

**Les Miserables**

**By**

**Victor Hugo**

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# LES MISERABLES

## VOLUME I.--FANTINE.

### PREFACE

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

HAUTEVILLE HOUSE, 1862.

FANTINE

BOOK FIRST--A JUST MAN

CHAPTER I--M. MYRIEL

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

Although this detail has no connection whatever with the real substance of what we are about to relate, it will not be superfluous, if merely for the sake of exactness in all points, to mention here the various rumors and remarks which had been in circulation about him from the very moment when he arrived in the diocese. True or false, that which is said of men often occupies as important a place in their lives, and above all

in their destinies, as that which they do. M. Myriel was the son of a councillor of the Parliament of Aix; hence he belonged to the nobility of the bar. It was said that his father, destining him to be the heir of his own post, had married him at a very early age, eighteen or twenty, in accordance with a custom which is rather widely prevalent in parliamentary families. In spite of this marriage, however, it was said that Charles Myriel created a great deal of talk. He was well formed, though rather short in stature, elegant, graceful, intelligent; the whole of the first portion of his life had been devoted to the world and to gallantry.

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

Italy he was a priest.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mademoiselle Baptistine was a long, pale, thin, gentle creature; she realized the ideal expressed by the word "respectable"; for it seems that a woman must needs be a mother in order to be venerable. She had never been pretty; her whole life, which had been nothing but a



succession of holy deeds, had finally conferred upon her a sort of pallor and transparency; and as she advanced in years she had acquired what may be called the beauty of goodness. What had been leanness in her youth had become transparency in her maturity; and this diaphaneity allowed the angel to be seen. She was a soul rather than a virgin. Her person seemed made of a shadow; there was hardly sufficient body to provide for sex; a little matter enclosing a light; large eyes forever drooping;--a mere pretext for a soul's remaining on the earth.

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

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

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

## CHAPTER II--M. MYRIEL BECOMES M. WELCOME

The episcopal palace of D---- adjoins the hospital.

The episcopal palace was a huge and beautiful house, built of stone at the beginning of the last century by M. Henri Puget, Doctor of Theology of the Faculty of Paris, Abbe of Simore, who had been Bishop of D---- in 1712. This palace was a genuine seignorial residence. Everything about it had a grand air,--the apartments of the Bishop, the drawing-rooms, the chambers, the principal courtyard, which was very large, with walks encircling it under arcades in the old Florentine fashion, and gardens planted with magnificent trees. In the dining-room, a long and superb gallery which was situated on the ground-floor and opened on the gardens, M. Henri Puget had entertained in state, on July 29, 1714, My Lords Charles Brulart de Genlis, archbishop; Prince d'Embrun; Antoine de Mesgrigny, the capuchin, Bishop of Grasse; Philippe de Vendome, Grand Prior of France, Abbe of Saint Honore de Lerins; Francois de Berton de Crillon, bishop, Baron de Vence; Cesar de Sabran de Forcalquier, bishop, Seigneur of Glandeve; and Jean Soanen, Priest of the Oratory, preacher in ordinary to the king, bishop, Seigneur of Senez. The portraits of these seven reverend personages decorated this apartment; and this memorable date, the 29th of July, 1714, was there engraved in letters of gold on a table of white marble.

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

small garden.

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

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

"Twenty-six, Monseigneur."

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

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

"That is what I observed."

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

"So it seems to me."

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

"That was what I said to myself."

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

"That is the thought which occurred to me."

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

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

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

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

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

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

"It would hold full twenty beds," said he, as though speaking to

himself. Then, raising his voice:--

"Hold, Monsieur the director of the hospital, I will tell you something. There is evidently a mistake here. There are thirty-six of you, in five or six small rooms. There are three of us here, and we have room for sixty. There is some mistake, I tell you; you have my house, and I have yours. Give me back my house; you are at home here."

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

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

NOTE ON THE REGULATION OF MY HOUSEHOLD EXPENSES.

For the little seminary . . . . .	1,500 livres
Society of the mission . . . . .	100 "
For the Lazarists of Montdidier . . . . .	100 "

Seminary for foreign missions in Paris . . . . .	200 "
Congregation of the Holy Spirit . . . . .	150 "
Religious establishments of the Holy Land . . . . .	100 "
Charitable maternity societies . . . . .	300 "
Extra, for that of Arles . . . . .	50 "
Work for the amelioration of prisons . . . . .	400 "
Work for the relief and delivery of prisoners . . .	500 "
To liberate fathers of families incarcerated for debt	1,000 "
Addition to the salary of the poor teachers of the diocese . . . . .	2,000 "
Public granary of the Hautes-Alpes . . . . .	100 "
Congregation of the ladies of D----, of Manosque, and of Sisteron, for the gratuitous instruction of poor girls . . . . .	1,500 "
For the poor . . . . .	6,000 "
My personal expenses . . . . .	1,000 "
	-----
Total . . . . .	15,000 "

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

This arrangement was accepted with absolute submission by Mademoiselle Baptistine. This holy woman regarded Monseigneur of D---- as at one and

the same time her brother and her bishop, her friend according to the flesh and her superior according to the Church. She simply loved and venerated him. When he spoke, she bowed; when he acted, she yielded her adherence. Their only servant, Madame Magloire, grumbled a little. It will be observed that Monsieur the Bishop had reserved for himself only one thousand livres, which, added to the pension of Mademoiselle Baptistine, made fifteen hundred francs a year. On these fifteen hundred francs these two old women and the old man subsisted.

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

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

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

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

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

And he made his demand.

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

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

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



I am for Caesar alone." Etc., etc.

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

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

EXPENSES OF CARRIAGE AND CIRCUIT.

For furnishing meat soup to the patients in the hospital.	1,500	livres
For the maternity charitable society of Aix . . . . .	250	"
For the maternity charitable society of Draguignan . . .	250	"
For foundlings . . . . .	500	"
For orphans . . . . .	500	"
	-----	
Total . . . . .	3,000	"

Such was M. Myriel's budget.

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

the more asperity, since he bestowed them on the needy.

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

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

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

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

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

### CHAPTER III--A HARD BISHOPRIC FOR A GOOD BISHOP

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

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

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

In the course of these trips he was kind and indulgent, and talked rather than preached. He never went far in search of his arguments and

his examples. He quoted to the inhabitants of one district the example of a neighboring district. In the cantons where they were harsh to the poor, he said: "Look at the people of Briancon! They have conferred on the poor, on widows and orphans, the right to have their meadows mown three days in advance of every one else. They rebuild their houses for them gratuitously when they are ruined. Therefore it is a country which is blessed by God. For a whole century, there has not been a single murderer among them."

In villages which were greedy for profit and harvest, he said: "Look at the people of Embrun! If, at the harvest season, the father of a family has his son away on service in the army, and his daughters at service in the town, and if he is ill and incapacitated, the cure recommends him to the prayers of the congregation; and on Sunday, after the mass, all the inhabitants of the village--men, women, and children--go to the poor man's field and do his harvesting for him, and carry his straw and his grain to his granary." To families divided by questions of money and inheritance he said: "Look at the mountaineers of Devolny, a country so wild that the nightingale is not heard there once in fifty years.

Well, when the father of a family dies, the boys go off to seek their fortunes, leaving the property to the girls, so that they may find husbands." To the cantons which had a taste for lawsuits, and where the farmers ruined themselves in stamped paper, he said: "Look at those good peasants in the valley of Queyras! There are three thousand souls of them. Mon Dieu! it is like a little republic. Neither judge nor bailiff is known there. The mayor does everything. He allots the imposts,

taxes each person conscientiously, judges quarrels for nothing, divides inheritances without charge, pronounces sentences gratuitously; and he is obeyed, because he is a just man among simple men." To villages where he found no schoolmaster, he quoted once more the people of Queyras: "Do you know how they manage?" he said. "Since a little country of a dozen or fifteen hearths cannot always support a teacher, they have school-masters who are paid by the whole valley, who make the round of the villages, spending a week in this one, ten days in that, and instruct them. These teachers go to the fairs. I have seen them there. They are to be recognized by the quill pens which they wear in the cord of their hat. Those who teach reading only have one pen; those who teach reading and reckoning have two pens; those who teach reading, reckoning, and Latin have three pens. But what a disgrace to be ignorant! Do like the people of Queyras!"

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

## CHAPTER IV--WORKS CORRESPONDING TO WORDS

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

One of his distant relatives, Madame la Comtesse de Lo, rarely allowed an opportunity to escape of enumerating, in his presence, what she designated as "the expectations" of her three sons. She had numerous relatives, who were very old and near to death, and of whom her sons were the natural heirs. The youngest of the three was to receive from a grand-aunt a good hundred thousand livres of income; the second was the heir by entail to the title of the Duke, his uncle; the eldest was to succeed to the peerage of his grandfather. The Bishop was accustomed to listen in silence to these innocent and pardonable maternal boasts. On one occasion, however, he appeared to be more thoughtful than usual, while Madame de Lo was relating once again the details of all these inheritances and all these "expectations." She interrupted herself impatiently: "Mon Dieu, cousin! What are you thinking about?" "I am thinking," replied the Bishop, "of a singular remark, which is to be found, I believe, in St. Augustine,--'Place your hopes in the man from

whom you do not inherit."

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

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



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

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

"My very dear brethren, my good friends, there are thirteen hundred and twenty thousand peasants' dwellings in France which have but three openings; eighteen hundred and seventeen thousand hovels which have but two openings, the door and one window; and three hundred and forty-six thousand cabins besides which have but one opening, the door. And this arises from a thing which is called the tax on doors and windows. Just put poor families, old women and little children, in those buildings, and behold the fevers and maladies which result! Alas! God gives air to men; the law sells it to them. I do not blame the law, but I bless God. In the department of the Isere, in the Var, in the two departments of the Alpes, the Hautes, and the Basses, the peasants have not even

wheelbarrows; they transport their manure on the backs of men; they have no candles, and they burn resinous sticks, and bits of rope dipped in pitch. That is the state of affairs throughout the whole of the hilly country of Dauphine. They make bread for six months at one time; they bake it with dried cow-dung. In the winter they break this bread up with an axe, and they soak it for twenty-four hours, in order to render it eatable. My brethren, have pity! behold the suffering on all sides of you!"

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

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

Being, as he described himself with a smile, an ex-sinner, he had none of the asperities of austerity, and he professed, with a good deal of distinctness, and without the frown of the ferociously virtuous, a

doctrine which may be summed up as follows:--

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

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

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

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

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

He said, moreover, "Teach those who are ignorant as many things as possible; society is culpable, in that it does not afford instruction gratis; it is responsible for the night which it produces. This soul is full of shadow; sin is therein committed. The guilty one is not the person who has committed the sin, but the person who has created the shadow."

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

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

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

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

"At the Court of Assizes."

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

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

He went instantly to the prison, descended to the cell of the

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

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

He mounted the tumbril with him, he mounted the scaffold with him. The sufferer, who had been so gloomy and cast down on the preceding day, was radiant. He felt that his soul was reconciled, and he hoped in God. The Bishop embraced him, and at the moment when the knife was about to fall, he said to him: "God raises from the dead him whom man slays; he whom his brothers have rejected finds his Father once more. Pray, believe,

enter into life: the Father is there." When he descended from the scaffold, there was something in his look which made the people draw aside to let him pass. They did not know which was most worthy of admiration, his pallor or his serenity. On his return to the humble dwelling, which he designated, with a smile, as his palace, he said to his sister, "I have just officiated pontifically."

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

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

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

In fact, when the scaffold is there, all erected and prepared, it has something about it which produces hallucination. One may feel a certain indifference to the death penalty, one may refrain from pronouncing upon it, from saying yes or no, so long as one has not seen a guillotine with one's own eyes: but if one encounters one of them, the shock is violent; one is forced to decide, and to take part for or against. Some admire it, like de Maistre; others execrate it, like Beccaria. The guillotine is the concretion of the law; it is called vindicte; it is not neutral,

and it does not permit you to remain neutral. He who sees it shivers with the most mysterious of shivers. All social problems erect their interrogation point around this chopping-knife. The scaffold is a vision. The scaffold is not a piece of carpentry; the scaffold is not a machine; the scaffold is not an inert bit of mechanism constructed of wood, iron and cords.

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

Therefore, the impression was terrible and profound; on the day following the execution, and on many succeeding days, the Bishop appeared to be crushed. The almost violent serenity of the funereal moment had disappeared; the phantom of social justice tormented him. He, who generally returned from all his deeds with a radiant satisfaction, seemed to be reproaching himself. At times he talked to himself, and stammered lugubrious monologues in a low voice. This is one which his sister overheard one evening and preserved: "I did not think that it was



so monstrous. It is wrong to become absorbed in the divine law to such a degree as not to perceive human law. Death belongs to God alone. By what right do men touch that unknown thing?"

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

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

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

## CHAPTER V--MONSEIGNEUR BIENVENU MADE HIS CASSOCKS LAST TOO LONG

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

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

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

What time was left to him, after these thousand details of business, and his offices and his breviary, he bestowed first on the necessitous,

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

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

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

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

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

This inconvenienced him somewhat in summer.

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

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

After supper he conversed for half an hour with Mademoiselle Baptistine and Madame Magloire; then he retired to his own room and set to writing, sometimes on loose sheets, and again on the margin of some folio. He was a man of letters and rather learned. He left behind him five or six very curious manuscripts; among others, a dissertation on this verse in Genesis, In the beginning, the spirit of God floated upon the waters. With this verse he compares three texts: the Arabic verse which says, The winds of God blew; Flavius Josephus who says, A wind from above was precipitated upon the earth; and finally, the Chaldaic paraphrase of Onkelos, which renders it, A wind coming from God blew upon the face of the waters. In another dissertation, he examines the theological works

of Hugo, Bishop of Ptolemais, great-grand-uncle to the writer of this book, and establishes the fact, that to this bishop must be attributed the divers little works published during the last century, under the pseudonym of Barleycourt.

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

Here is the note:--

"Oh, you who are!

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

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

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

## CHAPTER VI--WHO GUARDED HIS HOUSE FOR HIM

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

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

His bedroom was tolerably large, and rather difficult to warm in bad weather. As wood is extremely dear at D----, he hit upon the idea of having a compartment of boards constructed in the cow-shed. Here he

passed his evenings during seasons of severe cold: he called it his winter salon.

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

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

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

It sometimes happened that there were twelve in the party; the Bishop



then relieved the embarrassment of the situation by standing in front of the chimney if it was winter, or by strolling in the garden if it was summer.

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

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

Nothing is more easy to present to the imagination than the Bishop's bedchamber. A glazed door opened on the garden; opposite this was the bed,--a hospital bed of iron, with a canopy of green serge; in the shadow of the bed, behind a curtain, were the utensils of the toilet, which still betrayed the elegant habits of the man of the world: there

were two doors, one near the chimney, opening into the oratory; the other near the bookcase, opening into the dining-room. The bookcase was a large cupboard with glass doors filled with books; the chimney was of wood painted to represent marble, and habitually without fire. In the chimney stood a pair of firedogs of iron, ornamented above with two garlanded vases, and flutings which had formerly been silvered with silver leaf, which was a sort of episcopal luxury; above the chimney-piece hung a crucifix of copper, with the silver worn off, fixed on a background of threadbare velvet in a wooden frame from which the gilding had fallen; near the glass door a large table with an inkstand, loaded with a confusion of papers and with huge volumes; before the table an arm-chair of straw; in front of the bed a prie-Dieu, borrowed from the oratory.

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

particulars written in whitish ink on a little square of paper, yellowed by time, and attached to the back of the portrait of the Abbe of Grand-Champ with four wafers.

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

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

However, in their latter years, Madame Magloire discovered beneath the paper which had been washed over, paintings, ornamenting the apartment of Mademoiselle Baptistine, as we shall see further on. Before becoming a hospital, this house had been the ancient parliament house of the Bourgeois. Hence this decoration. The chambers were paved in red bricks, which were washed every week, with straw mats in front of all the beds. Altogether, this dwelling, which was attended to by the two women, was exquisitely clean from top to bottom. This was the sole luxury which the Bishop permitted. He said, "That takes nothing from the poor."

It must be confessed, however, that he still retained from his former possessions six silver knives and forks and a soup-ladle, which

Madame Magloire contemplated every day with delight, as they glistened splendidly upon the coarse linen cloth. And since we are now painting the Bishop of D---- as he was in reality, we must add that he had said more than once, "I find it difficult to renounce eating from silver dishes."

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

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

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

better to grow salads there than bouquets." "Madame Magloire," retorted the Bishop, "you are mistaken. The beautiful is as useful as the useful." He added after a pause, "More so, perhaps."

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

The house had not a single door which could be locked. The door of the dining-room, which, as we have said, opened directly on the cathedral square, had formerly been ornamented with locks and bolts like the door of a prison. The Bishop had had all this ironwork removed, and this door was never fastened, either by night or by day, with anything except the latch. All that the first passerby had to do at any hour, was to give it a push. At first, the two women had been very much tried by this door, which was never fastened, but Monsieur de D---- had said to them, "Have bolts put on your rooms, if that will please you." They had ended by

sharing his confidence, or by at least acting as though they shared it. Madame Magloire alone had frights from time to time. As for the Bishop, his thought can be found explained, or at least indicated, in the three lines which he wrote on the margin of a Bible, "This is the shade of difference: the door of the physician should never be shut, the door of the priest should always be open."

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

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

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

Then he spoke of something else.

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

## CHAPTER VII--CRAVATTE

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

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

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



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

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

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

"Set out?"

"Set out."

"Alone?"

"Alone."

"Monseigneur, you will not do that!"

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

"But the brigands, Monseigneur?"

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

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

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

"They will rob you, Monseigneur."

"I have nothing."

"They will kill you."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

While they were thus embarrassed, a large chest was brought and

deposited in the presbytery for the Bishop, by two unknown horsemen, who departed on the instant. The chest was opened; it contained a cope of cloth of gold, a mitre ornamented with diamonds, an archbishop's cross, a magnificent crosier,--all the pontifical vestments which had been stolen a month previously from the treasury of Notre Dame d'Embrun. In the chest was a paper, on which these words were written, "From Cravatte to Monseigneur Bienvenu."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

which is couched in these terms, "The question is, to decide whether this should be turned over to the cathedral or to the hospital."

## CHAPTER VIII--PHILOSOPHY AFTER DRINKING

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

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

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

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

The senator was encouraged, and went on:--

"Let us be good fellows."

"Good devils even," said the Bishop.

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

"Like yourself, Count," interposed the Bishop.

The senator resumed:--

"I hate Diderot; he is an ideologist, a declaimer, and a revolutionist, a believer in God at bottom, and more bigoted than Voltaire. Voltaire made sport of Needham, and he was wrong, for Needham's eels prove that God is useless. A drop of vinegar in a spoonful of flour paste supplies the fiat lux. Suppose the drop to be larger and the spoonful bigger; you have the world. Man is the eel. Then what is the good of the Eternal Father? The Jehovah hypothesis tires me, Bishop. It is good for nothing but to produce shallow people, whose reasoning is hollow. Down with that



great All, which torments me! Hurrah for Zero which leaves me in peace!  
Between you and me, and in order to empty my sack, and make confession  
to my pastor, as it behooves me to do, I will admit to you that I  
have good sense. I am not enthusiastic over your Jesus, who preaches  
renunciation and sacrifice to the last extremity. 'Tis the counsel of an  
avaricious man to beggars. Renunciation; why? Sacrifice; to what end?  
I do not see one wolf immolating himself for the happiness of another  
wolf. Let us stick to nature, then. We are at the top; let us have a  
superior philosophy. What is the advantage of being at the top, if  
one sees no further than the end of other people's noses? Let us live  
merrily. Life is all. That man has another future elsewhere, on high,  
below, anywhere, I don't believe; not one single word of it. Ah!  
sacrifice and renunciation are recommended to me; I must take heed to  
everything I do; I must cudgel my brains over good and evil, over the  
just and the unjust, over the fas and the nefas. Why? Because I shall  
have to render an account of my actions. When? After death. What a fine  
dream! After my death it will be a very clever person who can catch me.  
Have a handful of dust seized by a shadow-hand, if you can. Let us tell  
the truth, we who are initiated, and who have raised the veil of Isis:  
there is no such thing as either good or evil; there is vegetation.  
Let us seek the real. Let us get to the bottom of it. Let us go into it  
thoroughly. What the deuce! let us go to the bottom of it! We must scent  
out the truth; dig in the earth for it, and seize it. Then it gives you  
exquisite joys. Then you grow strong, and you laugh. I am square on the  
bottom, I am. Immortality, Bishop, is a chance, a waiting for dead men's  
shoes. Ah! what a charming promise! trust to it, if you like! What a

fine lot Adam has! We are souls, and we shall be angels, with blue wings on our shoulder-blades. Do come to my assistance: is it not Tertullian who says that the blessed shall travel from star to star? Very well. We shall be the grasshoppers of the stars. And then, besides, we shall see God. Ta, ta, ta! What twaddle all these paradises are! God is a nonsensical monster. I would not say that in the *Moniteur*, egad! but I may whisper it among friends. Inter pocula. To sacrifice the world to paradise is to let slip the prey for the shadow. Be the dupe of the infinite! I'm not such a fool. I am a nought. I call myself Monsieur le Comte Nought, senator. Did I exist before my birth? No. Shall I exist after death? No. What am I? A little dust collected in an organism. What am I to do on this earth? The choice rests with me: suffer or enjoy. Whither will suffering lead me? To nothingness; but I shall have suffered. Whither will enjoyment lead me? To nothingness; but I shall have enjoyed myself. My choice is made. One must eat or be eaten. I shall eat. It is better to be the tooth than the grass. Such is my wisdom. After which, go whither I push thee, the grave-digger is there; the Pantheon for some of us: all falls into the great hole. End. Finis. Total liquidation. This is the vanishing-point. Death is death, believe me. I laugh at the idea of there being any one who has anything to tell me on that subject. Fables of nurses; bugaboo for children; Jehovah for men. No; our to-morrow is the night. Beyond the tomb there is nothing but equal nothingness. You have been Sardanapalus, you have been Vincent de Paul--it makes no difference. That is the truth. Then live your life, above all things. Make use of your I while you have it. In truth, Bishop, I tell you that I have a philosophy of my own, and I have my

philosophers. I don't let myself be taken in with that nonsense.

Of course, there must be something for those who are down,--for the barefooted beggars, knife-grinders, and miserable wretches. Legends, chimeras, the soul, immortality, paradise, the stars, are provided for them to swallow. They gobble it down. They spread it on their dry bread. He who has nothing else has the good. God. That is the least he can have. I oppose no objection to that; but I reserve Monsieur Naigeon for myself. The good God is good for the populace."

The Bishop clapped his hands.

"That's talking!" he exclaimed. "What an excellent and really marvellous thing is this materialism! Not every one who wants it can have it. Ah! when one does have it, one is no longer a dupe, one does not stupidly allow one's self to be exiled like Cato, nor stoned like Stephen, nor burned alive like Jeanne d'Arc. Those who have succeeded in procuring this admirable materialism have the joy of feeling themselves irresponsible, and of thinking that they can devour everything without uneasiness,--places, sinecures, dignities, power, whether well or ill acquired, lucrative recantations, useful treacheries, savory capitulations of conscience,--and that they shall enter the tomb with their digestion accomplished. How agreeable that is! I do not say that with reference to you, senator. Nevertheless, it is impossible for me to refrain from congratulating you. You great lords have, so you say, a philosophy of your own, and for yourselves, which is exquisite, refined, accessible to the rich alone, good for all sauces, and which seasons

the voluptuousness of life admirably. This philosophy has been extracted from the depths, and unearthed by special seekers. But you are good-natured princes, and you do not think it a bad thing that belief in the good God should constitute the philosophy of the people, very much as the goose stuffed with chestnuts is the truffled turkey of the poor."

## CHAPTER IX--THE BROTHER AS DEPICTED BY THE SISTER

In order to furnish an idea of the private establishment of the Bishop of D---, and of the manner in which those two sainted women subordinated their actions, their thoughts, their feminine instincts even, which are easily alarmed, to the habits and purposes of the Bishop, without his even taking the trouble of speaking in order to explain them, we cannot do better than transcribe in this place a letter from Mademoiselle Baptistine to Madame the Vicomtesse de Boischevron, the friend of her childhood. This letter is in our possession.

D---, Dec. 16, 18--.

MY GOOD MADAM: Not a day passes without our speaking of you. It is our established custom; but there is another reason besides. Just imagine, while washing and dusting the ceilings and walls, Madam Magloire has made some discoveries; now our two chambers hung with antique paper whitewashed over, would not discredit a chateau in the style of yours. Madam Magloire has pulled off all the paper. There were things beneath. My drawing-room, which contains no furniture, and which we use for spreading out the linen after washing, is fifteen feet in height, eighteen square, with a ceiling which was formerly painted and gilded, and with beams, as in yours. This was covered with a cloth while this was the hospital. And the woodwork was of the era of our grandmothers. But my room is the one you ought to see. Madam Magloire has discovered, under at least ten thicknesses of paper pasted on top, some paintings,

which without being good are very tolerable. The subject is Telemachus being knighted by Minerva in some gardens, the name of which escapes me. In short, where the Roman ladies repaired on one single night. What shall I say to you? I have Romans, and Roman ladies [here occurs an illegible word], and the whole train. Madam Magloire has cleaned it all off; this summer she is going to have some small injuries repaired, and the whole revarnished, and my chamber will be a regular museum. She has also found in a corner of the attic two wooden pier-tables of ancient fashion. They asked us two crowns of six francs each to regild them, but it is much better to give the money to the poor; and they are very ugly besides, and I should much prefer a round table of mahogany.

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

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

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

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

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

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

At first I used to say to myself, "There are no dangers which will stop him; he is terrible." Now I have ended by getting used to it. I make a sign to Madam Magloire that she is not to oppose him. He risks himself as he sees fit. I carry off Madam Magloire, I enter my chamber, I pray for him and fall asleep. I am at ease, because I know that if anything were to happen to him, it would be the end of me. I should go to the good God with my brother and my bishop. It has cost Madam Magloire more trouble than it did me to accustom herself to what she terms his imprudences. But now the habit has been acquired. We pray together, we tremble together, and we fall asleep. If the devil were to enter this house, he would be allowed to do so. After all, what is there for us

to fear in this house? There is always some one with us who is stronger than we. The devil may pass through it, but the good God dwells here.

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

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

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



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

BAPTISTINE.

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

As will be perceived from this letter, these two women understood how to mould themselves to the Bishop's ways with that special feminine genius which comprehends the man better than he comprehends himself. The Bishop of D---, in spite of the gentle and candid air which never deserted him, sometimes did things that were grand, bold, and magnificent, without seeming to have even a suspicion of the fact. They trembled, but they let him alone. Sometimes Madame Magloire essayed a remonstrance in advance, but never at the time, nor afterwards. They never interfered with him by so much as a word or sign, in any action once entered upon. At certain moments, without his having occasion to mention it, when he was not even conscious of it himself in all probability, so perfect was his simplicity, they vaguely felt that he was acting as a bishop; then

they were nothing more than two shadows in the house. They served him passively; and if obedience consisted in disappearing, they disappeared. They understood, with an admirable delicacy of instinct, that certain cares may be put under constraint. Thus, even when believing him to be in peril, they understood, I will not say his thought, but his nature, to such a degree that they no longer watched over him. They confided him to God.

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

## CHAPTER X--THE BISHOP IN THE PRESENCE OF AN UNKNOWN LIGHT

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

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

Member of the Convention, G---- was mentioned with a sort of horror in the little world of D---- A member of the Convention--can you imagine such a thing? That existed from the time when people called each other thou, and when they said "citizen." This man was almost a monster.

He had not voted for the death of the king, but almost. He was a quasi-regicide. He had been a terrible man. How did it happen that such a man had not been brought before a provost's court, on the return of the legitimate princes? They need not have cut off his head, if you please; clemency must be exercised, agreed; but a good banishment for life. An example, in short, etc. Besides, he was an atheist, like all the rest of those people. Gossip of the geese about the vulture.

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

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

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

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

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

Still, should the scab of the sheep cause the shepherd to recoil? No.

But what a sheep!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Bishop answered:--

"My name is Bienvenu Myriel."

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

"I am."

The old man resumed with a half-smile

"In that case, you are my bishop?"

"Something of that sort."

"Enter, sir."

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

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

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

He paused, and then said:--

"I shall die three hours hence."

Then he continued:--

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

the point of death. It is well that there should be witnesses at that moment. One has one's caprices; I should have liked to last until the dawn, but I know that I shall hardly live three hours. It will be night then. What does it matter, after all? Dying is a simple affair. One has no need of the light for that. So be it. I shall die by starlight."

The old man turned to the shepherd lad:--

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

The child entered the hut.

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

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

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



powerful ones of the earth; for the first time in his life, probably, the Bishop felt in a mood to be severe.

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

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

survived with all the power of life, and seemed full of light. G----,  
at this solemn moment, resembled the king in that tale of the Orient who  
was flesh above and marble below.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"And conscience," added the Bishop.

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

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

The member of the Convention resumed:--

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

"Mixed joy," said the Bishop.

"You may say troubled joy, and to-day, after that fatal return of the past, which is called 1814, joy which has disappeared! Alas! The work was incomplete, I admit: we demolished the ancient regime in deeds; we were not able to suppress it entirely in ideas. To destroy abuses is not

sufficient; customs must be modified. The mill is there no longer; the wind is still there."

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

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

The Bishop could not refrain from murmuring:--

"Yes? '93!"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A momentary silence ensued. The Bishop almost regretted having come, and

yet he felt vaguely and strangely shaken.

The conventional resumed:--

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

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

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

"I weep for all," said the Bishop.

"Equally!" exclaimed conventional G----; "and if the balance must

incline, let it be on the side of the people. They have been suffering longer."

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Bishop resumed mildly:--

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

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



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

"I thank you," said the Bishop.

G---- resumed.

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

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

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

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

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

"Let me say a few words more in this and that direction; I am willing. Apart from the Revolution, which, taken as a whole, is an immense human affirmation, '93 is, alas! a rejoinder. You think it inexorable, sir; but what of the whole monarchy, sir? Carrier is a bandit; but what name do you give to Montrevel? Fouquier-Tainville is a rascal; but what is your opinion as to Lamoignon-Baville? Maillard is terrible; but Saulx-Tavannes, if you please? Duchene senior is ferocious; but what epithet will you allow me for the elder Letellier? Jourdan-Coupe-Tete is a monster; but not so great a one as M. the Marquis de Louvois. Sir, sir, I am sorry for Marie Antoinette, archduchess and queen; but I am also sorry for that poor Huguenot woman, who, in 1685, under Louis the Great, sir, while with a nursing infant, was bound, naked to the waist, to a stake, and the child kept at a distance; her breast swelled with milk and her heart with anguish; the little one, hungry and pale, beheld that breast and cried and agonized; the executioner said to the woman, a mother and a nurse, 'Abjure!' giving her her choice between the death of her infant and the death of her conscience. What say you to that torture of Tantalus as applied to a mother? Bear this well in mind sir: the French Revolution had its reasons for existence; its wrath will be absolved by the future; its result is the world made better. From its most terrible blows there comes forth a caress for the human race. I

abridge, I stop, I have too much the advantage; moreover, I am dying."

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Bishop experienced an indescribable shock.

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Bishop," said he, with a slowness which probably arose more from his dignity of soul than from the failing of his strength, "I have passed my life in meditation, study, and contemplation. I was sixty years of age when my country called me and commanded me to concern myself with its affairs. I obeyed. Abuses existed, I combated them; tyrannies existed, I destroyed them; rights and principles existed, I proclaimed and confessed them. Our territory was invaded, I defended it; France was menaced, I offered my breast. I was not rich; I am poor. I have been one of the masters of the state; the vaults of the treasury were encumbered with specie to such a degree that we were forced to shore up the walls, which were on the point of bursting beneath the weight of gold and silver; I dined in Dead Tree Street, at twenty-two sous. I have succored the oppressed, I have comforted the suffering. I tore the cloth from the altar, it is true; but it was to bind up the wounds of my country. I have always upheld the march forward of the human race, forward towards the light, and I have sometimes resisted progress without pity. I have, when the occasion offered, protected my own adversaries, men of your profession. And there is at Peteghem, in Flanders, at the very spot where the Merovingian kings had their summer palace, a convent of Urbanists, the Abbey of Sainte Claire en Beaulieu, which I saved in 1793. I have done my duty according to my powers, and all the good that I was able. After which, I was hunted down, pursued, persecuted, blackened, jeered at, scorned, cursed, proscribed. For many years past, I with my white hair have been conscious that many people think they have the right to despise me; to the poor ignorant masses I present the

visage of one damned. And I accept this isolation of hatred, without hating any one myself. Now I am eighty-six years old; I am on the point of death. What is it that you have come to ask of me?"

"Your blessing," said the Bishop.

And he knelt down.

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

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

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

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

This "pastoral visit" naturally furnished an occasion for a murmur of

comment in all the little local coteries.

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

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

## CHAPTER XI--A RESTRICTION

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

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

Let us, then, go back a few years.

Some time after the elevation of M. Myriel to the episcopate, the Emperor had made him a baron of the Empire, in company with many other bishops. The arrest of the Pope took place, as every one knows, on the night of the 5th to the 6th of July, 1809; on this occasion, M. Myriel was summoned by Napoleon to the synod of the bishops of France and Italy convened at Paris. This synod was held at Notre-Dame, and assembled for the first time on the 15th of June, 1811, under the presidency of Cardinal Fesch. M. Myriel was one of the ninety-five bishops who attended it. But he was present only at one sitting and at three or four private conferences. Bishop of a mountain diocese, living so very close to nature, in rusticity and deprivation, it appeared that he imported



among these eminent personages, ideas which altered the temperature of the assembly. He very soon returned to D---- He was interrogated as to this speedy return, and he replied: "I embarrassed them. The outside air penetrated to them through me. I produced on them the effect of an open door."

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

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

Let us remark, by the way, that the hatred of luxury is not an intelligent hatred. This hatred would involve the hatred of the arts. Nevertheless, in churchmen, luxury is wrong, except in connection with representations and ceremonies. It seems to reveal habits which have very little that is charitable about them. An opulent priest is a contradiction. The priest must keep close to the poor. Now, can one come in contact incessantly night and day with all this distress, all these misfortunes, and this poverty, without having about one's own person a little of that misery, like the dust of labor? Is it possible to imagine

a man near a brazier who is not warm? Can one imagine a workman who is working near a furnace, and who has neither a singed hair, nor blackened nails, nor a drop of sweat, nor a speck of ashes on his face? The first proof of charity in the priest, in the bishop especially, is poverty.

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

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

Besides his sister, Mademoiselle Baptistine, he had two brothers, one a general, the other a prefect. He wrote to both with tolerable frequency. He was harsh for a time towards the former, because, holding a command in Provence at the epoch of the disembarkation at Cannes, the general had put himself at the head of twelve hundred men and had pursued the Emperor as though the latter had been a person whom one is desirous

of allowing to escape. His correspondence with the other brother, the ex-prefect, a fine, worthy man who lived in retirement at Paris, Rue Cassette, remained more affectionate.

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

While admitting that it was not for a political office that God created Monseigneur Welcome, we should have understood and admired his protest in the name of right and liberty, his proud opposition, his just but perilous resistance to the all-powerful Napoleon. But that which pleases us in people who are rising pleases us less in the case of people who

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

With this exception, he was in all things just, true, equitable, intelligent, humble and dignified, beneficent and kindly, which is only another sort of benevolence. He was a priest, a sage, and a man. It must be admitted, that even in the political views with which we have just

reproached him, and which we are disposed to judge almost with severity, he was tolerant and easy, more so, perhaps, than we who are speaking here. The porter of the town-hall had been placed there by the Emperor. He was an old non-commissioned officer of the old guard, a member of the Legion of Honor at Austerlitz, as much of a Bonapartist as the eagle. This poor fellow occasionally let slip inconsiderate remarks, which the law then stigmatized as seditious speeches. After the imperial profile disappeared from the Legion of Honor, he never dressed himself in his regimentals, as he said, so that he should not be obliged to wear his cross. He had himself devoutly removed the imperial effigy from the cross which Napoleon had given him; this made a hole, and he would not put anything in its place. "I will die," he said, "rather than wear the three frogs upon my heart!" He liked to scoff aloud at Louis XVIII. "The gouty old creature in English gaiters!" he said; "let him take himself off to Prussia with that queue of his." He was happy to combine in the same imprecation the two things which he most detested, Prussia and England. He did it so often that he lost his place. There he was, turned out of the house, with his wife and children, and without bread. The Bishop sent for him, reproved him gently, and appointed him beadle in the cathedral.

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

## CHAPTER XII--THE SOLITUDE OF MONSEIGNEUR WELCOME

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

Just as there are bigwigs elsewhere, there are big mitres in the Church. These are the bishops who stand well at Court, who are rich, well endowed, skilful, accepted by the world, who know how to pray, no doubt, but who know also how to beg, who feel little scruple at making a whole diocese dance attendance in their person, who are connecting links between the sacristy and diplomacy, who are abbés rather than priests, prelates rather than bishops. Happy those who approach them! Being persons of influence, they create a shower about them, upon the assiduous and the favored, and upon all the young men who understand

the art of pleasing, of large parishes, prebends, archidiaconates, chaplaincies, and cathedral posts, while awaiting episcopal honors. As they advance themselves, they cause their satellites to progress also; it is a whole solar system on the march. Their radiance casts a gleam of purple over their suite. Their prosperity is crumbled up behind the scenes, into nice little promotions. The larger the diocese of the patron, the fatter the curacy for the favorite. And then, there is Rome. A bishop who understands how to become an archbishop, an archbishop who knows how to become a cardinal, carries you with him as conclavist; you enter a court of papal jurisdiction, you receive the pallium, and behold! you are an auditor, then a papal chamberlain, then monsignor, and from a Grace to an Eminence is only a step, and between the Eminence and the Holiness there is but the smoke of a ballot. Every skull-cap may dream of the tiara. The priest is nowadays the only man who can become a king in a regular manner; and what a king! the supreme king. Then what a nursery of aspirations is a seminary! How many blushing choristers, how many youthful abbess bear on their heads Perrette's pot of milk! Who knows how easy it is for ambition to call itself vocation? in good faith, perchance, and deceiving itself, devotee that it is.

Monseigneur Bienvenu, poor, humble, retiring, was not accounted among the big mitres. This was plain from the complete absence of young priests about him. We have seen that he "did not take" in Paris. Not a single future dreamed of engrafting itself on this solitary old man. Not a single sprouting ambition committed the folly of putting forth its foliage in his shadow. His canons and grand-vicars were good old men,

rather vulgar like himself, walled up like him in this diocese, without exit to a cardinalship, and who resembled their bishop, with this difference, that they were finished and he was completed. The impossibility of growing great under Monseigneur Bienvenu was so well understood, that no sooner had the young men whom he ordained left the seminary than they got themselves recommended to the archbishops of Aix or of Auch, and went off in a great hurry. For, in short, we repeat it, men wish to be pushed. A saint who dwells in a paroxysm of abnegation is a dangerous neighbor; he might communicate to you, by contagion, an incurable poverty, an ankylosis of the joints, which are useful in advancement, and in short, more renunciation than you desire; and this infectious virtue is avoided. Hence the isolation of Monseigneur Bienvenu. We live in the midst of a gloomy society. Success; that is the lesson which falls drop by drop from the slope of corruption.

Be it said in passing, that success is a very hideous thing. Its false resemblance to merit deceives men. For the masses, success has almost the same profile as supremacy. Success, that Menaechmus of talent, has one dupe,--history. Juvenal and Tacitus alone grumble at it. In our day, a philosophy which is almost official has entered into its service, wears the livery of success, and performs the service of its antechamber. Succeed: theory. Prosperity argues capacity. Win in the lottery, and behold! you are a clever man. He who triumphs is venerated. Be born with a silver spoon in your mouth! everything lies in that. Be lucky, and you will have all the rest; be happy, and people will think you great. Outside of five or six immense exceptions, which compose



the splendor of a century, contemporary admiration is nothing but short-sightedness. Gilding is gold. It does no harm to be the first arrival by pure chance, so long as you do arrive. The common herd is an old Narcissus who adores himself, and who applauds the vulgar herd. That enormous ability by virtue of which one is Moses, Aeschylus, Dante, Michael Angelo, or Napoleon, the multitude awards on the spot, and by acclamation, to whomsoever attains his object, in whatsoever it may consist. Let a notary transfigure himself into a deputy: let a false Corneille compose Tiridate; let a eunuch come to possess a harem; let a military Prudhomme accidentally win the decisive battle of an epoch; let an apothecary invent cardboard shoe-soles for the army of the Sambre-and-Meuse, and construct for himself, out of this cardboard, sold as leather, four hundred thousand francs of income; let a pork-packer espouse usury, and cause it to bring forth seven or eight millions, of which he is the father and of which it is the mother; let a preacher become a bishop by force of his nasal drawl; let the steward of a fine family be so rich on retiring from service that he is made minister of finances,--and men call that Genius, just as they call the face of Mousqueton Beauty, and the mien of Claude Majesty. With the constellations of space they confound the stars of the abyss which are made in the soft mire of the puddle by the feet of ducks.

## CHAPTER XIII--WHAT HE BELIEVED

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

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

The point which we consider it our duty to note is, that outside of and beyond his faith, as it were, the Bishop possessed an excess of love. It was in that quarter, *quia multum amavit*,--because he loved much--that he was regarded as vulnerable by "serious men," "grave persons" and "reasonable people"; favorite locutions of our sad world where egotism takes its word of command from pedantry. What was this excess of love? It was a serene benevolence which overflowed men, as we have already pointed out, and which, on occasion, extended even to things. He lived

without disdain. He was indulgent towards God's creation. Every man, even the best, has within him a thoughtless harshness which he reserves for animals. The Bishop of D---- had none of that harshness, which is peculiar to many priests, nevertheless. He did not go as far as the Brahmin, but he seemed to have weighed this saying of Ecclesiastes: "Who knoweth whither the soul of the animal goeth?" Hideousness of aspect, deformity of instinct, troubled him not, and did not arouse his indignation. He was touched, almost softened by them. It seemed as though he went thoughtfully away to seek beyond the bounds of life which is apparent, the cause, the explanation, or the excuse for them. He seemed at times to be asking God to commute these penalties. He examined without wrath, and with the eye of a linguist who is deciphering a palimpsest, that portion of chaos which still exists in nature. This reverie sometimes caused him to utter odd sayings. One morning he was in his garden, and thought himself alone, but his sister was walking behind him, unseen by him: suddenly he paused and gazed at something on the ground; it was a large, black, hairy, frightful spider. His sister heard him say:--

"Poor beast! It is not its fault!"

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

more venerable possible.

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

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

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

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

As we have seen, prayer, the celebration of the offices of religion, alms-giving, the consolation of the afflicted, the cultivation of a bit of land, fraternity, frugality, hospitality, renunciation, confidence, study, work, filled every day of his life. Filled is exactly the word; certainly the Bishop's day was quite full to the brim, of good words and good deeds. Nevertheless, it was not complete if cold or rainy weather prevented his passing an hour or two in his garden before going to bed, and after the two women had retired. It seemed to be a sort of rite with him, to prepare himself for slumber by meditation in the presence of the grand spectacles of the nocturnal heavens. Sometimes, if the two old

women were not asleep, they heard him pacing slowly along the walks at a very advanced hour of the night. He was there alone, communing with himself, peaceful, adoring, comparing the serenity of his heart with the serenity of the ether, moved amid the darkness by the visible splendor of the constellations and the invisible splendor of God, opening his heart to the thoughts which fall from the Unknown. At such moments, while he offered his heart at the hour when nocturnal flowers offer their perfume, illuminated like a lamp amid the starry night, as he poured himself out in ecstasy in the midst of the universal radiance of creation, he could not have told himself, probably, what was passing in his spirit; he felt something take its flight from him, and something descend into him. Mysterious exchange of the abysses of the soul with the abysses of the universe!

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

He seated himself on a wooden bench, with his back against a decrepit

vine; he gazed at the stars, past the puny and stunted silhouettes of his fruit-trees. This quarter of an acre, so poorly planted, so encumbered with mean buildings and sheds, was dear to him, and satisfied his wants.

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

## CHAPTER XIV--WHAT HE THOUGHT

One last word.

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

There are men who toil at extracting gold; he toiled at the extraction of pity. Universal misery was his mine. The sadness which reigned everywhere was but an excuse for unfailing kindness. Love each other; he declared this to be complete, desired nothing further, and that was the whole of his doctrine. One day, that man who believed himself to be a "philosopher," the senator who has already been alluded to, said to the Bishop: "Just survey the spectacle of the world: all war against all; the strongest has the most wit. Your love each other is nonsense."--"Well," replied Monseigneur Welcome, without contesting the point, "if it is nonsense, the soul should shut itself up in it, as the pearl in the oyster." Thus he shut himself up, he lived there, he

was absolutely satisfied with it, leaving on one side the prodigious questions which attract and terrify, the fathomless perspectives of abstraction, the precipices of metaphysics--all those profundities which converge, for the apostle in God, for the atheist in nothingness; destiny, good and evil, the way of being against being, the conscience of man, the thoughtful somnambulism of the animal, the transformation in death, the recapitulation of existences which the tomb contains, the incomprehensible grafting of successive loves on the persistent I, the essence, the substance, the Nile, and the Ens, the soul, nature, liberty, necessity; perpendicular problems, sinister obscurities, where lean the gigantic archangels of the human mind; formidable abysses, which Lucretius, Manou, Saint Paul, Dante, contemplate with eyes flashing lightning, which seems by its steady gaze on the infinite to cause stars to blaze forth there.

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