, M. Aug. Bost, author of a number of remarkable works, wrote to M. Victor Hugo to ask his influence in the debate.

M. Victor Hugo immediately responded in a long letter which did not arrive until the work of the Convention was over, the death penalty being retained. M. Victor Hugo did not give up, and, not being able to speak to the committee, he spoke to the people. He wrote again.

Two weeks afterwards the proposed Constitution was rejected by the people.

LIV.

A READING.

M. Victor Hugo had two dramatic subjects in his mind. He hesitated whether he should write *Marion de Lorme* or *Hernani* first. He decided in favor of *Marion de Lorme*, and began to write on the first of June, 1829. On the 20th of June, at daybreak, he commenced the fourth act, worked with great spirit, sat up all night, and when day reappeared had written the last line. The whole act was composed between two sunrises. On the 24th of June the piece was finished. The friends to whom M. Victor Hugo read it as he wrote, advised him to give it a more public reading. Already, in the case of *Cromwell*, he had enlarged his circle of auditors a little. M. Victor Hugo hesitated to enlarge it

further; but, when it became known that there would perhaps be a reading, he was assailed with solicitations and entreaties which did not leave him the liberty of refusal.

So he read, one evening in July, *Marion de Lorme*, then called *Un duel sous Richelieu*, before a numerous company in which were MM. de Balzac, Eugène Delacroix, Alfred de Musset, Alexander Dumas, Alfred de Vigny, Sainte-Beuve, Villemain, Mérimée, Armand and Édouard Bertin, Louis Boulanger, Taylor, Soumet, Émile and Antony Deschamps, the Devérias, Madame Tastu, etc. The success was very great. One of the things which astonished the audience was, that M. Victor Hugo had written a drama which could be played. The great length of *Cromwell* had caused it to be feared that he could not bend his mind to the exigencies of representation. *Marion de Lorme* dispelled that fear, and made him decidedly a dramatic author.

Felicitations being exhausted, the auditors departed. M. Mérimée, who remained, made an objection to the denouement; Didier then died without pardoning Marion. It seemed to him that this implacable death would leave the public under too severe and cruel an impression; Didier would be more sympathetic if at the last moment his sternness should give way.

The next day, at nine o'clock in the morning, M. Taylor was in the Rue Notre-Dame-des-Champs.

"I could not speak to you yesterday, in that crowd," said he, to M. Victor Hugo, "but it is understood, of course, that you will give me *Marion de Lorme* for the Théâtre Français. I am the first who asked a piece of you, so to me your first piece belongs. Besides, *Marion de Lorme* can only be Mademoiselle Mars. Is it agreed?"

"Agreed," said M. Victor Hugo.

That evening M. Victor Hugo received a letter from M. Jouslin de Lasalle, director of the Porte-Saint-Martin, offering him his theatre, M. Frédérick Lemaître for Didier, Madame Dorval for Marion, MM. Gobert, Lockroy, Provost, Jemma, etc., for the other rôles.

The next morning, the servant introduced into the author's study a gentleman in black coat and white pantaloons, wearing a decoration, whose pallid countenance made his large spiritual eyes and his enormous whiskers very conspicuous. He was the director of the Odéon.

"Sir," said he, "nothing is talked about but a drama, which you read night before last. I am here this morning in order to be the first to ask it of you."

"You are the third," said M. Victor Hugo.

Upon hearing that the drama was promised to the Théâtre Français, the director of the Odeon insisted: The Théâtre Français was not appropriate, he said, to a new and daring genius: the public there was old-fashioned, wedded to routine, averse to every novelty, the public of the Odéon was the youth; the generous and intelligent hands of the students would combat for the literary revolution; it was essential to M. Victor Hugo and to the liberty of the theatre, that he should gain his first battle at the Odéon, the rôle of Marion would be played by Mademoiselle Georges, etc.

M. Victor Hugo replied, that all that was very true, but that he had given his word, and that he should read the next day to the committee.

"They make you read!" cried M. Harel, "I do not ask even to know the name of the piece."

And, seeing the manuscript upon the table, he took a pen and wrote hurriedly on the cover:

"*Received at the Theatre of the Odéon, July 14th*, 1829."

"Yes," said he, "this is the anniversary of the taking of the Bastille. Well, I take my Bastille."

He put the manuscript without more ado under his arm, and was going to carry it off. M. Victor

Hugo had much trouble to get it from him.

The reading had the same success at the Théâtre Français, which it had had at the Rue Notre-Dame-des-Champs.

"It is useless to put it to vote," said M. Taylor, "M. Hugo does not present his piece to us, it is we who ask it of him."

It was then the middle of summer, and there was no haste about rehearsals. M. Taylor began by sending the manuscript to the office of the censor. He was afraid of the fourth act, and had advised the author to tone down some passages; but M. Victor Hugo desired that the act should remain as it was. As the royal commissioner had feared, the report of the censors concluded by an interdiction.

The Minister of the Interior was M. de Martignac. Somewhat a littérateur himself, he had the reputation of being a patron of literature, and it was he, according to rumor, who had determined, despite the censors, that the *Marino Faliero* of M. Casimir Delavigne should be played. M. Victor Hugo went to see him.

M. Martignac had two faces, his face as a man, friendly and courteous, and his face as minister which he made cold and dry. He received M. Victor Hugo with his official face. M. de Martignac was, in respect to the drama, in favor of the ancient division of styles, tragedy on the one hand, and on the other, comedy or vaudeville. He had, in the present century, his Racine, M. Casimir Delavigne, and his Molière, M. Scribe, with whom he had written plays.

M. Victor Hugo was, in his view, an innovator, who was overturning the usages of the drama, and *Marion de Lorme* seemed as dangerous to the littérateur as to the minister. He treated the author from the height of his portfolio and his vaudevilles. The censors had pronounced against the fourth act; he had read the piece and found their report moderate. Not only was an ancestor of the king turned into ridicule, but the king himself. In Louis XIII. a hunter, governed by a priest, all the world would see an allusion to Charles X.

M. Victor Hugo remonstrated. He had made no allusions. In producing Louis XIII. it was Louis XIII. he had intended to produce, and nobody else. He had given no one the right to accuse him of hypocrisy, and it was not in his character to strike a living king over the shoulders of a dead king.

"I believe you," said the minister; "I am convinced that it is not Charles X. whom you have put into your drama, but it is Charles X. whom the world would see in it. We are in serious times; the throne is attacked on all sides; the violence of party redoubles every day; this is not the hour to expose the royal person to the laughs and insults of the public. We know well, since the *Mariage de Figaro*, what a theatrical piece may produce. However, the question is coming up this very day before the council. But I warn you that I shall speak in favor of interdiction, and that, if it depends on me, your drama will not be played."

M. Victor Hugo, hurt by the refusal, and especially by the harshness of the minister, immediately asked an audience of the king. He received next morning word from the Duke d'Aumont, that His Majesty would receive that day at noon, in private audience, "the Baron Victor Hugo." He had never taken his title, and it was the first time it had been given to him.

He was to be at Saint-Cloud at noon. The trouble was that gentlemen were admitted only in court-dress, and he had none. His brother Abel, who was there, went in search of one. At the same time the fourth act was brought from the theatre royally copied upon vellum paper.

As the clock struck twelve M. Victor Hugo was introduced by the usher, into a hall in which there were in waiting fifteen or twenty persons, mostly loaded with gold lace, and a single woman. The men were

standing, etiquette permitting women only to be seated in the palace of the King, even though he were absent. The woman, who was seated, was Madame Du Cayla, whom M. Victor Hugo knew, having seen her at the wedding of his brother Abel. While he was chatting with her, an usher came in to beg her to have patience for a moment: mass was almost over, and the King was about to return from chapel.

Soon after the Duke d'Angoulême appeared, preceded and followed by body-guards, wearing upon his neck the necklace of the Saint-Esprit, upon his breast the crosses of the Legion of Honor and of Saint-Louis, his hat under his arm, and his prayer-book in his hand. He walked heavily, tottered as he went, bowed to the right and left with his head down, and traversed the hall without looking at anybody. A moment afterwards the same usher who had come to speak to Madame Du Cayla, came to call her in. She arose, passed without embarrassment through the masculine throng, and entered the King's presence. M. Victor Hugo thought that before his turn came he would have some time to kill, and went to a window to amuse himself by looking at the landscape. He had not been there ten minutes, when he heard his name called. This quick reception surprised him; he was naturally timid; he was much more embarrassed than Madame Du Cayla by the glances which were fastened upon him, and entered the presence of the King with a flushed countenance.

The affable reception of the King soon restored him. Charles X. said that he knew him by reputation, and he would be very happy to oblige him. M. Victor Hugo explained his business.

"Ah! yes, I know," said the King. 'They spoke to me of it yesterday. It appears," added he smiling, "that you are maltreating a little my poor ancestor Louis XIII. M. de Martignac tells me that there is in your piece one terrible act."

"Perhaps your Majesty will not be of the opinion of your minister, if you will take the trouble to examine it yourself. I have brought the fourth act!"

"The fourth act only!" interrupted the King graciously. "Certainly I will read it, you should have brought me the whole piece!"

A conversation ensued between the King and the poet, which M. Victor Hugo has related in *Les Rayons et les Ombres.* In taking leave of the King, he solicited a prompt decision.

"Rest assured," promised Charles X., "I will make haste. I love your genius very much, Monsieur Hugo. For me there are but two poets, yourself and Désaugiers!"

"The king will not permit himself then to be influenced by M. de Martignac."

"Oh! if it is M. de Martignac who disquiets you. * * *"

The King did not finish. The next morning M. de Martignac was minister no more.

A few days afterwards, M. Victor Hugo received an invitation to call on the new minister of the Interior, M. de la Bourdonnaye. The King had read the act, and regretted that he could not authorize its representation. The government, however, was disposed to do all in its power to reimburse the author. M. Victor Hugo thanked the minister, but accepted nothing.

Next morning he was talking with M. Sainte-Beuve; a letter was handed him bearing the seal of the minister of the Interior. M. de la Bourdonnaye announced to him that the King had given him a new annuity of four thousand francs. The man who brought the letter, asked if there was any answer.

"Yes," said M. Victor Hugo.

He seated himself and wrote a letter, which he handed to M. Sainte-Beuve before sealing it.

"I was sure of it," said M. Sainte-Beuve.

The letter refused the annuity.

M. Sainte-Beuve had no reason to conceal the fact. The journals related it. "The conduct of M. Victor Hugo," said the *Journal des Débats*, "will astonish none who know him; but it is well that the public should know the new claims which the young poet has acquired to its esteem." The *Constitutionnel* exclaimed, "Youth is not so easy to corrupt as MM. the ministers had hoped!"

LV.

HERNANI.

M. VICTOR HUGO was not one of those who are discouraged by a single check. He understood, moreover, that the interdiction of *Marion de Lorme* would help his next drama. The following week he dined at M. Nodier's with the Baron Taylor, who was setting out on a journey.

"When will you return?" asked M. Victor Hugo.

"At the end of the month."

"That gives us a little more than three weeks. Well, convoke the committee for the first of October. I will read something."

On the first of October he read *Hernani*.

The piece, received by acclamation, was distributed immediately. Doña Sol to Mademoiselle Mars, Hernani to M. Firmin, Don Ruy Gomez to M. Joanny, Don Carlos to M. Michelot. The smaller parts were accepted and solicited by actors of great merit.

The first rehearsals were conducted with spirit. M. Michelot, without particular liking for the new literature, was a man of the world, and of prepossessing manners. M. Firmin was sympathetic with the drama. M. Joanny was an old soldier, who had lost two fingers fighting under the orders of General Hugo. He showed the author the mutilated hand, and said, with a certain emphasis natural to him: "My glory will be to have served when young under the father, and when old under the son."

The coolness began with Mademoiselle Mars.

Mademoiselle Mars was then fifty years old. It was natural that she should love the pieces which she had played in her youth, and those which resembled them. She was very hostile to dramatic innovation. She had accepted the part principally in order that it might not be played by another. She carried little impertinences of criticism so far that one day, during rehearsal, M. Victor Hugo requested her to give up her part. It was the first time that she had heard such a request. She grew pale. She would lose prestige. She acknowledged her fault, and promised to do so no more. But she protested by a freezing attitude which chilled the rest. Moreover, an opposition was forming without, which reacted on that within.

The tragic and comic authors could not endure this new comer, who menaced their doctrines and their interests. They worked in advance against this demolisher of a literature which was the good one because it was theirs. They picked up lines and scenes, and caricatured them in the salons. One author was found hidden in the theatre during a rehearsal.

The majority of the journals attacked the piece. The Ministerial journals attacked M. Victor Hugo as a deserter since his *Ode to the Column*, and did not forgive him for refusing the annuity. The literary editors of the papers liberal in politics were the very authors which the drama dispossessed. The *Constitutionnel* especially, which a few weeks before had praised the incorruptibility of the man, was the most violent adversary of the poet.

One theatre even went so far as to burlesque the piece before it was played. In a review of the plays of the year, the Vaudeville held up the scene of the pictures to uproarious

laughter Don Ruy Gomez was an exhibitor of bears.

The manuscript sent to the censorship was authorized by the commission, but retained by the Minister, who returned it after a while, "with the indication of certain changes which had been deemed necessary." These changes injured the principal scenes. The author resisted, and was finally allowed to keep his play, but he had to contest it word by word. I find a letter in which three words are returned to him:

"Monsieur—I am happy to have to announce to you that His Excellency, recognising the justice of your observations, which I hastened to present to him, has consented to the restoration of some passages suppressed in *Hernani*. You are therefore permitted to retain upon the authorized manuscript the following expressions addressed to Don Carlos: *Cowardly, insensate, wicked King.*

"Receive, etc.,

"The Master of Requests, Chief of the Bureau of Theatres.

"TROUVÉ."

M. Victor Hugo resolved also to dispense with the *claque.*

When this was known in the theatre, everybody asked M. Victor Hugo if he was a fool. No piece could succeed without a claque; his was in greater danger than others; if it was not energetically sustained it would not be played through. He replied that, in the first place, salaried applauders were repugnant to him; then, the defenders of the old style would not be very ardent for the new; that neither the claqueurs of M. Delavigne nor those of M. Scribe were his; that to a new order of things a new public was necessary; that his public must resemble his drama; that, desiring a free art, he desired a free pit; that he would invite young men, poets, painters, etc. They were unanimous that he was wrong, and did all they could to change his resolution; but he persisted, and they yielded, leaving the responsibility to him.

Curiosity was excited and the demand for places enormous. Letters came continually to the author asking for boxes and places which could not be obtained otherwise. Among those which have been preserved are notes from Benjamin Constant, Thiers, Lizinka de Mirbel, and M. Merimée on behalf of Madame Recamier.

During the week preceding the representation the journals busied themselves much with the drama, and excited their readers highly, some in favor of it, most against. The ministerial writers endeavored to allay the excitement, the *Quotidienne* declaring: "whatever may be the importance of *Hernani* in the republic of letters, the French monarchy has nothing to fear from it."

All the friends of the author, and all those who desired the triumph of the new art, came to offer their services. MM. Louis Boulanger, Théophile Gautier, then almost a child in age, but already a man in talent, Gérard de Nerval, Vivier, Ernest de Saxe-Cobourg, a natural son of the reigning duke, Achille and Eugène Devéria, Edouard Thierry, came among the first. They brought lists of names which they had recruited, and asked to conduct their several tribes to the combat.

M. Victor Hugo bought several quires of red paper and cut the sheets into little squares upon which he printed with a stamp the Spanish word for *iron:*

Hierro

He distributed these squares to the chiefs of the tribes. The theatre gave him the orchestra seats, the second galleries, and the pit, less about fifty places.

In order to combine their strategic plan, and to secure their order of battle rightly, the young men asked to enter the hall before the public. This was permitted, on the condition that they should enter before the queue was formed. They were given until three o'clock. It would have been well had they been permitted to come up, like the claqueurs, by the little door of the dark passage now suppressed. But the theatre, which apparently did not desire to conceal them, assigned them the door of the Rue de Valois, which was the royal entrance. For fear of being too late, the young battalions came too early. The door was not open, and during a whole hour the innumerable passers of the Rue Richelieu saw a band of wild and curious beings accumulating, bearded, long-haired, dressed in all styles, except the fashionable one, in Spanish cloak, waistcoat *à la Robespierre*, cap *à la Henri III.*, with all ages and all countries upon their shoulders and their heads, in the heart of Paris and in broad daylight. The bourgeois stopped astounded and indignant. M. Théophile Gautier especially insulted all eyes by a scarlet satin waistcoat and heavy hair which fell to his loins.

The door did not open. The tribes hindered circulation, to which they were very indifferent, but one thing almost made them lose their patience. Classic art could not tranquilly see these hordes of barbarians who came to invade her asylum; she gathered all the sweepings and all the ordure of the theatre and threw them upon the heads of the besiegers. M. de Balzac got for his share a cabbage stump. The first impulse was to be angry. It was, perhaps, just what classic art had hoped; the tumult would have brought the police, who would have seized the disturbers, and the disturbers would naturally have received the blame. The young men knew that the least pretext would be a good one and did not give it.

The door opened at three o'clock and closed again. Alone in the house they organized. Their places arranged, they had yet three hours and a half before the drama began, which was at seven. They talked, they sang; but talk and singing were soon exhausted. Fortunately, as they had come too soon to have dined, they had brought Bologna sausages, ham bread, etc. So they dined, the seats serving for tables and their handkerchiefs for plates. As they had nothing else to do they prolonged the meal to such an extent that they were still at table when the public entered. At the sight of that restaurant the occupants of the boxes asked themselves if they were dreaming. At the same time their sense of smell was offended by the garlic of the sausages. That was nothing, however; but among so many men there had necessarily been some who had experienced other necessities than those of the stomach; they had sought some spot in the temple of Molière where they might be able "to expel the superfluity of drink;" the portresses, not having yet arrived, could not open the doors for them; they endeavored to go up on the stage; the door of communication was closed; the curtain was down, and there was no possibility of getting out. Shut up during these hours, many had not been able to hold in and had relieved themselves in the darkest corner of the room. But this dark corner was suddenly lighted up at the hour of admitting the public; imagine the scandal which must have been produced by this humidity, through which silk robes and the satin shoes had to pass.

When M. Victor Hugo arrived at the theatre, he found the employees smiling, and the royal commissioner distracted.

"What is the matter?" asked he

"Your drama is dead, and your friends have killed it."

M. Victor Hugo, informed of the incident, said that it was not the fault of his friends, but of those who had shut them up for four hours. At

least Mademoiselle Mars knew nothing of it; the Baron Taylor had taken care to order that the thing be concealed from her. The author went to his box.

"Ah! well," said she, the first word. "You have pretty friends. You know what they have done!"

The order of M. Taylor had not prevented the enemies of the piece from telling her everything. She was furious.

"I have played before a great many publics," said she, "but I shall owe it to you that I have played before this."

M. Victor Hugo repeated to the actress what he had said to the royal commissioner, and went into the side-scenes. Actors, supernumeraries, machinists, managers, had passed from coldness to hostility. M. Joanny alone came to him, superb in his costume of Don Ruy Gomez, and said:

"Have confidence! for my part, I have never felt in such fine humor."

M. Victor Hugo looked through the hole in the curtain. From top to bottom the house was nothing but silks, jewels, flowers, naked shoulders. In this resplendence two dark masses, in the pit and the second gallery, were shaking their flowing locks.

The bell rang. The author saw the curtain rise with the anguish of heart of one who delivers to the unknown his thought and perhaps his future. The little scene between Don Carlos and Josefa passed without interruption. Then Doña Sol entered. The young men, little versed in theatrical ways, and besides not very enthusiastic for Mademoiselle Mars, neglected to give her the reception to which she was accustomed on her entrance, and her own public, who were vexed with her for playing a drama, did not repair their negligence. M. Firmin, who had no longer Hernani's age, but who was still young in ardor and spirit, gave these lines very finely:

"Insensate greybeard, who with head bowed down,
To end his journey * * * *
Old man, go give your measure to the grave-digger!"

The orchestra, the pit, and the second gallery clapped their hands, but without an echo from the rest of the house. In the second act, at the dialogue between Don Carlos and Hernani, some boxes joined in the applause. At each scene which passed without opposition the actors and the people of the theatre relaxed the rigidity of their attitude; after the second act, they smiled on the author, and some admired the piece in good faith.

But the real danger was not passed; the redoubtable passage was the picture scene, designated in advance for laughter by the Vaudeville's parody. The third act commenced well. The lines of Don Ruy Gomez to Doña Sol:

"When passes a young herdsboy," etc.,

given by M. Joanny with a melancholy pride, touched the women, and there were some who applauded. M. Ernest de Saxe-Cobourg cried: *Vivent les femmes.* M. Joanny had a sort of haughty awkwardness and noble familiarity which were marvellously in keeping with his character in the play. He accosted the line of portraits grandly, and was followed by the public attentively to the sixth; but there they resisted a further advance, and began to murmur. At the end of two more they hissed. The line: *Some I omit, and better!* saved all. The last portrait was hailed with acclamations, which redoubled when Don Ruy prefers to surrender his own life and that of his affianced rather than his guest's, whom he knows to be his rival. From that time there was no one in the side scenes who had ever had any doubt of the piece. The success was decided by the monologue of Charles Quint in the fourth act; that immense monologue, interrupted almost at every line by bravos, ended in an explosion of interminable applause.

The applause was still continuing

when word came to the author that some one asked to see him. He went and saw a little man with a round belly and an open countenance.

"My name is Mame," said the little man; "I am the partner of M. Baudoin, the publisher. But we cannot talk well here. Will you come outside a minute?"

When they were in the street:

"Now," said he, "we are in the house, M. Baudoin and I, and we want to publish *Hernani*. Will you sell it to us?"

"How much?"

"Six thousand francs."

"We will talk about it after the representation is over."

"Pardon me," insisted the bookseller, "but I am anxious to conclude it immediately!"

"Why? You do not know what you are buying. The success may diminish!"

"Yes, but it may increase. At the second act, I thought I would offer you two thousand francs; at the third, four thousand; I offer you six thousand at the fourth; after the fifth, I am afraid I should offer you ten thousand!"

"Very well," said M. Victor Hugo, laughing, "since you are so much afraid of my drama, I will give it to you. Come to my house to-morrow morning, and we will sign!"

"If it is all the same to you, I would much prefer to sign immediately. I have the six thousand francs with me!"

"I am willing, but how can we do it? We are in the street!"

"Here is a tobacco shop!"

The bookseller entered it with the author, bought a sheet of stamped paper, asked for pen and ink; and the agreement was written and signed upon the counter, M. Victor Hugo receiving the money, which was not useless to him, for he had not more than fifty francs at home.

He returned immediately to the theatre, and saw by the universal respect, that the success had not diminished. The fourth act was finished. MM. Michelot, Joanny, Firmin, were radiant. Their three parts had shared the success; Doña Sol, during the first four acts, occupies but a secondary place. M. Victor Hugo deemed it necessary to go and see Mademoiselle Mars.

He found her dry and petulant. At first she pretended not to see him. She went on scolding her dresser. "What ails you to-day? I shall never be ready. Look now, my powder; it is an hour that I have been asking for it, and my box too is always full! One does not know where she is among all these visitors. * * *" "Ah there you are, Monsieur Hugo."

And, while covering her breast with powder:

"Do you know, this is going very well, this piece of yours—at least for you and for these gentlemen."

"We have just come to your act, Madame."

"Yes, I begin when the piece ends. Say now, I shall not have wearied your fine friends very much. Do you know that it is the first time that I have not been applauded on my entrance?"

"But how you will be on your recall!"

"After all," said she, assuming the look of a resigned victim, "when I accepted such a part, I ought to have expected such a success."

When she appeared in her white satin robe, a crown of white roses on her brow, with her splendid teeth her form which seemed that of a girl of eighteen, she produced the effect of youth and beauty. The decoration was charming; the terrace on which the masks were talking, the illuminated palace, the gardens with gleams of fountains, the movement of the festival, the music of the dances, then the silence, and the young husband and bride remaining alone, all had disposed the audience favorably, and when she recited these lines to which her musical voice was so well adapted:

"Even now the moon above the horizon climbs,
While yet thou speakest; and her tremulous shine
Goes with thy voice into this heart of mine;
Joyous and calm, O my dear love, am I,
And in this moment I could gladly die,"

she had no occasion to envy "these gentlemen."

The whole of the fifth act justified the precipitation of bookseller Mame. When M. Joanny took off the mask under which Don Ruy Gomez had been present at the wedding, the spectral face which appeared produced an impression of terror. He had during the whole scene a sepulchral rigidity which made one's blood run cold. Mademoiselle Mars disputed with him the life of *Hernani* with an energy of which no one would have believed Célimène capable. She was really violent when threatening Don Ruy:

"Better for you to rob the tiger's lair,
Than him I love out of my arms to tear. * * *
See you this dirk? Ah greybeard slow to feel,
When eyes have threatened fear you not the steel?
Beware, Don Ruy! I too am of the race,
My uncle!"

The denoûment was an intoxication; there was a shower of bouquets at the feet of Mademoiselle Mars; the name of the author was received with acclamation, even by the boxes; five or six only were mute; not one protested.

M. Victor Hugo went to pay the great actress the compliments which she deserved. Her box was thronged, but this time she did not complain of the throng. She was radiant. Her part was superb, the drama was a masterpiece.

"Well," said she, "you do not embrace your Doña Sol?"

And Doña Sol offered to the author the cheek of Mademoiselle Mars.

M. Victor Hugo was awaited at the door of the theatre by a troop of friends who would see him home. On arriving at his house, he found his drawing-room filled. The Rue Notre-Dame-des-Champs was astonished to find itself so noisy at one o'clock in the morning. M. Achille Devéria said that he could not sleep on such a night, and went home to make a sketch of the last scene.

Next morning, on awakening, M. Victor Hugo received this letter:

"I have seen, Monsieur, the first representation of *Hernani*. You know my admiration for you. My vanity attaches itself to your lyre, you know wherefore. I am setting, monsieur, and you are rising. I commend myself to the remembrance of your muse. A pious glory should pray for the dead.

"CHATEAUBRIAND.

"Feb. 29th, 1830."

The first representation took place on Saturday. On Monday, the day of the second, the criticisms appeared. Except that of the *Journal des Débats*, they were all hostile. They attacked the drama and its audience. The author had brought spectators worthy of his piece, a species of banditti, uncivilized and ragged, gathered in, one knows not from what holes, who had made of a respectable theatre a nauseous cavern; they had given themselves up there to an orgie, which had had unclean consequences; they had sung, the liberal journals said, obscene songs, the royalist journals said, impious songs. The temple had been profaned for ever, and Melpomene was in a pitiful condition.

The royal commissioner hurried to the author's house. He was very anxious. Evidently this unanimity of the journals would resuscitate the spirit of unfriendliness subdued on the night of the play, and there would be a battle that evening. Since M. Victor Hugo would not have the claque he must bring his friends again to defend the second representation as they had the first. There was no need to go after them; the chiefs of the tribes had no sooner read the criticisms than they came of their own accord; they comprehended that the struggle was not over, and that the evening was likely to be a rough one; they were delighted at the prospect; they thought that they had succeeded too easily the first day, and they would have been only half satisfied to conquer without a combat.

The Rue de Valois was filled at noon with loungers hoping to see the strange bands promised in the papers. But the theatre no longer required that the young men should enter by the royal gate, and be imprisoned for four hours. They entered, a little before the opening of the office, by the little door of the passage. They sang no songs, and had no sausages with garlic, or other eatables. There was only the eccentricity of costume, which, however, sufficed amply for the horripilation of the boxes.

At the moment of the rising of the curtain there occurred an incident which has been repeated on the production of every one of M. Victor Hugo's plays. A shower of little white papers fell from above upon the first boxes, the balcony, and the orchestra. These little papers stuck to clothes, fastened upon noses, clung to feminine ringlets, and slipped into boddices. The whole house began to shake itself and to pick. It was a new grievance against *Hernani*. Who was the author of this act? Was it an ultra hater of the bourgeois, who irritated them, in the first place for the sake of irritating them, and next to invite them to combat, as the picador excites the bull? The question has never been solved.

From the first words it was felt that a storm was brewing. It burst forth in the first act. The line:

"We three have come! That's two too many, Madame."

was received with a shout of laughter from the whole of the first gallery and the orchestra stalls. The laughter redoubled at every opportunity.

It may well be imagined that the laughter was valiantly answered by the young men; sneers and applause encountered, and the battle began. In the second act, at the passage,

"What time is it?"
"Midnight."

this king who asked the time, and who, asking it, said: "What time is it?" and who said this in verse, and to whom the response was made, still in verse, that it was midnight, when it would have been so easy to reply:

"My lord, from the high tower,
The sounding bronze peals forth the midnight hour,"

all this, of course, appeared intolerable, and the laughter became a hoot. The young men were a little angry, and imposed silence with such resolution that the scene between Hernani and the king was heard without trouble, and had still greater success than at the first representation. M. Joanny, very firm before the opposition, saved the portrait scene by his bold manner.

On the other hand, the monologue de Charles-Quint, so much applauded on Saturday, was covered with mockings.

The masked fête and the dancing airs of the fifth act pleased the audience for a moment, but, when Doña Sol, after having endeavored to escape the music, desires to hear a song at night, and when Hernani said to her:

* * * * * "Capricious!"

the word seemed very droll, and the jeers recommenced, to cease no more.

The morning journals recounted the jeers, and forgot to add that they had been overwhelmed by applause; justice had been done to that scandalous drama; they should have nothing more of it; thank God! Moreover, it had not even excited curiosity; at the second representation the house was half empty, etc.

There were, in fact, empty places, especially two front boxes, which astonished the throng crowded together everywhere else, and the author still more, who knew that all the boxes were let. He desired to know who they were who paid not to come, and discovered that it was the brother and the attorney of an author of the theatre then very celebrated.

The third representation was yet more troubled than the second. But the opposition contented itself with sneers, only it sneered oftener. The author had still his friends, who made

to each hoot a vigorous and enthusiastic reply.

But, after three representations, M. Victor Hugo returned to the custom of authors, and had but few places to give. The actors called for the claque again, which would hardly be very cordial towards a piece which had expelled it. The royal commissioner, still devoted to the new art, took it upon himself to give the author a hundred places at each representation.

One hundred places against fifteen hundred was the odds at which they had henceforth to maintain the battle. The unfriendly journals said that now *the real public* would be able at last to get into the theatre, and avenge outraged art.

Then began, in fact, the serious struggle. Each representation became a frightful uproar. The boxes sneered, the stalls hissed; it was the fashion in the salons to go and "laugh at *Hernani*."

The hundred, lost in the mass, did not yield; their youth and their conviction excited them to rage in that hurricane. They stood out against the multitude, defended the scenes line by line, abandoned no hemistich; they stamped, they roared, they insulted the hissers. M. Ernest de Saxe-Cobourg knew neither age nor sex. A young woman laughed loudly during the scene of the portraits:

"Madame," said he, "you ought not to laugh; you show your teeth."

Old men, with bald and venerable heads, hissed in the orchestra. He cried:

"To the guillotine, old knees!"

The author did not meet in the side scenes the respectful salutations liberally lavished on the first evening upon the triumphant author. M. Joanny himself changed. Mademoiselle Mars alone was brave to the last. She teased the author in conversation, but she represented him before the public.

What maintained the drama, in spite of the vehemence of its enemies, and the discouragement of the actors, was the figure of the receipts. People came to hiss; but they came.

The attack had its caprices. It seized upon one passage to-day, another to-morrow. A scene overwhelmed one evening would be heard quietly the next. On the contrary, a scene hitherto believed to be satisfactory would be cut to pieces by interruptions. During an interlude of the thirtieth representation the author and Mademoiselle Mars, extraordinarily gracious, were amusing themselves in searching for lines which had not been hissed. They could find none.

"There is the whole of my part," said Madame Thénard, who was present.

She had a line and a quarter in the fifth act.

"Your line has not been hissed," said the author. "Well, it will be."

It was that night.

M. Victor Hugo received threatening letters; one of them ended with this phrase: "If you do not withdraw your filthy piece in twenty-four hours, we will see that you never taste bread again."

Two young men who were present when he received that letter took it seriously. They could not be prevented from waiting, after every representation, at the door of the theatre, for M. Victor Hugo, and conducting him to the Rue Notre-Dame-des-Champs, which was no small inconvenience, for they lived on the Boulevard Montmartre. They did this until the last representation.

In the meantime the political as well as the literary world was agitated. *Hernani* divided public attention with the address of the 221. An editor of the *Courrier Français*, a friend of M. Victor Hugo, in spite of his journal, said to him:

"There are two men well hated in France, M. de Polignac and you."

The quarrel extended to the departments. At Toulouse, a young man named Batlam fought a duel for *Hernani*, and was killed. At Vannes, a corporal of dragoons died, leaving

this will: "I desire that there be put upon my tomb-stone, '*Here lies one who believed in Victor Hugo.*'"

The absence of Mademoiselle Mars interrupted the piece at its forty-fifth representation.

At a revival, eight years afterwards, at which there were only plaudits, two spectators were talking while descending the stairs, after the play.

"It is not astonishing that there are no hisses now!" said one, who had doubtless been a hisser at the first representation. "He has changed all the lines."

"You deceive yourself," answered the other. "It is not the drama which has changed, but the public."

LVI.

NOTRE-DAME DE PARIS.

A FORTNIGHT before the close of the representations, the woman of whom M. Victor Hugo rented his apartments, who herself occupied the ground floor, came to Madame Hugo with a distressed look:

"My dear lady," said she, "you are very pleasant, and your husband is a good fellow, but you are not quiet enough for me. I have retired from trade to live peaceably. I bought this house on purpose in a street where there was no noise, and for three months there has been, on your account, a procession with no end day nor night, an uproar on the stairs and earthquakes over my head. At one o'clock in the morning I am started out of my bed, thinking that the ceiling must fall on me. We cannot live together any longer."

"That is, you give us notice to leave?"

"I am terribly sorry for it. I shall miss you a great deal. You are a nice little family, and you love your children dearly. But then you don't sleep yourself! How I pity you, my poor lady! Your husband has taken a very bad trade!"

Hernani having had the singular success of turning M. Victor Hugo out of his house, the family crossed the Seine, and went to the Rue Jean-Goujon. There a new trouble awaited them.

Among this multitude which the landlady had not been able to endure had been, on the morning after the representation, bookseller Gosselin, who came to buy the manuscript. He did not find M. Victor Hugo, who had gone to the theatre. Madame Hugo, who knew him but slightly, had not remarked him in the throng, and had not spoken to him. Some one having asked who would publish the drama, she had related the sudden sale of the previous evening. M. Gosselin went out immediately, doubly furious, and wrote to M. Victor Hugo that he had the right to sell his plays to whomsoever he liked, but that Madame Hugo had no right to receive a man shabbily who was a juror and an elector.

He had his revenge in his own hands. At the same time with the *Dernier Jour d'un condamné*, M. Victor Hugo had sold him a romance, to which he had already given thought, and which was to be called *Notre-Dame de Paris.* He had engaged to deliver it in April, 1829. Absorbed in his drama, he had thought of nothing else, and that date had passed more than a year, while he had not written the first line. The bookseller, who had not pressed him until now, suddenly demanded the immediate fulfilment of the agreement.

Impossible to deliver a romance which was not commenced; the bookseller claimed damages. It required the intervention of M. Bertin to arrange the matter. The author had five months to write *Notre Dame de Paris;* if it was not ready by the first of December, he was to pay a thousand francs for each week's delay.

He must, therefore, set about *Notre-Dame de Paris*, while yet agitated by the feverish battles of *Hernani*, and in the disorder of a compulsory removal.

He first installed himself. One day, while he was hanging in his study a bookcase composed of four boards supported by cords, the Prince de Craon brought to him a fair-haired young man with an agreeable countenance, of which at first only the sweetness was perceptible, afterwards only the acuteness. This young man had seen *Hernani*, and wished to congratulate the author. He was charmed to see the theatre enfranchised. He desired liberty everywhere. His name was M. de Montalembert.

When M. Victor Hugo was settled he began to work. He commenced writing on the morning of the 27th of July. The next morning the Champs Elysées were a bivouac. They were not at that time the fashionable resort, and built up as at present. The houses were far apart, situated in vast grounds used for vegetable gardens. The inhabitants were far from everything, and had great difficulty in obtaining provisions through the troops. They were prisoners in their own houses; neither letters nor papers; they knew nothing. They heard the rumbling of artillery wagons upon the quai, the noise of musketry, and the sound of the tocsin. A passing engagement took place so near that the balls whistled through their garden.

They were blockaded on all sides and without news. The only way to get any was to go after it. M. Victor Hugo went out with M. de Mortemart-Boiste, who also lived in the house. Entering the avenue of the Champs Elysées, they found a battery, and passed only after parley. The military display was formidable. The soldiers, in constructing the redoubts, cut down the trees to make chevaux-de-frise.

Near Marigny Square, a boy of fourteen or fifteen tied to a tree, was very pale. M. de Mortemart asked wherefore he was tied.

"So that he shan't escape before being shot!" said a soldier.

"Shot!" said M. Victor Hugo. "It is a child."

"It's a child who has killed a man. He has brought down our Captain, but he shall dance for it."

At this moment, a picket of cavalry approached from the barrière de l'Etoile. M. Victor Hugo recognised General Girardin, and went up to him.

"What the devil are you doing here?" said the General.

"I lodge here."

"Ah! well. I advise you to dislodge. I have come from Saint Cloud, and they are going to fire hot shot."

M. Victor Hugo showed the young boy to the general, who had him untied and taken to the nearest station.

The next morning, the Revolution was master, and the Champs-Elysées were again free.

These great commotions of events found deep echo in men's minds. M. Victor Hugo, who had just finished his insurrection and his barricades at the theatre, comprehended that all things progressed together, and that to be consistent, he must accept in politics what he desired in literature. He began to write without order and as they came to him, the ideas which these occurrences inspired each day. He published afterwards, in *Littérature et Philosophie mêlees*, this "journal of a revolutionist of 1830."

One afternoon in September, M. de Lamennais came to see M. Victor Hugo, whom he found writing.

"You are at work, and I disturb you."

"I am at work, but you do not disturb me."

"What is it that you are writing?"

"Something which will not please you."

"Tell me nevertheless."

M. Victor Hugo handed him a sheet on which M. de Lamennais read this:

"The Republic which is not yet ripe, but which will embrace Europe in a century, is society the sovereign of society; protecting itself, national

guard; judging itself, jury; administering itself, municipality; governing itself, electoral college.

"The four members of monarchy, the army, the magistracy, the administration, and the peerage, are to this Republic but four inconvenient excrescences which are atrophied and moribund."

"That is it," said M. de Lamennais. "I was very sure that a man like you would not remain a royalist. There is only one word too much; '*the Republic is not ripe*;' you put it in the future; I put it in the present!"

M. de Lamennais, believing no longer in absolutism, did not now acknowledge monarchy. His whole character rejected middle terms and delays. M. Victor Hugo, while seeing in the republic the definitive form of society, believed it possible only after preparation; he desired that universal suffrage should be reached by universal education; the limited monarchy of Louis-Philippe seemed to him a useful transition.

Notre-Dame de Paris had been very much hindered by this political eruption; the more so as, in removing his manuscripts for safety, the author had lost one of his note-books containing materials indispensable for work. On this account the time allowed him by the bookseller was extended to the 1st of February, 1831, giving him five months and a half to complete his work.

He could now hope for no further delay; he must be punctual to the hour. He bought a bottle of ink and a coarse knit garment of grey woollen which enveloped him from neck to toe, put his coats under key so that he should have no temptation to go out, and entered into his romance as into a prison. He was very melancholy.

From that time he left his desk only to eat and sleep. His only recreation was an hour of conversation after dinner with some friends who came to see him, and to whom he read at times the pages which he had written during the day. He read the chapter entitled *Les Cloches* to M. Pierre Leroux, who thought that sort of literature entirely superfluous.

After the first chapters he became more cheerful; his creation took possession of him; he felt neither fatigue, nor the cold of winter, which had come; in December he worked with open windows.

He left his bear-skin but once. On the morning of the 20th of December, the Prince de Craon came and offered to take him to the trial of the Ministers of Charles X. He went, was present at the trial, and saw the tumult which assailed it.

The session was suspended. The Prince de Craon and M. Victor Hugo went out to see. The National Guard, crowded back against the palace, defended it with great difficulty. The multitude crushed against the walls, mounted on the posts, clung to the windows. Hatred was upon all faces, anger in all voices. Accused, judges, national guards, all were insulted. General Lafayette, accompanied by M. Ferdinand de Lasteyrie, endeavored to address the malcontents, but the people had had enough of harangues, and of Lafayette. Some gamins seized the General by the legs, raised him into the air, and passed him from hand to hand, crying with an indescribable twang: *Here's General Lafayette! who wants him?* A detachment of the line cleared a path and rescued him. The way being opened, M. Victor Hugo and the Prince approached the General, who took their arm.

"I no longer recognise my people of Paris," said he, without suspecting that perhaps it was the people of Paris who no longer recognised their Lafayette. He added: "The people have their excuse, but these royalists!"

And pointing to a balcony in the style of Louis XV. in the Rue de Tournon:

"I sent a request to M. * * * to let me use his balcony to speak to the people. He replied that his door never should open to General La-

fayette. Out of spite against the Revolution, they would let their friends' throats be cut."

M. Victor Hugo was going back to the chamber, but the session was not continued. He returned to the Rue Jean-Goujon, and again plunged into his net and his work.

During the night of the 7th of January, a brilliant light made him suddenly look towards his window, which was always open: it was an aurora borealis.

On the 14th of January, the book was finished. The bottle of ink which he had bought on the first day was also finished; he had come at the same time to the last line and the last drop; this led him for a moment to think of changing the title of his romance to: "*What there is in a bottle of ink.*" Some years afterwards he related this before Alphonse Karr, who thought the title charming, and asked him for it as he had done nothing with it. M. Alphonse Karr published under that collective name several romances, among others that master-piece of spirit and emotion, *Geneviève.*

While he was at work on *Notre-Dame de Paris* M. Victor Hugo, of whom M. Gosselin asked some information concerning the book in order to announce it, wrote to him:

"* * * It is a picture of Paris in the fifteenth century, and of the fifteenth century as related to Paris. Louis XI. figures in one chapter. It is he who determines the denoument. The book has no historical pretensions, except, perhaps, to paint with some science and some conscience, but only by glimpses and snatches, the state of customs, beliefs, laws, arts, of the civilisation, in short, of the fifteenth century. But that is only subordinate in the book. If it has any merit it is as a work of imagination, whim, and fancy."

After the completion of *Notre-Dame de Paris* M. Victor Hugo felt idle and melancholy; he had become accustomed to live with his characters, and he experienced on separating from them the grief which he would have felt at the departure of old friends. It was as hard for him to take leave of his book as it had been to begin it.

M. Gosselin gave the manuscript to his wife to read, an agreeable, well-read person, who translated Walter Scott's novels. She found mortal ennui in the book, and her husband had no hesitation about saying that he had got a bad bargain, and that would be a lesson to him not to buy books without reading them.

The romance appeared on the 13th of February, the day of the sack of the archbishop's palace. The author, a witness of the popular violence, saw the books of the library cast into the water, among them one which had served him for his romance. That book, called the "black book," because it was bound in black shagreen, and which was a unique copy, contained the charter of the cloister of Notre-Dame.

The majority of the journals were hostile, as usual. M. Alfred de Musset, in *Le Temps*, stated without regret that the book had had the misfortune to be published on an émeute day, and that it had been drowned with the archbishop's library. One of the most friendly journals was *L'Avenir*, edited by MM. de Lamennais, de Montalembert, and Lacordaire, which gave three articles.

I find this note:

"My dear Hugo, I send you a man with strong loins and broad shoulders; load him without fear. He will bring me *Notre-Dame de Paris*, which I am impatient to know, because all the world is talking to me about it, and because it is your work.

"I warn you, however, that, an enemy of the descriptive style, I know in advance there is one part of the romance of which I shall be a very poor judge. But I am disposed to be towards the rest of the book

what you know I am towards all your productions.

"With all my heart for life,

"BÉRANGER."

Here is a more curious letter from the author of the *Mysteries of Paris:*

"I have *Notre-Dame;* I had one of the first, I swear to you. * * * If the powerless admiration of a barbarian like me could express itself and translate itself in a manner worthy of the book which has inspired it, I should say, Monsieur, that you are a great spendthrift, that your critics are like those poor fifth story people who, seeing the prodigalities of a great lord, say furiously: 'On the money he spends in a day I could live all my life!'

"And, in fact, the only thing which has been blamed in your book is, that there is too much of it. A pleasant criticism for this age, is it not?

"But at all times superior geniuses have excited a base and narrow jealousy, much grovelling and lying criticism. What can you expect, Monsieur? You must pay for glory.

"I should say to you again, Monsieur, that, apart from all the poetry, all the richness of thought and of drama, there is one thing which has struck me forcibly. It is that Quasimodo standing, so to speak, for beauty of the soul and devotion, Trollo for erudition, science, intellectual power, and Châteaupers for physical beauty—you had the idea of putting these three types of our nature face to face with an artless young girl, a savage almost in the midst of civilization, to give her a choice among them and to make her choice so thoroughly *woman.*

"* * * I wished only to recall myself to your kind and friendly remembrance. I came to your house to say all this and yet more, for you have welcomed me with so much goodness and so much grace that I feel at ease with you, Monsieur, although no one feels more than myself the deep impression of superiority.

"Accept the assurance of my devotion and of my sincere admiration.

"EUGÈNE SUE."

The opinion of Madame Gosselin and the hostility of the majority of the journals did not prevent *Notre-Dame de Paris* from having an extraordinary success. Editions multiplied, and publishers came incessantly, M. Gosselin at the head, to ask other romances of the author. He had none to give them; then they implored at least a title, something which should resemble the shadow of a promise. It is thus that, for many years, the catalogues of M. Renduel announced *Le Fils de la Bossue* and *La Quiquengrogne.*

These two romances, announced for thirty years, have never been written; the first romance of M. Victor Hugo after *Notre-Dame de Paris* was to be *Les Misérables.*

LVII.

MARION DE LORME.

THE revolution of July had of course suppressed the censorship; all the forbidden pieces were precipitated upon the theatres; the Comedie-Française had thought immediately of *Marion de Lorme.* At the beginning of August Mademoiselle Mars came to the author's house with MM. Armand and Firmin; the time was admirable; the fourth act especially, interdicted by Charles X. in person, would have a success of political reaction. The author answered that it was the certainty of that success which prevented him from allowing it to be played. He comprehended that in the presence of that maddening revolution of July his voice ought to mingle with those who applauded the people, but not with those who cursed the king.

It is well known with what rapidity things change their aspect in times

of revolution; in the spring of 1831 the King who was attacked, was Charles X. no longer; it was already Louis Philippe. M. Victor Hugo had no further objection to the representation of his drama, which could not now be an offence to the forgotten king.

But he was little tempted to return to the Théâtre-Français. The hostility which he had found in the public, the employees, and even the actors, did not attract him thither very strongly; he preferred the theatre of the Porte-Saint-Martin, which M. Crosnier, who had succeeded M. Jouslin de Lasalle, came to offer him; and he signed an agreement with M. Crosnier, although Mademoiselle Mars, hearing of his intention, came twice to supplicate for the Théâtre-Français.

The *Antony* of M. Alexandre Dumas was in process of rehearsal at the Porte-Saint-Martin. This beautiful drama was played some days afterwards with a success as brilliant as it was deserved, and the name of M. Alexandre Dumas, celebrated since *Henri III.*, was now consecrated. The only inconvenience of this great success was that it divided the young men, who hitherto had seen only the common flag, and who all together had opened the breach with *Henri III.* and given the assault with *Hernani;* they then separated into two troops, the adherents of M. Victor Hugo and those of M. Alexandre Dumas; they no longer opposed a compact mass to the enemy, and they fired upon each other.

The day after *Antony*, *Marion de Lorme* was distributed. Marion could only be Madame Dorval, who was as charming in the rehearsals as Mademoiselle Mars had been uncivil.

The ardor of the young men was not, even now, equal to that for *Hernani;* the excessive political excitement created a powerful diversion from literature; one faction would fight only for M. Alexandre Dumas; the rest were not enough to sustain the piece by themselves; the pit was left to the claque. At the last rehearsals it was known that M. Crosnier had sold the theatre, and his successor had not taken possession; everything went haphazard, and the actors were excited and discouraged.

M. Victor Hugo, inured by the representations of *Hernani*, saw the curtain rise with as much tranquillity as if the piece had been another's.

The first act was a success. The second was received coldly. The third act was full of hitches. The drama rose in the fourth. In the fifth act, a smart opposition troubled the whole scene of Didier with Saverny; Didier was laughed at, and Saverny was hissed. But Madame Dorval entered, with such an effusion, such grief, and such fidelity to truth, that all the men clapped their hands, and all the women wept.

At the fall of the curtain there was a volley of hisses. But the plaudits, in great majority, drowned these, and greeted energetically the name of the author.

LVIII.

THE CHOLERA.

Among the combatants for *Hernani* who remained faithful to *Marion de Lorme*, none had been more ardent than M. Ernest de Saxe-Cobourg. He lived at Paris with his mother, a Greek of sculptural beauty, whom he resembled, upon a pension which the Duke gave them, solitary and in a sort of incognito, expansive and enthusiastic in art. On returning from the representations in which he had fought so well, he wrote the name of the author on the walls. He was constantly in the Rue Notre-Dame-des-Champs, and removed to the Rue Jean-Goujon soon after M. Victor Hugo.

In March, 1832, he was missed for several days; M. Victor Hugo was astonished at this, and went to see him; he was sick. The physician said that it was a pleurisy, but that

he would answer for his cure, if they could make his mother obey his directions.

The poor woman, who had a blind adoration for her son, said that the doctor was starving him to death, and insisted upon making him eat, giving to the disease the strength which she thought she was giving to the sick. M. Victor Hugo spoke to the mother, who promised to listen to the directions, but who paid no more attention to them.

One night, M. Victor Hugo was startled out of sleep by a white spectre kneeling at the foot of his bed, which pulled him by the arm, weeping and sobbing. It was the mother, who, half-naked and dishevelled, was calling him to the aid of her son.

"Quick! there is nobody but you who can save him! Quick! Quick!"

M. Victor Hugo arose. But a domestic who, anxious, had followed her mistress, said to Madame Hugo: "He is dead!"

M. Victor Hugo passed the night with the distracted mother and the body. The physician, who was sent for immediately, was surprised at the sudden death. He questioned, and discovered that the sick man had eaten during the night.

That the mother might still have something of her son, M. Victor Hugo brought M. Louis Boulanger, who painted a very fine portrait of him. M. Victor Hugo also took charge of the funeral, the expenses of which were reimbursed by the father, in a letter full of tenderness for this son, whom he had scarcely known.

M. Victor Hugo long remained under the impression left by this sudden death, and this despairing mother. When night came, he did not like to be alone; he felt the need of action and life.

The year began inauspiciously for all; the cholera was expected. It was coming; its progress was followed day by day; it would be in France in the spring. It was exact at the hour predicted. Its second victim in Paris was a porter in the Rue Jean-Goujon. The next day a score of people were attacked; the day after, they were counted by hundreds.

At the most violent period of the epidemic, little Charles was brought home from school, livid and suffering. He had been taken with vomiting,

He was poisoned, said the servant. He had drunk some water at his school, and they were poisoning the barrels of the water-carriers, etc. This was the popular explanation of the unknown scourge. The family physician, M. Louis, said it might be nothing but a fit of indigestion, that the child must be put to bed, and promised to return soon. The child, in bed, was better; the vomiting ceased; they felt assured, and left him asleep. Suddenly they heard a noise in the dining-room; they ran in: he was lying flat at the bottom of a marble fountain which he set running, and was drinking his fill. They attempted to take him up, he resisted, saying: "Let me drink! I want to drink!" M. Louis, who returned just then, said: "It is the cholera."

In a few moments the poor dear child was as cold and rigid as a corpse. His eye was sunken in its orbit, his cheeks hollow and livid, his fingers black and shrunken. Among other prescriptions of the doctor, he was to be rubbed constantly with hot flannel, moistened with alcohol. The father would allow none other to do this; all night he came and went between the fire-place and the bed, heating the flannel and rubbing vigorously the delicate skin of the child, who continued to vomit and to ask for drink.

The skin was rubbed off and the flesh was bleeding. The little sufferer scarcely perceived it; he said once only: "Don't touch me so; you hurt me." His skin, though bleeding, was yet cold.

Towards morning, warmth and feeling were restored; the face regained its color. Three days afterwards, joy returned to the house with the health of the invalid, and Charles could say that he was "twice the son of his obstinate *father*."

At this time M. Victor Hugo received a visit from a young man with a Southern accent, black beard and hair, dark complexion and intelligent eye, who told him this:

His name was Granier de Cassagnac. He belonged to Toulouse, where he had been professor of literature in the college. He was living there by his labor, giving two lectures a week, and employing the rest of his time in editing a liberal journal, which he had founded, *Le Patriote*, when he had received a letter signed Victor Hugo. This letter thanked him for having quoted *Notre-Dame de Paris* and *Hernàni* in his lectures, and congratulated him upon his double ability as writer and speaker. He was a little astonished that the letter asked him to send his reply, not to M. Victor Hugo, but to a friend's whose address it gave. Charmed, however, to be in communication with him whom he admired, he replied, and a correspondence ensued, in which he was finally pressed to come to Paris. He replied that he had his chair and his journal at Toulouse, and nothing at Paris; but was answered with the commission of the secretaryship of the minister of justice, official, and bearing the seal of the ministry. He had sold his journal and resigned his chair, and hurried to the real home of literature. Immediately on his arrival he had gone to the ministry, where he was laughed at, and where he found that he had been the victim of a long mystification.

M. Victor Hugo, who read some of the articles in *Le Patriote*, and thought them very remarkable, was unwilling that his name should be the accomplice of a perfidy committed upon a man of talent. He gave M. Granier de Cassagnac a letter to M. Bertin. One of the editors of the *Journal des Débats*, M. de Bourqueney, was setting out upon an embassy; M. de Cassagnac took his place.

LIX.

LE ROI S'AMUSE.

On the 1st of June, M. Victor Hugo commenced *Le Roi s'amuse.* Excessive night work and watching sunsets too much had brought on a chronic irritation of the eyelids, and he was ordered to wear green glasses, to walk a good deal, and to live as much as possible among the trees and grass. He lived very near the gardens of the Tuileries; he found in the gardens upon the terrace at the water's edge, a solitary corner, in which he worked while walking.

On the 5th of June he was finishing the first act, and was engaged on the speech of Saint-Vallier, when he was shut out of the garden. There was an insurrection. He went in the direction of the fighting; as he was passing through the arcade du Saumon, suddenly the grated gates were closed and the balls whistled from one to the other. No shops in which to take refuge; the doors had been closed before the gates. He could only shelter himself between two of the thin columns of the arcade. The balls continued to fly for a quarter of an hour; the troops, not being able to dislodge the insurgents, turned the position, the scene of the combat was changed, and the gates were opened again.

The next day M. Victor Hugo dined with M. Emile Deschamps. One of the guests, M. Jules de Rességuier, related the heroic defence of the cloister Saint-Merry, which deeply affected the future author of the *Epic of the Rue Saint-Denis.*

Upon finishing *Le Roi s'amuse*, M. Victor Hugo began *Lucrèce Borgia* immediately, which he called at first *Le Souper à Ferrare.*

The Baron Taylor, learning that M. Victor Hugo had two dramas finished, came to him for one, and obtained *Le Roi s'amuse.*

The rehearsals commenced. Unfortunately it was September—a month which M. Victor Hugo had a

pleasant habit of passing at The Rocks. He would not lose his vacation, and let the rehearsals go on alone. While the drama was getting on as best it could, the author employed the close of the summer in playing with his children under the trees, or making them marvellous birds, boats, and carriages, which he gilded, and which the celebrated painters who came to visit M. Édouard Bertin, did not disdain to paint. It was a happy thing to see the delight of these children when they were placed before these fine vehicles, and told that they were their own, and they could take them to Paris. In October the author returned, but he removed from the Rue Jean-Goujon to the Place Royale, which was another distraction.

The theatres then depended upon the ministry of public works. The minister, M. d'Argout, requested that the author send the manuscript to him; the author refused. The minister asked that at least M. Victor Hugo should come and talk over the matter with him. That compromised nothing. M. Victor Hugo permitted M. Mérimée, chief of the cabinet, to take him to the minister. M. d'Argout, easy and blasé, received him good-naturedly.

"Come, Monsieur Hugo, speak to me with confidence. I am no puritan, you know; but they say that there are allusions against the King in your drama."

M. Victor Hugo made the same reply to M. d'Argout as to M. de Martignac, that he made no allusions; that in painting Francis I., it was Francis I. whom he had intended to paint; that, indeed, he could understand how, if one desired it very much, he might have found some resemblance between Louis XIII. and Charles X., but that it was impossible for him to imagine what relations could be seen between Francis I. and Louis Philippe.

The minister then changed ground, and said, that Francis I. was understood to be very much abused in the play; the principle of monarchy would suffer from this attack upon one of the most popular kings of France. The author replied, that above the interest of royalty was the interest of history. M. d'Argout asked if there were no means of softening certain details, obtained nothing, and was not vexed at it. He could have asked that there should be nothing against Francis I., but since Victor Hugo gave his word that there was nothing against Louis Philippe, that was sufficient.

As at the Porte-Saint-Martin, the claqueurs had their ordinary post. The young men were more numerous, however, than at *Marion de Lorme*. The faithful, with MM. Théophile Gautier and Célestin Nanteuil at their head, recruited a hundred and fifty, who were divided between the orchestra and the second gallery. They entered by the passage a little before the public. The political fermentation kept alive by the émeutes filled, for the most part, the heads of these young men, and they saluted the entrance of the public with the *Marseillaise* and the *Carmagnole* shouted at the top of their voices.

At the moment of commencing, the news was made known throughout the theatre that the king had been shot at. This became immediately the subject of conversation, the curtain rose in the midst of the general preoccupation, and the first act, which was, moreover, not very well played, was chilling. The second act was so disfigured by the awkward manner in which Blanche was carried from the stage, heels over head, that it closed in a storm of hisses. In the third, the boxes were shocked at seeing a king appear in his dressing-gown; the act was hooted.

Thus far the combat remained indecisive; the claqueurs, who remembered *Hernani*, helped but little, but the hundred and fifty young men fought with ardor. An accident in the machinery of the piece helped the enemy. A door by which one of the principal actors should enter at a

critical moment, was fastened, the effect of his entrance was lost, he appeared from the rear of the stage, no one knew whence; this was the final blow; the public had enough of this drama in which the supernumeraries did not know how to carry off the women, and in which the doors did not know how to open, and the close of the piece was nothing but a mêlée, in which the plaudits did not yield, but were overborne.

The next morning, he received the following note:

"It is ten and a half o'clock and I have this moment received *the order* to suspend the representation of *Le Roi s'amuse.* M. Taylor communicates this order to me on the part of the minister.

"JOUSLIN-DE LASSALLE."

"Nov. 18."

The pretext of the suspension was immorality; the truth was, that a certain number of classic authors went to the minister, and told him that he ought not to tolerate a piece the subject of which was the assassination of a king, the day after the king had barely escaped assassination; that *Le Roi s'amuse* was the apology of the regicide; that the friends of the author had sung the *Carmagnole*, and had madly applauded this line so evidently directed against the king:

"Your mothers played the harlot with their grooms."

But one friend came to see M. Victor Hugo that day; it was M. Théophile Gautier.

There was a council of ministers, and the piece, which had been suspended only in the morning, was interdicted.

The author did not go to the ministers; he went to the judges. He asked of the Tribunal of Commerce, if, in presence of the charter, which abolished the censorship and confiscation, a minister had the right to censure and confiscate a piece. The Tribunal of Commerce answered, Yes.

M. Victor Hugo's advocate was M. Odillon Barrot, who advised him to speak also. Never having spoken in public, and not knowing how he should succeed, he wrote his address. Several copies were required for the journals; some young men volunteered, M. Théophile Gautier first of all, and spent a portion of the night before the trial with him. The speech was long, and he did not finish the dictation until two o'clock in the morning; it was late to go home; these terrible singers of the *Carmagnole* feared their porters; M. Victor Hugo's study was large; the canopy and a few mattresses improvised a bedroom.

On going to the court, M. Victor Hugo met M. de Montalembert on his way thither. They entered together. The hall of the tribunal was crowded with a sympathetic audience. The address of M. Victor Hugo was applauded at different points, and the president was obliged to call the public to order several times. When M. Victor Hugo had finished speaking, he was surrounded and complimented. M. de Montalembert told him that he was as much an orator as a writer, and that, if the theatre were closed to him, the tribune would remain.

The revolution of July had deprived M. Victor Hugo of the annuity of a thousand francs which Louis XVIII. had given him out of his privy purse, and Charles X. had continued; but he had still the two thousand francs from the Ministry of the Interior. The ministerial journals reproached him with receiving it. He immediately addressed an indignant letter to M. d'Argout, declining to receive it longer. M. d'Argout replied that the annuity was a debt of the country, and that it would be preserved for M. Victor Hugo in spite of his letter. But two years later he asked M. Thiers, then Minister of the Interior, if it could not be given to Elisa Mercœur, a poor young poetess, and the reply was, that it had been employed.

Among the letters which M. Victor Hugo received on the occasion of his drama and his suit, I notice this:

"London, Jan. 8, 1833.

"MONSIEUR,—I have received two copies of *Le Roi s'amuse;* we read it the last day of the year; yesterday afternoon we had to give it a new representation. * * * Our society is composed of but eighteen persons, but I can assure you that you had a very complete success, so much so that I boasted of your friendship for me. * * * but in this leaden body of Triboulet how much native gold!!! How true, how natural, how pregnant this paternal malediction of Saint Vallier! It is the voice of the living God, pursuing the mighty fallen! I stop; I have neither the time, nor the talent, nor the intention of sitting in judgment on your piece; I repeat to you what Molière's maid said: 'It amuses me, read it again.' * * *"

"What you say of Napoleon in your answer to the tribunal, appears to me to demand that I should now declare what I believe I can prove some day: his despotism was only the dictatorship of war; it would have ceased with it. Pitt alone desired war perpetually, and the event of the Restoration has proved that as chief of the oligarchic and absolutist interests of the reigning houses of Europe, Pitt was right.

"The whole question between Pitt and Napoleon lies in this: which desired war?

"I have documents to prove that Napoleon always desired peace, and that Pitt always desired war. Both were right as chiefs of the interests which they represented, those of Old and of New Europe. The civilization of which you speak so well in your preface, was that which Napoleon desired; for that, it was necessary to have peace on the ocean and to be well consolidated. *Non lo connobbe il mondo mentre l'ebbe—connobb' il io!**

"If the approaching session of Parliament might induce you to come and spend a few days here, how happy I should be to talk long and freely with you! how useful it might be to the knowledge of one of the greatest characters of history, that I should place in your hands positive dates, which by representing him in his true light, would render him as much beloved by the French as he is by myself. The sabre with which M. de Chateaubriand always arms him, was never more than the hand of justice at home, abroad never more than a buckler for the defence of his country; he was obliged to attack to defend himself.

"* * * Accept my profound esteem and my cordial sympathy with the son of General Hugo, my friend.

"JOSEPH."

* "The world knew him not while it had him—I knew him!"

LX.

LUCRÈCE BORGIA.

THE decided violence which had attended all the pieces of M. Victor Hugo had discouraged the directors of the theatres; nobody came to ask him for *Le Souper à Ferrare.* His success in speaking before the tribunal proved that he was still alive. At the close of December, M. Harel, then director of the Porte-Saint-Martin, was announced. He came to ask *Le Souper à Ferrare.*

Knowing that Mademoiselle Georges ruled the theatre, M. Victor Hugo did not wish to conclude an agreement before reading his piece to her. M. Harel was in great haste, and he read it that same evening at her house. She was enchanted with her part, and M. Victor Hugo changed the title of the piece to the name of the heroine, which she was to play, at the suggestion of M. Harel.

At one of the rehearsals, the manager proposed to M. Victor Hugo to introduce music as an aid to the piece. He willingly consented, and MM. Meyerbeer and Berlioz were so kind as to propose to write the music for the song sung at the supper.

"Yes indeed," said M. Harel, "great musicians, who will make us music that people will listen to and distract them from the drama! I want an air which shall go on its knees to the words. Let Piccini alone."

M. Piccini was the leader of the orchestra. He found an excellent melody for the couplets, but could not find anything for the refrain which satisfied him. He told his embarrassment to the author.

"Nothing is easier," answered M. Victor Hugo; "you have only to follow the words. Here."

He began to repeat the verses, accenting them in a sort of rude chant. Having in his life never been able to sing a correct note, he beat time upon the prompter's table.

"I have it," said the chief of the orchestra, who recognised an air in the taps, and noted them upon the spot.

The hostile journals denounced the piece in advance as being the height of obscenity; it was a frightful orgie; *Lucrèce Borgia* would have the same fate as *Le Roi s'amuse;* there would be but one representation, etc. * * * All Paris wished to be present at that unique representation, and the author received more letters for boxes and places than for *Hernani.*

I take one from the heap:

"It is long since I had the pleasure of seeing M. Victor Hugo. I have, however, to congratulate him upon his fine theatrical defence. One of our friends desires to learn if it is possible to get a box for the first representation of his new piece. The Princess Belgiojoso did endeavor to get one, but she was too late, and received the reply that they could now be obtained only through the favor of the author. M. Victor Hugo will permit me to address myself directly to him, at the same time that I profit by this occasion to renew to him the assurance of my sincere attachment.

"LAFAYETTE."

"January 29, 1833."

In the first scene of the first act, when Gubetta says that the two brothers love the same woman, and that this woman was their sister, a loud hiss was heard.

"What! They hiss?" said M. Harel, completely confounded. "What does that mean?"

"That means," answered M. Victor Hugo, "that the piece is really mine."

But in the scene with Gennaro, Mademoiselle Georges read the letter with so mournful and so tender an expression, that the whole house was thrilled. The insult of the young lords, coming upon that, produced an irresistible effect; at each epithet thrown in the face of the poisoness, the emotion increased, and there was at the end an incomparable fury of plaudits.

The first and second acts passed off with great éclat. At the close of the second, M. Alexandre Dumas came to Madame Hugo's box; he was transported with admiration and pleasure; this great success gave him as much pleasure as his own; he pressed the hands of Madame Hugo weeping for joy.

The author had not seen the scenery of the second act. While they were placing it, he perceived that the concealed door by which Lucrèce Borgia was to effect Gennaro's escape was splendid.

"That door is absurd," said he.

"True," said the manager, "you ask for a hidden door and they make you one which puts your eyes out."

"Is M. Séchan in the theatre?"

M. Séchan could not be found. The minutes were slipping away, and the interlude had already continued too long.

"Is there any paint here?" asked M. Victor Hugo.

"Yes, the painters have been working all day, and they have not taken their things away."

"Bring me the pot and the brushes."

They brought him what he wanted

and the author repainted his scenery himself.

The remaining acts went off with great éclat, and at the close of the last scene, orchestra, galleries, boxes, rose to their feet and applauded with hands and voice; the stage was strewed with bouquets; the name of the author did not satisfy the public, who demanded the author himself.

M. Victor Hugo was awaited at the door of the theatre by a dense throng; the horses of the fiacre which he took with his wife and daughter, were unharnessed, and he avoided being drawn in triumph only by leaping out at the door and going home on foot; the throng escorted him to the arcades of the Place Royale; old friends who had become distant re-appeared that night; men whom he knew not asked to shake the hand of the victor: the ovation commenced beneath the lamps of the theatre was continued beneath the stars.

The next morning M. Victor Hugo was awakened by M. Harel, overflowing with joy: his theatre was transfigured, the Porte-Saint-Martin was now the true Théâtre Français, he desired nothing but the success of art, and of high art; he hoped that henceforth the author of *Lucrèce Borgia* would go nowhere else, etc. M. Victor Hugo, who had seen the director's change of countenance at the hiss in the first act, would make no agreement. M. Harel insisted on having at least the promise of a second price. The author without saying no, did not say yes.

The journals, disarmed, were almost all favorable. The warmest article was one of M. Jules Janin in the *Journal des Débats*. Parodies were played at all the minor theatres, among others *l'Ogresse Borgia*; masks, representing the principal personages of the drama, passed on Mardi-Gras along the Boulevards, and stopped before the house of Mademoiselle Georges, crying: "The Poisoness!" All this redoubled the general curiosity, and the receipts increased. In thirty representations the receipts amounted to the then unparalleled figure of 84,769 francs.

Lucrèce Borgia did not, however, escape hisses. The classical journals, surprised at first and drawn along the current, soon recollected themselves and retracted their approbation. M. Armand Carrel attacked it in the *National*. The example given by him was followed first in the journals, then in the theatre, and thenceforth there were a few hisses every evening; but the dramas of M. Victor Hugo were made for harsher treatment, and *Lucrèce Borgia* was not disturbed by them.

Divers reasons embroiled the author with the director. One evening, on going to the theatre, M. Victor Hugo saw that the bill announced a revival for the next day. *Lucrèce Borgia* was still making money, he had not been consulted, he went to the box of Mademoiselle Georges, the real office of the director, and asked what it meant. M. Harel responded that it meant that he was the director and played what pieces he liked. The author asked what were the receipts of the day.

"Two thousand five hundred francs!"

"And how much do you expect to make to-morrow with the revival?"

"Five hundred francs."

"Then why do you interrupt me?"

"Because I choose to."

"Very well," said the author. "But let me tell you that you have played the last piece that you shall ever have of mine."

"The one before the last," said M. Harel. "You forget that you have promised me your next piece."

"I have promised you nothing of the kind."

"I affirm," said M. Harel, "that you have promised me."

"And I," said M. Victor Hugo, "affirm the contrary."

"Then you give me the lie?"

"I am at your orders."

On returning to his house, M.

Victor Hugo found the following letter:

"Your perseverance in denying the promise you have so frequently given me, and before witnesses, accompanied by these words: 'I am at your orders,' makes me the offended party.

"I therefore expect satisfaction.

"Let me know when and where you will give it.

"HAREL."

"April 30th, evening."

The next day M. Victor Hugo arose early in the morning, to find witnesses. As he turned into the Boulevard he saw a national guard approach him, whom he did not know at first, but who was M. Harel.

"Monsieur Hugo," said the director, "I have written you a very foolish letter. It would be a very bad way to get your piece, to kill you. On your part, it would not be any very great glory to kill M. Harel. The best way is to be reconciled. I am the offended party, and it is I who retract. Will you pardon me and give me your piece? Of course we will play *Lucrèce* this evening."

The author could not be angry longer, and this time promised the piece.

"My faith," said M. Harel to him, "you are probably the first to whom a director has said: '*Your piece or your life!*'"

LXI.

MARIE TUDOR.

At the end of August, M. Victor Hugo notified the director of the Porte-Saint-Martin that the drama which he had promised was ready. M. Harel and Mademoiselle Georges were as much charmed with *Marie Tudor* as with *Lucrèce Borgia*, and M. Harel insisted more than ever upon having other pieces of the author. M. Victor Hugo refused. But M. Harel found means to extort another from him by threatening to bring out *Marie Tudor* without new scenery.

As during preceding years, M Victor Hugo passed the autumn at The Rocks, but he came in every day to the rehearsals. One day M. Bertin, taking him aside, showed him some proofs of the *Journal des Débats*. They were a criticism of M. Granier de Cassagnac, very hostile to M. Alexandre Dumas. As it was known that M. Granier had obtained a place on the *Débats* upon the recommendation of M. Victor Hugo, it would have been believed that he had inspired the article, and M. Bertin had desired to speak with him before publishing it. M. Victor Hugo thanked M. Bertin, told him that M. Alexandre Dumas was his friend, his brother in arms; that very recently, at the performance of *Lucrèce Borgia*, he had found him full of cordiality and sympathy, and that he should be grieved to present even the appearance of having done him wrong. M. Bertin promised that the criticism should not appear. The week following, M. Bertin, opening the *Journal des Débats*, which the postman brought to The Rocks, uttered an *Ah!* The criticism was there! Owing to a misunderstanding of M. Bertin's orders, it had been inserted.

The article was signed "G. C." Many thought these initials fanciful, and that M. Victor Hugo was the real author of the article. The moderate recognised that it was written by M. Granier de Cassagnac, and that M. Victor Hugo only dictated it. M. Bertin related the facts of the case in the *Débats*, and the strong desire expressed by M. Victor Hugo that the article should not appear. But the calumny was too convenient to be given up at a time when M. Victor Hugo was about to put a new drama upon the stage, and the falsehood was maintained and propagated by the enemies of the success of *Lucrèce Borgia*.

M. Harel said to himself that the moment was bad for M. Victor Hugo and good for M. Alexandre Dumas; he did not hesitate to desert *Marie Tudor*, and go over to the side of M. Dumas, to whom he offered his theatre. He came with two dramas, *Angèle* and *La Vénitienne;* M. Harel bestirred himself to get rid of M. Victor Hugo as quickly as possible. Some days before the representation the bottom of the bill appeared thus:

Immediately

MARIE TUDOR.

Shortly

ANGÈLE.

In this way the public was well prepared. M. Victor Hugo was angry, and *Angèle* disappeared from the bill. The hostility was only the deeper, because it was no longer placarded. M. Harel spread abroad all sorts of reports injurious to the piece; he quarrelled with M. Victor Hugo about the distribution of the parts.

The evening before the representation M. Victor Hugo, on leaving the theatre, was followed by M. Harel under the pentice of the theatre.

"Monsieur Hugo," said the director, "have you decided not to change your distribution?"

"It would be rather late, as it is played to-morrow."

"I have had the parts learned in duplicate. Do you wish the change?"

"No."

"Well, your piece will fail."

"That means you will make it fail."

"That means what you like."

"Well, Monsieur Harel, make my piece fail, and I will make your theatre fail."

These were the last words exchanged between the author and the director before the battle.

M. Harel was to have sent the author two hundred and fifty tickets; he sent but fifty. M. Hugo sent them back. Some friends of the author, grieved at not having tickets, applied to M. Alexandre Dumas, then all-powerful with the management, who, with his characteristic generosity, procured them admission.

The piece was assailed by volleys of hisses at intervals throughout Yet these were met by an energetic resistance; a considerable portion of the public had protested by their plaudits; the friends of the author affirmed that the hisses came for the most part, not from the orchestra or the boxes, but from the pit, which contained the claque, or in other words, the director. The night was not decisive; but it was very different from that of the representation of *Le Roi s'amuse*, hissed evidently by the public; this was a combat, but not a defeat. The name of the author was hissed for the first time.

At the fourth representation, the announcement of *Angèle* reappeared upon the bill. Notwithstanding this, the receipts, though inferior to those of *Lucrèce Borgia*, were so large that the manager was compelled to withdraw the announcement again, and *Marie Tudor* had a number of very honorable representations.

Relations being no longer possible between M. Victor Hugo and M. Harel, the agreement for a third piece was cancelled by mutual consent.

LXII.

ANGELO.

At the beginning of 1834 M. Victor Hugo wrote the *Étude sur Mirabeau*, decidedly revolutionary. His ideas had progressed since his first odes, so blindly royalist. He felt the need of measuring the road which he had passed over, casting a glance upon the stations at which his mind had rested, confronting his present with his past, and taking an ac-

count of himself. Sure of never having obeyed other than his conviction, and having nothing to disown or to conceal, he made that examination of his conscience in public in *Littérature et Philosophie mêlées.*

The fallen *Roi s'amuse* did not prevent the Théâtre Français from asking a piece of him since the brilliant success of *Lucrèce Borgia.* M. Victor Hugo gave to M. Jouslin de Lasalle, in February, 1835, *Angelo*, a drama which required two actresses of the first order. Madame Dorval was engaged to play with Mademoiselle Mars. Mademoiselle Mars, jealous of Madame Dorval, insisted upon standing before her during one of her most striking exits. M. Victor Hugo reminded her that her place was on the other side of the stage. She replied that that was for the actress to judge. He lost patience, and told her that women who exposed their persons were modest compared with this nakedness of selfishness; that Madame Dorval was her equal in talent and success, and that she was free to give up the part. And he broke off the rehearsal, declaring that the piece should be played as he intended or not at all.

On the evening of this occurrence M. Harel was announced. He knew what had passed at the Théâtre Français. He had wronged Monsieur Hugo, he knew it; he had been well punished, his theatre had declined since, he was repentant, he accused himself, he swore that he never would do so again. If M. Victor Hugo would pardon him and give him *Angelo*, he would engage Madame Dorval, he had Mademoiselle Georges, etc. M. Victor Hugo replied:

"I am sorry for you if you have need of me. But I have given you my word. You told me that *Marie Tudor* should fail, and you have kept your promise; I told you that your theatre should fail, and I shall keep mine."

After that, M. Harel came very often to the author of *Marie Tudor.* He prayed, implored, offered him premiums, and all possible security. M. Victor Hugo received him politely, talked, but as to a piece he persistently refused. It is well known that M. Harel became a bankrupt.

During the evening of the day on which M. Victor Hugo had suspended the rehearsal, he received letters from Madame Dorval and the director, urging him to come to the rehearsal next day, and assuring him that all should be made right. He went accordingly. Mademoiselle Mars obeyed his previous directions, and all passed off smoothly. Angelo, at its first representation, was a decided success, and the success continued with its succeeding representations. Mademoiselle Mars became resigned to the success of Madame Dorval, and contented herself with her own.

LXIII.

LA ESMERALDA.

The extraordinary success of *Notre-Dame de Paris* had attracted to M. Victor Hugo numerous demands from composers, among others from the illustrious M. Meyerbeer, who desired him to make an opera of his romance. He had always refused them. But M. Bertin asked him to do it for his daughter, and he did out of friendship that which he had not done out of interest.

When the music was ready there was a preparatory hearing. The *soirée* was preceded by a dinner, at which were MM. Victor Hugo, Eugène Delacroix, Rossini, Berlioz, Antony Deschamps, etc. It was remarked that during the dinner M. Rossini always called M. Delacroix "Monsieur Delaroche." MM. de Bourqueney, Lesourd, Alfred de Wailly, Antony Deschamps, and a niece of M. Bertin, sang selections from the opera, which were much praised. M. Rossini had a charming voice and was fond of singing; he was begged for a song; he refused

M. and Madame Bertin pressed him; pretty women almost fell at his feet; he replied that he was hoarse and absolutely incapable of getting a note out of his throat, went out almost immediately, and as soon he was in the antechamber began to sing an air of one of his own operas in a clear and resounding voice.

The rehearsals of *La Esmeralda* took place in the year 1836. The author of the words was not present; he was travelling in Brittany. On his return he was struck by the meanness of the scenic representation. Old Paris gave way to decorations and costumes. Nothing rich nor picturesque; the tatters of the Cour des Miracles, which might have been characteristic and a novelty at the Opera, were of new cloth; so that the lords had the appearance of poor people and the vagrants of bourgeois. M. Victor Hugo had given an idea of a mechanical effect which would have been very successful: the ascension of Quasimodo carrying Esmeralda from story to story; to allow Quasimodo to rise it was only necessary to lower the cathedral. In his absence the thing had been declared impossible. This mechanical effect, impossible at the Opéra, was afterwards produced at the L'Ambigu.

The opera sung by MM. Nourrit, Levasseur, Massol, etc,, and Mademoiselle Falcon, was applauded by the public on its first representation, which was overshadowed by the news of the death of Charles X.

The journals exhibited extreme violence against the music. Party spirit mingled in this, and avenged itself upon the journal of the father through the daughter. Then, the public hissed. The opposition increased from representation to representation, and at the eighth the curtain was lowered before the close. All that the director, M. Duponchel, who owed his privilege to M. Bertin, could do, was to play occasionally, before the ballet, one act in which the author had united the principal pieces of the five.

The romance is founded upon the word ἀνάγκη, the opera ends by the word *fatalité*. A first fatality was this suppression of a work the singers of which were M. Nourrit and Mademoiselle Falcon, the composer a woman of great talent, the librettist M. Victor Hugo, and the subject *Notre-Dame de Paris*. The fatality followed the actors. Mademoiselle Falcon lost her voice; M. Nourrit soon after committed suicide in Italy. A ship called *Esmeralda*, crossing from England to Ireland, was lost, vessel and cargo. The Duke of Orleans named a mare of great value *Esmeralda*; in a steeple-chase she ran against a horse at a gallop and got her head broken.

LXIV.

THE BROTHER'S DEATH.

In 1837 M. Victor Hugo lost his brother Eugène. After he was taken to M. Esquirol, M. Royer-Collard, the chief physician of the house, gave him especial attention; the violent paroxysms disappeared; when his father and his brothers came to see him he talked with them affectionately and rationally, except upon one point: he thought he was confined in a prison of state for having conspired against the Duchess de Berry. The General said that the best refutation of his error would be liberty, and, the physician assenting, had taken him to Blois.

He had been carried thither quietly without exhibiting pain or pleasure; on leaving, his manner and features were torpid; this robust and powerful young man, who had at one time thought himself born for literary struggle, had now something of the appearance of a sleeping sheep. He had remained thus at Blois, placid, manageable, sensible,—obstinate only in desiring to go in the sun without his hat, as he had been when a child, to pull off his stockings in the snows of Mont-Cenis. One day, at dinner, he sprang suddenly upon his step-

mother, knife in hand, threatening to kill her.

The General took him to Paris, and tried the house Saint Maurice à Charenton, which was a military establishment. The treatment, being adapted to soldiers, was of a military kind; the vigor of the remedies subdued the fury of the disease again; but Eugène thought himself in a prison of state more than ever; he protested against this incarceration without trial, tried to escape, and they caught him on one occasion as he was about to jump out of the window.

When he heard the ravings of the mad, he thought they were being murdered, and begged his father and brothers to take him out. As they did not aid him to escape, he grew cold towards them. He remained attached to M. Victor Hugo for some time longer; he was interested in literature; he wished to read *Hernani*. But the director having shown the establishment to M. Victor Hugo, and having taken him about with the complaisant politeness which a celebrated visitor receives, the poor sufferer imagined that his brother was on too good terms with his enemies, and would not see him any more, or anybody else. They were obliged to cease making visits which only exasperated him.

Contrary to what ordinarily occurs, the health of his body sympathized with that of his brain; his strong constitution grew weak; the decay was gradual; his youth and vigor resisted, and he lingered until February, 1837.

Thus died the comrade of the infancy and youth of M. Victor Hugo. The two brothers, so closely united, seemed made for the same existence, they had the same sports, the same masters, the same aspirations towards poetry, the same instinct of new needs; they had not been separated a single day until the death of their mother: destiny separated them at a blow, and tossed one into fame and light, the other into isolation and night.

LXV.

THE FÊTE AT VERSAILLES.

In the summer of 1837 Louis Philippe celebrated at Versailles the marriage of the Duke of Orleans. M. Victor Hugo was invited. The evening before the fête, M. Alexandre Dumas came to see him, much irritated. There were to be promotions in the Legion of Honor; the King, seeing his name on one of the lists presented to him, had struck it off. Upon this offence he had sent back the invitation which he had received. M. Victor Hugo told him he would not go either, and wrote to the Duke of Orleans the reason of his refusal. In the evening the secretary of the Duke came to the Place Royale; the Duke of Orleans, on receiving the letter of M. Victor Hugo, had gone immediately to the King, and earnestly requested the restoration of the name of M. Alexandre Dumas to the list. The secretary had not gone when M. Dumas himself returned, but joyous this time; he had received word from the Duke of Orleans that he had the cross, and that he could wear it immediately. All difficulty being removed, M. Victor Hugo promised the Prince's secretary to go to Versailles. He asked him if there was any prescribed dress; the secretary replied that everything was admissible except citizen's dress. The fête was to be next day. There was scarcely time to procure a costume. But Victor Hugo had been in the National Guard in 1830, when he had been elected to I forget what grade; he found his uniform in a closet. M. Alexandre Dumas and he examined it piece by piece from epaulettes to belt; it was still very passable. M. Dumas was himself an officer; it was admirable; he would take his uniform, and it would be between them another bond of fraternity to wear the same dress.

The fête commenced by the tour of the interior of the château. Numerous as was the throng, they circulated with ease in these vast roya'

apartments and interminable galleries. They here met all who were famous in painting, sculpture, music, science, politics, etc. One of the first whom the two national guardsmen met was M. de Balzac, in the costume of a Marquis, probably hired, and certainly made for another.

After they had promenaded sufficiently long, M. Victor Hugo seated himself with MM. Alexandre Dumas, Eugène Delacroix, and three or four friends, who had joined the group; the conversation was interrupted by the entrance of the King and the royal family. The Duke of Orleans gave his arm to his wife. The King, naturally amiable, and at this time happy also, said gracious things to his guests, especially to M. Victor Hugo, who thought he remarked that his costume as a national guard did not injure him in the estimation of the King. After compliments, he asked what he thought of Versailles, to which M. Victor Hugo replied courteously that the age of Louis XIV. had written a beautiful book, and that the King had given that beautiful book a magnificent binding.

Madame the Duchess of Orleans came to M. Victor Hugo, and told him that she was happy to see him, that there were two persons she had greatly desired to know, M. Cousin and himself, that she had often spoken of him with "Monsieur de Goethe," that she had read all his books, that she knew his poems by heart, and liked best of all the piece of the *Chants du Crépuscule* commencing:

"C'étrit une humble église, etc."

She added: "I have visited *your* Notre Dame."

At four o'clock, an usher came to say "the King is served." The dinner lasted till six o'clock. Then there was rout and a mêlée; the play commenced immediately after dinner; everybody desired to be in a position to see well, not the play, but the royal box, or perhaps to be in a position to be seen from it. Mademoiselle Mars and the best of the company of the Théâtre-Français played the *Misanthrope;* the representation was, however, cold. That swarming of the public which produces the life of the theatre, was wanting. There were only two rows of boxes, separated by large columns, so that, though full, the theatre seemed empty. No cohesion, no communication between the spectators; none of those electric currents which mingle all souls in one. There were, moreover, but few women, only the wives of the ministers and ambassadors being invited. The promenade by torchlight in the picture gallery followed. At eleven o'clock the fête ended, and every one ran after his carriage, which was not easy to find in the crowd. MM. Alexandre Dumas and Victor Hugo did not find theirs until one o'clock in the morning, and they re-entered Paris at daylight.

M. Victor Hugo, who had hitherto been a chevalier only of the Legion of Honor, was made an officer, a grade at which he remains.

On the 27th of June, 1837, M. Victor Hugo published the *Voix interieurs*. During the day, two footmen in the livery of the Duke of Orleans came to the Place Royale with some men who bore with difficulty a large painting. It was an *Inez de Castro*, of M. Saint-Èvre, which had been the masterpiece of an exhibition. Upon the gilt frame was this inscription: *The Duke and Duchess of Orleans to M. Victor Hugo, June 27th*, 1837.

LXVI.

RUY BLAS.

M. Alexandre Dumas also was not long without cause of complaint against M. Harel, and he left the Porte-Saint Martin. He was also on bad terms with the *Comedie-Française*. He came one day to M. Victor Hugo and related a conversation which he had held with the Duke of

Orleans. The prince inquiring why he wrote no more plays, he replied that the new literature had no theatre. The Duke responded that contemporaneous art had a right to a theatre, and that he would speak with M. Guizot concerning it.

"Now," concluded M. Dumas, "you must go to see Guizot. I have persuaded the prince, you persuade the minister."

The result of M. Victor Hugo's conference with M. Guizot, was the license of a theatre, which was offered to M. Victor Hugo, but which he refused, and presented to his friend M. Anténor Joly. M. Victor Hugo agreed also to write a piece for the opening night, and set at work upon Ruy Blas. He wrote the first scene on the 4th of July, and the last on the 11th of August. This drama occupied more time in its composition than any other.

The new drama could not count upon the aid of the youth who had sustained *Hernani;* some had become celebrated, all mature; the painters' boys of 1830 were now masters thinking of their own works; others not having succeeded in art had renounced it, and, as merchants, manufacturers, husbands, were doing penance for their sins of enthusiasm and of literature. Those even who remained writers, painters, and friends, had left Bohemia for the Bourgeoisie, cut their hair, wore the fashionable coat and hat, had wives or mistresses whom they could not take to the pit nor into crowds, thought furious acclamations in bad taste, but applauded occasionally with the tips of their gloves.

A new generation had come. M. Auguste Vacquerie and M. Paul Meurice, students of the college of Charlemagne, young men of sixteen or seventeen years, had recently become, as they have remained, most intimate friends of M. Victor Hugo. M. Auguste Vacquerie came eighty leagues to be present at *Ruy Blas.*

Notwithstanding that the theatre was not completed on the night of the first representation and that it was exceedingly cold, the piece was successful. A fact worthy of note was that the pit and the stalls applauded less than the boxes. The success, this time, came mostly from the public.

M. Victor Hugo was about to sell the manuscript to his then publisher, M. Renduel, when another bookseller, M. Delloye, came to ask him for it, also for the right of publishing his entire works for eleven years, in the name of a company of which he was the agent. M. Delloye offered two hundred thousand francs. He added forty thousand, and M. Victor Hugo added on his part two unpublished volumes.

LXVII.

LES BURGRAVES.

One of these volumes was a new collection of poems, *Les Rayons et Les Ombres;* the other was *Les Burgraves*, the representations of which have been the last episode in the dramatic life of M. Victor Hugo. I only mention the lyric works of M. Victor Hugo, because in this mere biography of his creations I ought to dwell more upon those which have been most adventurous. Now, the adventures have been principally in the theatre; there his real difficulty has been; there M. Victor Hugo has been contested most; as a lyric poet he was accepted in his first poems; that first success has increased with each volume.

Les Burgraves was written in October, 1842, and read to the Committee of the Comedie-Française on the 20th of November. The author, this time, had no reason for anything but praise of the theatre; actors, manager, M. Buloz, the secretary, M. Verteuil, everybody gave him faithful support.

But politics worked against him.

The Republicans, not then very numerous, thought much more of

political than of social qeustions. The abolition of the death-penalty, universal peace, gratuitous education, the rights of children, the rights of women, etc., seemed to them chimeras of the poet. On the other hand, they were solicitous for the republic; while M. Victor. Hugo, a republican in theory, believing this to be possible only through the education of the masses, was content with the monarchy, provided it consented to progress. In the dust of the struggle they did not see that M. Victor Hugo, a "socialist" since 1828, a "socialist" before the word was invented, was more advanced than themselves in democracy, and that they were firing upon one of their own. The *National* had remained stationary at the programme of M. Armand Carrel: progress in politics, recoil in literature. He hated the drama, and admired only the tragedy of the "great reign."

The time was propitious for tragedy. An actress of great talents, Mademoiselle Rachel, brought back the multitude to Corneille and Racine. During the rehearsal of *Les Burgraves* a young man had arrived from the Provinces with a tragedy which had the double appropriateness of being a tragedy and a republican tragedy: the subject was the expulsion of the Tarquins and the establishment of the Republic at Rome. They laid hold of the piece and the author. *Lucrèce* was read publicly in the salons; delight was at its height; they had already Mademoiselle Rachel; they were now to have M. Ponsard; tragedy was complete; Louis XIV. was resuscitated; all this in the name of the Republic.

Everything was therefore against M. Victor Hugo and in favor of M. Ponsard. Even the actors of the drama deserted to tragedy; Madame Dorval and M. Bocage played the principal parts of *Lucrèce.*

The first representation was received coldly. Opposition manifested itself at the second. Sneers and hisses, though never approximating the tumults of *Hernani*, disturbed the piece every evening. There were disputes and collisions, but the actors and the theatre bravely and honestly sustained the piece to the end.

M. Victor Hugo, after *Les Burgraves*, withdrew from the theatre, although he had a drama which had been almost completed since 1838, *Les Jumeaux;* he was unwilling to deliver his thought longer to these easy insults and anonymous hisses which fifteen years had not disarmed. He had, moreover, less need of the theatre: he was soon to have the tribune.

LXVIII.

THE ACADEMY.

I HAVE closed the purely, or to speak more truly, specially literary life of M. Victor Hugo; for, as we have seen, he had given attention to politics from his childhood. He himself has said that he was cast at sixteen into the literary world by his political passions. Since his first odes, all his books have mingled more or less in public life; even that which appeared most indifferent and most absorbed in art, *Les Orientales*, was a work in reference to, and had fought for, the independence of Greece.

The indirect and slow action of literature soon ceased to suffice for M. Victor Hugo, he wished to add to this the immediate action of politics, and complete the writer by the orator.

He could take the oath to Louis Phillippe. He had more than paid his debt to the fallen monarchy. He was free to follow his own conviction, which had detached him from the Bourbons before their fall.

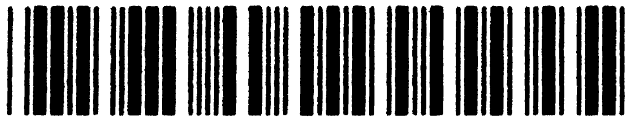
There were two tribunes, that of the Deputies and that of the Peers. Deputy he could not be: the Electoral law was made for those who were richer than he; *Notre-Dame de Paris* and *Les Feuilles d'Automne* were not equal to a farm or a house

The law could be evaded by a means, common enough, if one had a friend who was a house-owner: he lent you his house. But if M. Victor Hugo had borrowed the house of a friend, the privileged electors had little sympathy with literary men; writers were to them dreamers, well enough to amuse them in the intervals of their serious affairs, but the moment one was a thinker, and especially a poet, he became radically incapable of good sense and understood nothing of practical things. I know not by what mistake M. de Lamartine had been able to be elected; one poet was too much already; they certainly would not admit two.

There remained the Chamber of Peers. But, in order to be nominated, it was necessary to be in one of the categories from which the King had to choose. One only was accessible to M. Victor Hugo, the Academy. He presented himself in 1836: the Academy preferred M. Dupaty. He presented himself a second time in 1839: the Academy preferred M. Molé. He presented himself a third time in 1840: the Academy preferred M. Flourens. In 1841 he knocked for the fourth time at the door, which at length was opened to him.

He had thenceforth his foot upon the first step of the tribune, and commenced a new existence, which will be the subject of a new publication.

THE END.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