BOOK THIRD.--IN THE YEAR 1817

CHAPTER I--THE YEAR 1817

1817 is the year which Louis XVIII., with a certain royal assurance which was not wanting in pride, entitled the twenty-second of his reign. It is the year in which M. Bruguiere de Sorsum was celebrated. All the hairdressers' shops, hoping for powder and the return of the royal bird, were besmeared with azure and decked with fleurs-de-lys. It was the candid time at which Count Lynch sat every Sunday as church-warden in the church-warden's pew of Saint-Germain-des-Pres, in his costume of a peer of France, with his red ribbon and his long nose and the majesty of profile peculiar to a man who has performed a brilliant action.
The brilliant action performed by M. Lynch was this: being mayor of Bordeaux, on the 12th of March, 1814, he had surrendered the city a little too promptly to M. the Duke d'Angouleme. Hence his peerage. In 1817 fashion swallowed up little boys of from four to six years of age in vast caps of morocco leather with ear-tabs resembling Esquimaux mitres. The French army was dressed in white, after the mode of the Austrian; the regiments were called legions; instead of numbers they bore the names of departments; Napoleon was at St. Helena; and since England refused him green cloth, he was having his old coats turned.

In 1817 Pelligrini sang; Mademoiselle Bigottini danced; Potier reigned; Odry did not yet exist. Madame Saqui had succeeded to Forioso. There were still Prussians in France. M. Delalot was a personage. Legitimacy had just asserted itself by cutting off the hand, then the head, of Pleignier, of Carbonneau, and of Tolleron. The Prince de Talleyrand, grand chamberlain, and the Abbe Louis, appointed minister of finance, laughed as they looked at each other, with the laugh of the two augurs; both of them had celebrated, on the 14th of July, 1790, the mass of federation in the Champ de Mars; Talleyrand had said it as bishop, Louis had served it in the capacity of deacon. In 1817, in the side-alleys of this same Champ de Mars, two great cylinders of wood might have been seen lying in the rain, rotting amid the grass, painted blue, with traces of eagles and bees, from which the gilding was falling. These were the columns which two years before had upheld the Emperor's platform in the Champ de Mai. They were blackened here and there with the scorches of the bivouac of Austrians encamped near Gros-Caillou. Two or three of these columns had disappeared in these bivouac fires, and had warmed the large hands of the Imperial troops. The Field of May had this remarkable point: that it had been held in the month of June and in the Field of March (Mars). In this year, 1817, two things were popular: the Voltaire-Touquet and the snuff-box a la Charter. The most recent Parisian sensation was the crime of Dautun, who had thrown his brother's head into the fountain of the Flower-Market.

They had begun to feel anxious at the Naval Department, on account of the lack of news from that fatal frigate, The Medusa, which was destined

to cover Chaumareix with infamy and Gericault with glory. Colonel Selves was going to Egypt to become Soliman-Pasha. The palace of Thermes, in the Rue de La Harpe, served as a shop for a cooper. On the platform of the octagonal tower of the Hotel de Cluny, the little shed of boards, which had served as an observatory to Messier, the naval astronomer under Louis XVI., was still to be seen. The Duchesse de Duras read to three or four friends her unpublished Ourika, in her boudoir furnished by X. in sky-blue satin. The N's were scratched off the Louvre. The bridge of Austerlitz had abdicated, and was entitled the bridge of the King's Garden [du Jardin du Roi], a double enigma, which disguised the bridge of Austerlitz and the Jardin des Plantes at one stroke. Louis XVIII., much preoccupied while annotating Horace with the corner of his finger-nail, heroes who have become emperors, and makers of wooden shoes who have become dauphins, had two anxieties,--Napoleon and Mathurin Bruneau. The French Academy had given for its prize subject, The Happiness procured through Study. M. Bellart was officially eloquent. In his shadow could be seen germinating that future advocate-general of Broe, dedicated to the sarcasms of Paul-Louis Courier. There was a false Chateaubriand, named Marchangy, in the interim, until there should be a false Marchangy, named d'Arlincourt. Claire d'Albe and Malek-Adel were masterpieces; Madame Cottin was proclaimed the chief writer of the epoch. The Institute had the academician, Napoleon Bonaparte, stricken from its list of members. A royal ordinance erected Angouleme into a naval school; for the Duc d'Angouleme, being lord high admiral, it was evident that the city of Angouleme had all the qualities of a seaport; otherwise the monarchical principle would have received a wound. In

the Council of Ministers the question was agitated whether vignettes representing slack-rope performances, which adorned Franconi's advertising posters, and which attracted throngs of street urchins, should be tolerated. M. Paer, the author of Agnese, a good sort of fellow, with a square face and a wart on his cheek, directed the little private concerts of the Marquise de Sasenaye in the Rue Ville l'Eveque. All the young girls were singing the Hermit of Saint-Avelle, with words by Edmond Geraud. The Yellow Dwarf was transferred into Mirror. The Cafe Lemblin stood up for the Emperor, against the Cafe Valois, which upheld the Bourbons. The Duc de Berri, already surveyed from the shadow by Louvel, had just been married to a princess of Sicily. Madame de Stael had died a year previously. The body-guard hissed Mademoiselle Mars. The grand newspapers were all very small. Their form was restricted, but their liberty was great. The Constitutionnel was constitutional. La Minerve called Chateaubriand Chateaubriant. That made the good middle-class people laugh heartily at the expense of the great writer. In journals which sold themselves, prostituted journalists, insulted the exiles of 1815. David had no longer any talent, Arnault had no longer any wit, Carnot was no longer honest, Soult had won no battles; it is true that Napoleon had no longer any genius. No one is ignorant of the fact that letters sent to an exile by post very rarely reached him, as the police made it their religious duty to intercept them. This is no new fact; Descartes complained of it in his exile. Now David, having, in a Belgian publication, shown some displeasure at not receiving letters which had been written to him, it struck the royalist journals as amusing; and they derided the prescribed man well on this occasion. What

separated two men more than an abyss was to say, the regicides, or to say the voters; to say the enemies, or to say the allies; to say Napoleon, or to say Buonaparte. All sensible people were agreed that the era of revolution had been closed forever by King Louis XVIII., surnamed "The Immortal Author of the Charter." On the platform of the Pont-Neuf, the word Redivivus was carved on the pedestal that awaited the statue of Henry IV. M. Piet, in the Rue Therese, No. 4, was making the rough draft of his privy assembly to consolidate the monarchy. The leaders of the Right said at grave conjunctures, "We must write to Bacot." MM. Canuel, O'Mahoney, and De Chappedelaine were preparing the sketch, to some extent with Monsieur's approval, of what was to become later on "The Conspiracy of the Bord de l'Eau"--of the waterside. L'Epingle Noire was already plotting in his own quarter. Delaverderie was conferring with Trogoff. M. Decazes, who was liberal to a degree, reigned. Chateaubriand stood every morning at his window at No. 27 Rue Saint-Dominique, clad in footed trousers, and slippers, with a madras kerchief knotted over his gray hair, with his eyes fixed on a mirror, a complete set of dentist's instruments spread out before him, cleaning his teeth, which were charming, while he dictated The Monarchy according to the Charter to M. Pilorge, his secretary. Criticism, assuming an authoritative tone, preferred Lafon to Talma. M. de Feletez signed himself A.; M. Hoffmann signed himself Z. Charles Nodier wrote Therese Aubert. Divorce was abolished. Lyceums called themselves colleges. The collegians, decorated on the collar with a golden fleur-de-lys, fought each other apropos of the King of Rome. The counter-police of the chateau had denounced to her Royal Highness Madame, the portrait, everywhere exhibited, of M. the

Duc d'Orleans, who made a better appearance in his uniform of a colonel-general of hussars than M. the Duc de Berri, in his uniform of colonel-general of dragoons--a serious inconvenience. The city of Paris was having the dome of the Invalides regilded at its own expense. Serious men asked themselves what M. de Trinquelague would do on such or such an occasion; M. Clausel de Montals differed on divers points from M. Clausel de Coussergues; M. de Salaberry was not satisfied. The comedian Picard, who belonged to the Academy, which the comedian Moliere had not been able to do, had The Two Philiberts played at the Odeon, upon whose pediment the removal of the letters still allowed THEATRE OF THE EMPRESS to be plainly read. People took part for or against Cugnet de Montarlot. Fabvier was factious; Bavoux was revolutionary. The Liberal, Pelicier, published an edition of Voltaire, with the following title: Works of Voltaire, of the French Academy. "That will attract purchasers," said the ingenious editor. The general opinion was that M. Charles Loyson would be the genius of the century; envy was beginning to gnaw at him--a sign of glory; and this verse was composed on him:--

"Even when Loyson steals, one feels that he has paws."

As Cardinal Fesch refused to resign, M. de Pins, Archbishop of Amasie, administered the diocese of Lyons. The quarrel over the valley of Dappes was begun between Switzerland and France by a memoir from Captain, afterwards General Dufour. Saint-Simon, ignored, was erecting his sublime dream. There was a celebrated Fourier at the Academy of Science, whom posterity has forgotten; and in some garret an obscure Fourier,

whom the future will recall. Lord Byron was beginning to make his mark; a note to a poem by Millevoye introduced him to France in these terms: a certain Lord Baron. David d'Angers was trying to work in marble. The Abbe Caron was speaking, in terms of praise, to a private gathering of seminarists in the blind alley of Feuillantines, of an unknown priest, named Felicite-Robert, who, at a latter date, became Lamennais. A thing which smoked and clattered on the Seine with the noise of a swimming dog went and came beneath the windows of the Tuileries, from the Pont Royal to the Pont Louis XV.; it was a piece of mechanism which was not good for much; a sort of plaything, the idle dream of a dream-ridden inventor; an utopia--a steamboat. The Parisians stared indifferently at this useless thing. M. de Vaublanc, the reformer of the Institute by a coup d'etat, the distinguished author of numerous academicians, ordinances, and batches of members, after having created them, could not succeed in becoming one himself. The Faubourg Saint-Germain and the pavilion de Marsan wished to have M. Delaveau for prefect of police, on account of his piety. Dupuytren and Recamier entered into a quarrel in the amphitheatre of the School of Medicine, and threatened each other with their fists on the subject of the divinity of Jesus Christ. Cuvier, with one eye on Genesis and the other on nature, tried to please bigoted reaction by reconciling fossils with texts and by making mastodons flatter Moses.

M. Francois de Neufchateau, the praiseworthy cultivator of the memory of Parmentier, made a thousand efforts to have pomme de terre [potato] pronounced parmentiere, and succeeded therein not at all. The Abbe

Gregoire, ex-bishop, ex-conventionary, ex-senator, had passed, in the royalist polemics, to the state of "Infamous Gregoire." The locution of which we have made use--passed to the state of--has been condemned as a neologism by M. Royer Collard. Under the third arch of the Pont de Jena, the new stone with which, the two years previously, the mining aperture made by Blucher to blow up the bridge had been stopped up, was still recognizable on account of its whiteness. Justice summoned to its bar a man who, on seeing the Comte d'Artois enter Notre Dame, had said aloud: "Sapristi! I regret the time when I saw Bonaparte and Talma enter the Bel Sauvage, arm in arm." A seditious utterance. Six months in prison. Traitors showed themselves unbuttoned; men who had gone over to the enemy on the eve of battle made no secret of their recompense, and strutted immodestly in the light of day, in the cynicism of riches and dignities; deserters from Ligny and Quatre-Bras, in the brazenness of their well-paid turpitude, exhibited their devotion to the monarchy in the most barefaced manner.

This is what floats up confusedly, pell-mell, for the year 1817, and is now forgotten. History neglects nearly all these particulars, and cannot do otherwise; the infinity would overwhelm it. Nevertheless, these details, which are wrongly called trivial,--there are no trivial facts in humanity, nor little leaves in vegetation,--are useful. It is of the physiognomy of the years that the physiognomy of the centuries is composed. In this year of 1817 four young Parisians arranged "a fine farce."

CHAPTER II--A DOUBLE QUARTETTE

These Parisians came, one from Toulouse, another from Limoges, the third from Cahors, and the fourth from Montauban; but they were students; and when one says student, one says Parisian: to study in Paris is to be born in Paris.

These young men were insignificant; every one has seen such faces; four specimens of humanity taken at random; neither good nor bad, neither wise nor ignorant, neither geniuses nor fools; handsome, with that charming April which is called twenty years. They were four Oscars; for, at that epoch, Arthurs did not yet exist. Burn for him the perfumes of Araby! exclaimed romance. Oscar advances. Oscar, I shall behold him! People had just emerged from Ossian; elegance was Scandinavian and Caledonian; the pure English style was only to prevail later, and the first of the Arthurs, Wellington, had but just won the battle of Waterloo.

These Oscars bore the names, one of Felix Tholomyes, of Toulouse; the second, Listolier, of Cahors; the next, Fameuil, of Limoges; the last, Blachevelle, of Montauban. Naturally, each of them had his mistress. Blachevelle loved Favourite, so named because she had been in England; Listolier adored Dahlia, who had taken for her nickname the name of a flower; Fameuil idolized Zephine, an abridgment of Josephine; Tholomyes

had Fantine, called the Blonde, because of her beautiful, sunny hair.

Favourite, Dahlia, Zephine, and Fantine were four ravishing young women, perfumed and radiant, still a little like working-women, and not yet entirely divorced from their needles; somewhat disturbed by intrigues, but still retaining on their faces something of the serenity of toil, and in their souls that flower of honesty which survives the first fall in woman. One of the four was called the young, because she was the youngest of them, and one was called the old; the old one was twenty-three. Not to conceal anything, the three first were more experienced, more heedless, and more emancipated into the tumult of life than Fantine the Blonde, who was still in her first illusions.

Dahlia, Zephine, and especially Favourite, could not have said as much. There had already been more than one episode in their romance, though hardly begun; and the lover who had borne the name of Adolph in the first chapter had turned out to be Alphonse in the second, and Gustave in the third. Poverty and coquetry are two fatal counsellors; one scolds and the other flatters, and the beautiful daughters of the people have both of them whispering in their ear, each on its own side. These badly guarded souls listen. Hence the falls which they accomplish, and the stones which are thrown at them. They are overwhelmed with splendor of all that is immaculate and inaccessible. Alas! what if the Jungfrau were hungry?

Favourite having been in England, was admired by Dahlia and Zephine. She

had had an establishment of her own very early in life. Her father was an old unmarried professor of mathematics, a brutal man and a braggart, who went out to give lessons in spite of his age. This professor, when he was a young man, had one day seen a chambermaid's gown catch on a fender; he had fallen in love in consequence of this accident. The result had been Favourite. She met her father from time to time, and he bowed to her. One morning an old woman with the air of a devotee, had entered her apartments, and had said to her, "You do not know me, Mamemoiselle?" "No." "I am your mother." Then the old woman opened the sideboard, and ate and drank, had a mattress which she owned brought in, and installed herself. This cross and pious old mother never spoke to Favourite, remained hours without uttering a word, breakfasted, dined, and supped for four, and went down to the porter's quarters for company, where she spoke ill of her daughter.

It was having rosy nails that were too pretty which had drawn Dahlia to Listolier, to others perhaps, to idleness. How could she make such nails work? She who wishes to remain virtuous must not have pity on her hands. As for Zephine, she had conquered Fameuil by her roguish and caressing little way of saying "Yes, sir."

The young men were comrades; the young girls were friends. Such loves are always accompanied by such friendships.

Goodness and philosophy are two distinct things; the proof of this is that, after making all due allowances for these little irregular

households, Favourite, Zephine, and Dahlia were philosophical young women, while Fantine was a good girl.

Good! some one will exclaim; and Tholomyes? Solomon would reply that love forms a part of wisdom. We will confine ourselves to saying that the love of Fantine was a first love, a sole love, a faithful love.

She alone, of all the four, was not called "thou" by a single one of them.

Fantine was one of those beings who blossom, so to speak, from the dregs of the people. Though she had emerged from the most unfathomable depths of social shadow, she bore on her brow the sign of the anonymous and the unknown. She was born at M. sur M. Of what parents? Who can say? She had never known father or mother. She was called Fantine. Why Fantine? She had never borne any other name. At the epoch of her birth the Directory still existed. She had no family name; she had no family; no baptismal name; the Church no longer existed. She bore the name which pleased the first random passer-by, who had encountered her, when a very small child, running bare-legged in the street. She received the name as she received the water from the clouds upon her brow when it rained. She was called little Fantine. No one knew more than that. This human creature had entered life in just this way. At the age of ten, Fantine quitted the town and went to service with some farmers in the neighborhood. At fifteen she came to Paris "to seek her fortune." Fantine was beautiful, and remained pure as long as she could. She was a lovely blonde, with

fine teeth. She had gold and pearls for her dowry; but her gold was on her head, and her pearls were in her mouth.

She worked for her living; then, still for the sake of her living,--for the heart, also, has its hunger,--she loved.

She loved Tholomyes.

An amour for him; passion for her. The streets of the Latin quarter, filled with throngs of students and grisettes, saw the beginning of their dream. Fantine had long evaded Tholomyes in the mazes of the hill of the Pantheon, where so many adventurers twine and untwine, but in such a way as constantly to encounter him again. There is a way of avoiding which resembles seeking. In short, the eclogue took place.

Blachevelle, Listolier, and Fameuil formed a sort of group of which Tholomyes was the head. It was he who possessed the wit.

Tholomyes was the antique old student; he was rich; he had an income of four thousand francs; four thousand francs! a splendid scandal on Mount Sainte-Genevieve. Tholomyes was a fast man of thirty, and badly preserved. He was wrinkled and toothless, and he had the beginning of a bald spot, of which he himself said with sadness, the skull at thirty, the knee at forty. His digestion was mediocre, and he had been attacked by a watering in one eye. But in proportion as his youth disappeared, gayety was kindled; he replaced his teeth with buffooneries, his hair

with mirth, his health with irony, his weeping eye laughed incessantly. He was dilapidated but still in flower. His youth, which was packing up for departure long before its time, beat a retreat in good order, bursting with laughter, and no one saw anything but fire. He had had a piece rejected at the Vaudeville. He made a few verses now and then. In addition to this he doubted everything to the last degree, which is a vast force in the eyes of the weak. Being thus ironical and bald, he was the leader. Iron is an English word. Is it possible that irony is derived from it?

One day Tholomyes took the three others aside, with the gesture of an oracle, and said to them:--

"Fantine, Dahlia, Zephine, and Favourite have been teasing us for nearly a year to give them a surprise. We have promised them solemnly that we would. They are forever talking about it to us, to me in particular, just as the old women in Naples cry to Saint Januarius, 'Faccia gialluta, fa o miracolo, Yellow face, perform thy miracle,' so our beauties say to me incessantly, 'Tholomyes, when will you bring forth your surprise?' At the same time our parents keep writing to us. Pressure on both sides. The moment has arrived, it seems to me; let us discuss the question."

Thereupon, Tholomyes lowered his voice and articulated something so mirthful, that a vast and enthusiastic grin broke out upon the four mouths simultaneously, and Blachevelle exclaimed, "That is an idea."

A smoky tap-room presented itself; they entered, and the remainder of their confidential colloquy was lost in shadow.

The result of these shades was a dazzling pleasure party which took place on the following Sunday, the four young men inviting the four young girls.

CHAPTER III--FOUR AND FOUR

It is hard nowadays to picture to one's self what a pleasure-trip of students and grisettes to the country was like, forty-five years ago. The suburbs of Paris are no longer the same; the physiognomy of what may be called circumparisian life has changed completely in the last half-century; where there was the cuckoo, there is the railway car; where there was a tender-boat, there is now the steamboat; people speak of Fecamp nowadays as they spoke of Saint-Cloud in those days. The Paris of 1862 is a city which has France for its outskirts.

The four couples conscientiously went through with all the country follies possible at that time. The vacation was beginning, and it was a warm, bright, summer day. On the preceding day, Favourite, the only one who knew how to write, had written the following to Tholomyes in the name of the four: "It is a good hour to emerge from happiness." That is why they rose at five o'clock in the morning. Then they went to Saint-Cloud by the coach, looked at the dry cascade and exclaimed, "This must be very beautiful when there is water!" They breakfasted at the Tete-Noir, where Castaing had not yet been; they treated themselves to a game of ring-throwing under the quincunx of trees of the grand fountain; they ascended Diogenes' lantern, they gambled for macaroons at the roulette establishment of the Pont de Sevres, picked bouquets at Pateaux, bought reed-pipes at Neuilly, ate apple tarts everywhere, and were perfectly happy.

The young girls rustled and chatted like warblers escaped from their cage. It was a perfect delirium. From time to time they bestowed little taps on the young men. Matutinal intoxication of life! adorable years! the wings of the dragonfly quiver. Oh, whoever you may be, do you not remember? Have you rambled through the brushwood, holding aside the branches, on account of the charming head which is coming on behind you? Have you slid, laughing, down a slope all wet with rain, with a beloved woman holding your hand, and crying, "Ah, my new boots! what a state they are in!"

Let us say at once that that merry obstacle, a shower, was lacking in the case of this good-humored party, although Favourite had said as they set out, with a magisterial and maternal tone, "The slugs are crawling in the paths,--a sign of rain, children."

All four were madly pretty. A good old classic poet, then famous, a good fellow who had an Eleonore, M. le Chevalier de Labouisse, as he strolled that day beneath the chestnut-trees of Saint-Cloud, saw them pass about ten o'clock in the morning, and exclaimed, "There is one too many of them," as he thought of the Graces. Favourite, Blachevelle's friend, the one aged three and twenty, the old one, ran on in front under the great green boughs, jumped the ditches, stalked distractedly over bushes, and presided over this merry-making with the spirit of a young female faun. Zephine and Dahlia, whom chance had made beautiful in such a way that they set each off when they were together, and completed each other, never left each other, more from an instinct of coquetry than from

friendship, and clinging to each other, they assumed English poses; the first keepsakes had just made their appearance, melancholy was dawning for women, as later on, Byronism dawned for men; and the hair of the tender sex began to droop dolefully. Zephine and Dahlia had their hair dressed in rolls. Listolier and Fameuil, who were engaged in discussing their professors, explained to Fantine the difference that existed between M. Delvincourt and M. Blondeau.

Blachevelle seemed to have been created expressly to carry Favourite's single-bordered, imitation India shawl of Ternaux's manufacture, on his arm on Sundays.

Tholomyes followed, dominating the group. He was very gay, but one felt the force of government in him; there was dictation in his joviality; his principal ornament was a pair of trousers of elephant-leg pattern of nankeen, with straps of braided copper wire; he carried a stout rattan worth two hundred francs in his hand, and, as he treated himself to everything, a strange thing called a cigar in his mouth. Nothing was sacred to him; he smoked.

"That Tholomyes is astounding!" said the others, with veneration. "What trousers! What energy!"

As for Fantine, she was a joy to behold. Her splendid teeth had evidently received an office from God,--laughter. She preferred to carry her little hat of sewed straw, with its long white strings, in her hand

rather than on her head. Her thick blond hair, which was inclined to wave, and which easily uncoiled, and which it was necessary to fasten up incessantly, seemed made for the flight of Galatea under the willows. Her rosy lips babbled enchantingly. The corners of her mouth voluptuously turned up, as in the antique masks of Erigone, had an air of encouraging the audacious; but her long, shadowy lashes drooped discreetly over the jollity of the lower part of the face as though to call a halt. There was something indescribably harmonious and striking about her entire dress. She wore a gown of mauve barege, little reddish brown buskins, whose ribbons traced an X on her fine, white, open-worked stockings, and that sort of muslin spencer, a Marseilles invention, whose name, canezou, a corruption of the words quinze aout, pronounced after the fashion of the Canebiere, signifies fine weather, heat, and midday. The three others, less timid, as we have already said, wore low-necked dresses without disguise, which in summer, beneath flower-adorned hats, are very graceful and enticing; but by the side of these audacious outfits, blond Fantine's canezou, with its transparencies, its indiscretion, and its reticence, concealing and displaying at one and the same time, seemed an alluring godsend of decency, and the famous Court of Love, presided over by the Vicomtesse de Cette, with the sea-green eyes, would, perhaps, have awarded the prize for coquetry to this canezou, in the contest for the prize of modesty. The most ingenious is, at times, the wisest. This does happen.

Brilliant of face, delicate of profile, with eyes of a deep blue, heavy lids, feet arched and small, wrists and ankles admirably formed, a white

skin which, here and there allowed the azure branching of the veins to be seen, joy, a cheek that was young and fresh, the robust throat of the Juno of AEgina, a strong and supple nape of the neck, shoulders modelled as though by Coustou, with a voluptuous dimple in the middle, visible through the muslin; a gayety cooled by dreaminess; sculptural and exquisite--such was Fantine; and beneath these feminine adornments and these ribbons one could divine a statue, and in that statue a soul.

Fantine was beautiful, without being too conscious of it. Those rare dreamers, mysterious priests of the beautiful who silently confront everything with perfection, would have caught a glimpse in this little working-woman, through the transparency of her Parisian grace, of the ancient sacred euphony. This daughter of the shadows was thoroughbred. She was beautiful in the two ways--style and rhythm. Style is the form of the ideal; rhythm is its movement.

We have said that Fantine was joy; she was also modesty.

To an observer who studied her attentively, that which breathed from her athwart all the intoxication of her age, the season, and her love affair, was an invincible expression of reserve and modesty. She remained a little astonished. This chaste astonishment is the shade of difference which separates Psyche from Venus. Fantine had the long, white, fine fingers of the vestal virgin who stirs the ashes of the sacred fire with a golden pin. Although she would have refused nothing to Tholomyes, as we shall have more than ample opportunity to see, her

face in repose was supremely virginal; a sort of serious and almost austere dignity suddenly overwhelmed her at certain times, and there was nothing more singular and disturbing than to see gayety become so suddenly extinct there, and meditation succeed to cheerfulness without any transition state. This sudden and sometimes severely accentuated gravity resembled the disdain of a goddess. Her brow, her nose, her chin, presented that equilibrium of outline which is quite distinct from equilibrium of proportion, and from which harmony of countenance results; in the very characteristic interval which separates the base of the nose from the upper lip, she had that imperceptible and charming fold, a mysterious sign of chastity, which makes Barberousse fall in love with a Diana found in the treasures of Iconia.

Love is a fault; so be it. Fantine was innocence floating high over fault.

CHAPTER IV--THOLOMYES IS SO MERRY THAT HE SINGS A SPANISH DITTY

That day was composed of dawn, from one end to the other. All nature seemed to be having a holiday, and to be laughing. The flower-beds of Saint-Cloud perfumed the air; the breath of the Seine rustled the leaves vaguely; the branches gesticulated in the wind, bees pillaged the jasmines; a whole bohemia of butterflies swooped down upon the yarrow, the clover, and the sterile oats; in the august park of the King of France there was a pack of vagabonds, the birds.

The four merry couples, mingled with the sun, the fields, the flowers, the trees, were resplendent.

And in this community of Paradise, talking, singing, running, dancing, chasing butterflies, plucking convolvulus, wetting their pink, open-work stockings in the tall grass, fresh, wild, without malice, all received, to some extent, the kisses of all, with the exception of Fantine, who was hedged about with that vague resistance of hers composed of dreaminess and wildness, and who was in love. "You always have a queer look about you," said Favourite to her.

Such things are joys. These passages of happy couples are a profound appeal to life and nature, and make a caress and light spring forth from everything. There was once a fairy who created the fields and forests expressly for those in love,--in that eternal hedge-school of lovers,

which is forever beginning anew, and which will last as long as there are hedges and scholars. Hence the popularity of spring among thinkers. The patrician and the knife-grinder, the duke and the peer, the limb of the law, the courtiers and townspeople, as they used to say in olden times, all are subjects of this fairy. They laugh and hunt, and there is in the air the brilliance of an apotheosis--what a transfiguration effected by love! Notaries' clerks are gods. And the little cries, the pursuits through the grass, the waists embraced on the fly, those jargons which are melodies, those adorations which burst forth in the manner of pronouncing a syllable, those cherries torn from one mouth by another,--all this blazes forth and takes its place among the celestial glories. Beautiful women waste themselves sweetly. They think that this will never come to an end. Philosophers, poets, painters, observe these ecstasies and know not what to make of it, so greatly are they dazzled by it. The departure for Cythera! exclaims Watteau; Lancret, the painter of plebeians, contemplates his bourgeois, who have flitted away into the azure sky; Diderot stretches out his arms to all these love idyls, and d'Urfe mingles druids with them.

After breakfast the four couples went to what was then called the King's Square to see a newly arrived plant from India, whose name escapes our memory at this moment, and which, at that epoch, was attracting all Paris to Saint-Cloud. It was an odd and charming shrub with a long stem, whose numerous branches, bristling and leafless and as fine as threads, were covered with a million tiny white rosettes; this gave the shrub the air of a head of hair studded with flowers. There was always an admiring

crowd about it.

After viewing the shrub, Tholomyes exclaimed, "I offer you asses!" and having agreed upon a price with the owner of the asses, they returned by way of Vanvres and Issy. At Issy an incident occurred. The truly national park, at that time owned by Bourguin the contractor, happened to be wide open. They passed the gates, visited the manikin anchorite in his grotto, tried the mysterious little effects of the famous cabinet of mirrors, the wanton trap worthy of a satyr become a millionaire or of Turcaret metamorphosed into a Priapus. They had stoutly shaken the swing attached to the two chestnut-trees celebrated by the Abbe de Bernis. As he swung these beauties, one after the other, producing folds in the fluttering skirts which Greuze would have found to his taste, amid peals of laughter, the Toulousan Tholomyes, who was somewhat of a Spaniard, Toulouse being the cousin of Tolosa, sang, to a melancholy chant, the old ballad gallega, probably inspired by some lovely maid dashing in full flight upon a rope between two trees:--

"Soy de Badajoz,
Amor me llama,
Toda mi alma,
Es en mi ojos,
Porque ensenas,
A tuas piernas.

"Badajoz is my home,
And Love is my name;
To my eyes in flame,
All my soul doth come;
For instruction meet
I receive at thy feet"

Fantine alone refused to swing.

"I don't like to have people put on airs like that," muttered Favourite, with a good deal of acrimony.

After leaving the asses there was a fresh delight; they crossed the Seine in a boat, and proceeding from Passy on foot they reached the barrier of l'Etoile. They had been up since five o'clock that morning, as the reader will remember; but bah! there is no such thing as fatigue on Sunday, said Favourite; on Sunday fatigue does not work.

About three o'clock the four couples, frightened at their happiness, were sliding down the Russian mountains, a singular edifice which then occupied the heights of Beaujon, and whose undulating line was visible above the trees of the Champs Elysees.

From time to time Favourite exclaimed:--

"And the surprise? I claim the surprise."

"Patience," replied Tholomyes.

CHAPTER V--AT BOMBARDA'S

The Russian mountains having been exhausted, they began to think about dinner; and the radiant party of eight, somewhat weary at last, became stranded in Bombarda's public house, a branch establishment which had been set up in the Champs-Elysees by that famous restaurant-keeper, Bombarda, whose sign could then be seen in the Rue de Rivoli, near Delorme Alley.

A large but ugly room, with an alcove and a bed at the end (they had been obliged to put up with this accommodation in view of the Sunday crowd); two windows whence they could survey beyond the elms, the quay and the river; a magnificent August sunlight lightly touching the panes; two tables; upon one of them a triumphant mountain of bouquets, mingled with the hats of men and women; at the other the four couples seated round a merry confusion of platters, dishes, glasses, and bottles; jugs of beer mingled with flasks of wine; very little order on the table, some disorder beneath it;

"They made beneath the table
A noise, a clatter of the feet that was abominable,"

says Moliere.

This was the state which the shepherd idyl, begun at five o'clock in the morning, had reached at half-past four in the afternoon. The sun was

setting; their appetites were satisfied.

The Champs-Elysees, filled with sunshine and with people, were nothing but light and dust, the two things of which glory is composed. The horses of Marly, those neighing marbles, were prancing in a cloud of gold. Carriages were going and coming. A squadron of magnificent body-guards, with their clarions at their head, were descending the Avenue de Neuilly; the white flag, showing faintly rosy in the setting sun, floated over the dome of the Tuileries. The Place de la Concorde, which had become the Place Louis XV. once more, was choked with happy promenaders. Many wore the silver fleur-de-lys suspended from the white-watered ribbon, which had not yet wholly disappeared from button-holes in the year 1817. Here and there choruses of little girls threw to the winds, amid the passersby, who formed into circles and applauded, the then celebrated Bourbon air, which was destined to strike the Hundred Days with lightning, and which had for its refrain:--

"Rendez-nous notre pere de Gand,
Rendez-nous notre pere."

"Give us back our father from Ghent,
Give us back our father."

Groups of dwellers in the suburbs, in Sunday array, sometimes even decorated with the fleur-de-lys, like the bourgeois, scattered over the

large square and the Marigny square, were playing at rings and revolving on the wooden horses; others were engaged in drinking; some journeyman printers had on paper caps; their laughter was audible. Every thing was radiant. It was a time of undisputed peace and profound royalist security; it was the epoch when a special and private report of Chief of Police Angeles to the King, on the subject of the suburbs of Paris, terminated with these lines:--

"Taking all things into consideration, Sire, there is nothing to be feared from these people. They are as heedless and as indolent as cats. The populace is restless in the provinces; it is not in Paris. These are very pretty men, Sire. It would take all of two of them to make one of your grenadiers. There is nothing to be feared on the part of the populace of Paris the capital. It is remarkable that the stature of this population should have diminished in the last fifty years; and the populace of the suburbs is still more puny than at the time of the Revolution. It is not dangerous. In short, it is an amiable rabble."

Prefects of the police do not deem it possible that a cat can transform itself into a lion; that does happen, however, and in that lies the miracle wrought by the populace of Paris. Moreover, the cat so despised by Count Angles possessed the esteem of the republics of old. In their eyes it was liberty incarnate; and as though to serve as pendant to the Minerva Aptera of the Piraeus, there stood on the public square in Corinth the colossal bronze figure of a cat. The ingenuous police of the Restoration beheld the populace of Paris in too "rose-colored" a light;

it is not so much of "an amiable rabble" as it is thought. The Parisian is to the Frenchman what the Athenian was to the Greek: no one sleeps more soundly than he, no one is more frankly frivolous and lazy than he, no one can better assume the air of forgetfulness; let him not be trusted nevertheless; he is ready for any sort of cool deed; but when there is glory at the end of it, he is worthy of admiration in every sort of fury. Give him a pike, he will produce the 10th of August; give him a gun, you will have Austerlitz. He is Napoleon's stay and Danton's resource. Is it a question of country, he enlists; is it a question of liberty, he tears up the pavements. Beware! his hair filled with wrath, is epic; his blouse drapes itself like the folds of a chlamys. Take care! he will make of the first Rue Grenetat which comes to hand Caudine Forks. When the hour strikes, this man of the faubourgs will grow in stature; this little man will arise, and his gaze will be terrible, and his breath will become a tempest, and there will issue forth from that slender chest enough wind to disarrange the folds of the Alps. It is, thanks to the suburban man of Paris, that the Revolution, mixed with arms, conquers Europe. He sings; it is his delight. Proportion his song to his nature, and you will see! As long as he has for refrain nothing but la Carmagnole, he only overthrows Louis XVI.; make him sing the Marseillaise, and he will free the world.

This note jotted down on the margin of Angles' report, we will return to our four couples. The dinner, as we have said, was drawing to its close.

CHAPTER VI--A CHAPTER IN WHICH THEY ADORE EACH OTHER

Chat at table, the chat of love; it is as impossible to reproduce one as the other; the chat of love is a cloud; the chat at table is smoke.

Fameuil and Dahlia were humming. Tholomyes was drinking. Zephine was laughing, Fantine smiling, Listolier blowing a wooden trumpet which he had purchased at Saint-Cloud.

Favourite gazed tenderly at Blachevelle and said:--

"Blachevelle, I adore you."

This called forth a question from Blachevelle:--

"What would you do, Favourite, if I were to cease to love you?"

"I!" cried Favourite. "Ah! Do not say that even in jest! If you were to cease to love me, I would spring after you, I would scratch you, I should rend you, I would throw you into the water, I would have you arrested."

Blachevelle smiled with the voluptuous self-conceit of a man who is tickled in his self-love. Favourite resumed:--

"Yes, I would scream to the police! Ah! I should not restrain myself,

not at all! Rabble!"

Blachevelle threw himself back in his chair, in an ecstasy, and closed both eyes proudly.

Dahlia, as she ate, said in a low voice to Favourite, amid the uproar:--

"So you really idolize him deeply, that Blachevelle of yours?"

"I? I detest him," replied Favourite in the same tone, seizing her fork again. "He is avaricious. I love the little fellow opposite me in my house. He is very nice, that young man; do you know him? One can see that he is an actor by profession. I love actors. As soon as he comes in, his mother says to him: 'Ah! mon Dieu! my peace of mind is gone. There he goes with his shouting. But, my dear, you are splitting my head!' So he goes up to rat-ridden garrets, to black holes, as high as he can mount, and there he sets to singing, declaiming, how do I know what? so that he can be heard down stairs! He earns twenty sous a day at an attorney's by penning quibbles. He is the son of a former precentor of Saint-Jacques-du-Haut-Pas. Ah! he is very nice. He idolizes me so, that one day when he saw me making batter for some pancakes, he said to me: 'Mamselle, make your gloves into fritters, and I will eat them.' It is only artists who can say such things as that. Ah! he is very nice. I am in a fair way to go out of my head over that little fellow. Never mind; I tell Blachevelle that I adore him--how I lie! Hey! How I do lie!"

Favourite paused, and then went on:--

"I am sad, you see, Dahlia. It has done nothing but rain all summer; the wind irritates me; the wind does not abate. Blachevelle is very stingy; there are hardly any green peas in the market; one does not know what to eat. I have the spleen, as the English say, butter is so dear! and then you see it is horrible, here we are dining in a room with a bed in it, and that disgusts me with life."

CHAPTER VII--THE WISDOM OF THOLOMYES

In the meantime, while some sang, the rest talked together tumultuously all at once; it was no longer anything but noise. Tholomyes intervened.

"Let us not talk at random nor too fast," he exclaimed. "Let us reflect, if we wish to be brilliant. Too much improvisation empties the mind in a stupid way. Running beer gathers no froth. No haste, gentlemen. Let us mingle majesty with the feast. Let us eat with meditation; let us make haste slowly. Let us not hurry. Consider the springtime; if it makes haste, it is done for; that is to say, it gets frozen. Excess of zeal ruins peach-trees and apricot-trees. Excess of zeal kills the grace and the mirth of good dinners. No zeal, gentlemen! Grimod de la Reyniere agrees with Talleyrand."

A hollow sound of rebellion rumbled through the group.

"Leave us in peace, Tholomyes," said Blachevelle.

"Down with the tyrant!" said Fameuil.

"Bombarda, Bombance, and Bambochel!" cried Listolier.

"Sunday exists," resumed Fameuil.

"We are sober," added Listolier.

"Tholomyes," remarked Blachevelle, "contemplate my calmness [mon calme]."

"You are the Marquis of that," retorted Tholomyes.

This mediocre play upon words produced the effect of a stone in a pool. The Marquis de Montcalm was at that time a celebrated royalist. All the frogs held their peace.

"Friends," cried Tholomyes, with the accent of a man who had recovered his empire, "Come to yourselves. This pun which has fallen from the skies must not be received with too much stupor. Everything which falls in that way is not necessarily worthy of enthusiasm and respect. The pun is the dung of the mind which soars. The jest falls, no matter where; and the mind after producing a piece of stupidity plunges into the azure depths. A whitish speck flattened against the rock does not prevent the condor from soaring aloft. Far be it from me to insult the pun! I honor it in proportion to its merits; nothing more. All the most august, the most sublime, the most charming of humanity, and perhaps outside of humanity, have made puns. Jesus Christ made a pun on St. Peter, Moses on Isaac, AEschylus on Polynices, Cleopatra on Octavius. And observe that Cleopatra's pun preceded the battle of Actium, and that had it not been for it, no one would have remembered the city of Toryne, a Greek name which signifies a ladle. That once conceded, I return to my exhortation. I repeat, brothers, I repeat, no zeal, no hubbub, no excess; even in

witticisms, gayety, jollities, or plays on words. Listen to me. I have the prudence of Amphiaraus and the baldness of Caesar. There must be a limit, even to rebuses. Est modus in rebus.

"There must be a limit, even to dinners. You are fond of apple turnovers, ladies; do not indulge in them to excess. Even in the matter of turnovers, good sense and art are requisite. Gluttony chastises the glutton, Gula punit Gulax. Indigestion is charged by the good God with preaching morality to stomachs. And remember this: each one of our passions, even love, has a stomach which must not be filled too full. In all things the word finis must be written in good season; self-control must be exercised when the matter becomes urgent; the bolt must be drawn on appetite; one must set one's own fantasy to the violin, and carry one's self to the post. The sage is the man who knows how, at a given moment, to effect his own arrest. Have some confidence in me, for I have succeeded to some extent in my study of the law, according to the verdict of my examinations, for I know the difference between the question put and the question pending, for I have sustained a thesis in Latin upon the manner in which torture was administered at Rome at the epoch when Munatius Demens was quaestor of the Parricide; because I am going to be a doctor, apparently it does not follow that it is absolutely necessary that I should be an imbecile. I recommend you to moderation in your desires. It is true that my name is Felix Tholomyes; I speak well. Happy is he who, when the hour strikes, takes a heroic resolve, and abdicates like Sylla or Origenes."

Favourite listened with profound attention.

"Felix," said she, "what a pretty word! I love that name. It is Latin; it means prosper."

Tholomyes went on:--

"Quirites, gentlemen, caballeros, my friends. Do you wish never to feel the prick, to do without the nuptial bed, and to brave love? Nothing more simple. Here is the receipt: lemonade, excessive exercise, hard labor; work yourself to death, drag blocks, sleep not, hold vigil, gorge yourself with nitrous beverages, and potions of nymphaeas; drink emulsions of poppies and agnus castus; season this with a strict diet, starve yourself, and add thereto cold baths, girdles of herbs, the application of a plate of lead, lotions made with the subacetate of lead, and fomentations of oxycrat."

"I prefer a woman," said Listolier.

"Woman," resumed Tholomyes; "distrust her. Woe to him who yields himself to the unstable heart of woman! Woman is perfidious and disingenuous. She detests the serpent from professional jealousy. The serpent is the shop over the way."

"Tholomyes!" cried Blachevelle, "you are drunk!"

"Pardieu," said Tholomyes.

"Then be gay," resumed Blachevelle.

"I agree to that," responded Tholomyes.

And, refilling his glass, he rose.

"Glory to wine! Nunc te, Bacche, canam! Pardon me ladies; that is Spanish. And the proof of it, senoras, is this: like people, like cask. The arrobe of Castile contains sixteen litres; the cantaro of Alicante, twelve; the almude of the Canaries, twenty-five; the cuartin of the Balearic Isles, twenty-six; the boot of Tzar Peter, thirty. Long live that Tzar who was great, and long live his boot, which was still greater! Ladies, take the advice of a friend; make a mistake in your neighbor if you see fit. The property of love is to err. A love affair is not made to crouch down and brutalize itself like an English serving-maid who has callouses on her knees from scrubbing. It is not made for that; it errs gayly, our gentle love. It has been said, error is human; I say, error is love. Ladies, I idolize you all. O Zephine, O Josephine, face more than irregular, you would be charming were you not all askew. You have the air of a pretty face upon which some one has sat down by mistake. As for Favourite, O nymphs and muses! one day when Blachevelle was crossing the gutter in the Rue Guerin-Boisseau, he espied a beautiful girl with white stockings well drawn up, which displayed her legs. This prologue pleased him, and Blachevelle fell

in love. The one he loved was Favourite. O Favourite, thou hast Ionian lips. There was a Greek painter named Euphorion, who was surnamed the painter of the lips. That Greek alone would have been worthy to paint thy mouth. Listen! before thee, there was never a creature worthy of the name. Thou wert made to receive the apple like Venus, or to eat it like Eve; beauty begins with thee. I have just referred to Eve; it is thou who hast created her. Thou deservest the letters-patent of the beautiful woman. O Favourite, I cease to address you as 'thou,' because I pass from poetry to prose. You were speaking of my name a little while ago. That touched me; but let us, whoever we may be, distrust names. They may delude us. I am called Felix, and I am not happy. Words are liars. Let us not blindly accept the indications which they afford us. It would be a mistake to write to Liege [2] for corks, and to Pau for gloves. Miss Dahlia, were I in your place, I would call myself Rosa. A flower should smell sweet, and woman should have wit. I say nothing of Fantine; she is a dreamer, a musing, thoughtful, pensive person; she is a phantom possessed of the form of a nymph and the modesty of a nun, who has strayed into the life of a grisette, but who takes refuge in illusions, and who sings and prays and gazes into the azure without very well knowing what she sees or what she is doing, and who, with her eyes fixed on heaven, wanders in a garden where there are more birds than are in existence. O Fantine, know this: I, Tholomyes, I am all illusion; but she does not even hear me, that blond maid of Chimeras! as for the rest, everything about her is freshness, suavity, youth, sweet morning light. O Fantine, maid worthy of being called Marguerite or Pearl, you are a woman from the beauteous Orient. Ladies, a second piece of advice: do

not marry; marriage is a graft; it takes well or ill; avoid that risk.
But bah! what am I saying? I am wasting my words. Girls are incurable on the subject of marriage, and all that we wise men can say will not prevent the waistcoat-makers and the shoe-stitchers from dreaming of husbands studded with diamonds. Well, so be it; but, my beauties, remember this, you eat too much sugar. You have but one fault, O woman, and that is nibbling sugar. O nibbling sex, your pretty little white teeth adore sugar. Now, heed me well, sugar is a salt. All salts are withering. Sugar is the most desiccating of all salts; it sucks the liquids of the blood through the veins; hence the coagulation, and then the solidification of the blood; hence tubercles in the lungs, hence death. That is why diabetes borders on consumption. Then, do not crunch sugar, and you will live. I turn to the men: gentlemen, make conquest, rob each other of your well-beloved without remorse. Chassez across.
In love there are no friends. Everywhere where there is a pretty woman hostility is open. No quarter, war to the death! a pretty woman is a casus belli; a pretty woman is flagrant misdemeanor. All the invasions of history have been determined by petticoats. Woman is man's right. Romulus carried off the Sabines; William carried off the Saxon women; Caesar carried off the Roman women. The man who is not loved soars like a vulture over the mistresses of other men; and for my own part, to all those unfortunate men who are widowers, I throw the sublime proclamation of Bonaparte to the army of Italy: "Soldiers, you are in need of everything; the enemy has it."

Tholomyes paused.

"Take breath, Tholomyes," said Blachevelle.

At the same moment Blachevelle, supported by Listolier and Fameuil, struck up to a plaintive air, one of those studio songs composed of the first words which come to hand, rhymed richly and not at all, as destitute of sense as the gesture of the tree and the sound of the wind, which have their birth in the vapor of pipes, and are dissipated and take their flight with them. This is the couplet by which the group replied to Tholomyes' harangue:--

"The father turkey-cocks so grave
Some money to an agent gave,
That master good Clermont-Tonnerre
Might be made pope on Saint Johns' day fair.
But this good Clermont could not be
Made pope, because no priest was he;
And then their agent, whose wrath burned,
With all their money back returned."

This was not calculated to calm Tholomyes' improvisation; he emptied his glass, filled, refilled it, and began again:--

"Down with wisdom! Forget all that I have said. Let us be neither prudes

nor prudent men nor prudhommes. I propose a toast to mirth; be merry. Let us complete our course of law by folly and eating! Indigestion and the digest. Let Justinian be the male, and Feasting, the female! Joy in the depths! Live, O creation! The world is a great diamond. I am happy. The birds are astonishing. What a festival everywhere! The nightingale is a gratuitous Elleviou. Summer, I salute thee! O Luxembourg! O Georgics of the Rue Madame, and of the Allee de l'Observatoire! O pensive infantry soldiers! O all those charming nurses who, while they guard the children, amuse themselves! The pampas of America would please me if I had not the arcades of the Odeon. My soul flits away into the virgin forests and to the savannas. All is beautiful. The flies buzz in the sun. The sun has sneezed out the humming bird. Embrace me, Fantine!"

He made a mistake and embraced Favourite.

CHAPTER VIII--THE DEATH OF A HORSE

"The dinners are better at Edon's than at Bombarda's," exclaimed Zephine.

"I prefer Bombarda to Edon," declared Blachevelle. "There is more luxury. It is more Asiatic. Look at the room downstairs; there are mirrors [glaces] on the walls."

"I prefer them [glaces, ices] on my plate," said Favourite.

Blachevelle persisted:--

"Look at the knives. The handles are of silver at Bombarda's and of bone at Edon's. Now, silver is more valuable than bone."

"Except for those who have a silver chin," observed Tholomyes.

He was looking at the dome of the Invalides, which was visible from Bombarda's windows.

A pause ensued.

"Tholomyes," exclaimed Fameuil, "Listolier and I were having a discussion just now."

"A discussion is a good thing," replied Tholomyes; "a quarrel is better."

"We were disputing about philosophy."

"Well?"

"Which do you prefer, Descartes or Spinoza?"

"Desaugiers," said Tholomyes.

This decree pronounced, he took a drink, and went on:--

"I consent to live. All is not at an end on earth since we can still talk nonsense. For that I return thanks to the immortal gods. We lie. One lies, but one laughs. One affirms, but one doubts. The unexpected bursts forth from the syllogism. That is fine. There are still human beings here below who know how to open and close the surprise box of the paradox merrily. This, ladies, which you are drinking with so tranquil an air is Madeira wine, you must know, from the vineyard of Coural das Freiras, which is three hundred and seventeen fathoms above the level of the sea. Attention while you drink! three hundred and seventeen fathoms! and Monsieur Bombarda, the magnificent eating-house keeper, gives you those three hundred and seventeen fathoms for four francs and fifty centimes."

Again Fameuil interrupted him:--

"Tholomyes, your opinions fix the law. Who is your favorite author?"

"Ber--"

"Quin?"

"No; Choux."

And Tholomyes continued:--

"Honor to Bombarda! He would equal Munophis of Elephanta if he could but get me an Indian dancing-girl, and Thygelion of Chaeronea if he could bring me a Greek courtesan; for, oh, ladies! there were Bombardas in Greece and in Egypt. Apuleius tells us of them. Alas! always the same, and nothing new; nothing more unpublished by the creator in creation! Nil sub sole novum, says Solomon; amor omnibus idem, says Virgil; and Carabine mounts with Carabin into the bark at Saint-Cloud, as Aspasia embarked with Pericles upon the fleet at Samos. One last word. Do you know what Aspasia was, ladies? Although she lived at an epoch when women had, as yet, no soul, she was a soul; a soul of a rosy and purple hue, more ardent hued than fire, fresher than the dawn. Aspasia was a creature in whom two extremes of womanhood met; she was the goddess prostitute; Socrates plus Manon Lescaut. Aspasia was created in case a

mistress should be needed for Prometheus."

Tholomyes, once started, would have found some difficulty in stopping, had not a horse fallen down upon the quay just at that moment. The shock caused the cart and the orator to come to a dead halt. It was a Beauceron mare, old and thin, and one fit for the knacker, which was dragging a very heavy cart. On arriving in front of Bombarda's, the worn-out, exhausted beast had refused to proceed any further. This incident attracted a crowd. Hardly had the cursing and indignant carter had time to utter with proper energy the sacramental word, Matin (the jade), backed up with a pitiless cut of the whip, when the jade fell, never to rise again. On hearing the hubbub made by the passersby, Tholomyes' merry auditors turned their heads, and Tholomyes took advantage of the opportunity to bring his allocution to a close with this melancholy strophe:--

"Elle etait de ce monde ou coucous et carrosses [3]
Ont le meme destin;
Et, rosse, elle a vecu ce que vivant les rosses,
L'espace d'un matin!"

"Poor horse!" sighed Fantine.

And Dahlia exclaimed:--

"There is Fantine on the point of crying over horses. How can one be such a pitiful fool as that!"

At that moment Favourite, folding her arms and throwing her head back, looked resolutely at Tholomyes and said:--

"Come, now! the surprise?"

"Exactly. The moment has arrived," replied Tholomyes. "Gentlemen, the hour for giving these ladies a surprise has struck. Wait for us a moment, ladies."

"It begins with a kiss," said Blachevelle.

"On the brow," added Tholomyes.

Each gravely bestowed a kiss on his mistress's brow; then all four filed out through the door, with their fingers on their lips.

Favourite clapped her hands on their departure.

"It is beginning to be amusing already," said she.

"Don't be too long," murmured Fantine; "we are waiting for you."

CHAPTER IX--A MERRY END TO MIRTH

When the young girls were left alone, they leaned two by two on the window-sills, chatting, craning out their heads, and talking from one window to the other.

They saw the young men emerge from the Cafe Bombarda arm in arm. The latter turned round, made signs to them, smiled, and disappeared in that dusty Sunday throng which makes a weekly invasion into the Champs-Elysees.

"Don't be long!" cried Fantine.

"What are they going to bring us?" said Zephine.

"It will certainly be something pretty," said Dahlia.

"For my part," said Favourite, "I want it to be of gold."

Their attention was soon distracted by the movements on the shore of the lake, which they could see through the branches of the large trees, and which diverted them greatly.

It was the hour for the departure of the mail-coaches and diligences. Nearly all the stage-coaches for the south and west passed through the Champs-Elysees. The majority followed the quay and went through the

Passy Barrier. From moment to moment, some huge vehicle, painted yellow and black, heavily loaded, noisily harnessed, rendered shapeless by trunks, tarpaulins, and valises, full of heads which immediately disappeared, rushed through the crowd with all the sparks of a forge, with dust for smoke, and an air of fury, grinding the pavements, changing all the paving-stones into steels. This uproar delighted the young girls. Favourite exclaimed:--

"What a row! One would say that it was a pile of chains flying away."

It chanced that one of these vehicles, which they could only see with difficulty through the thick elms, halted for a moment, then set out again at a gallop. This surprised Fantine.

"That's odd!" said she. "I thought the diligence never stopped."

Favourite shrugged her shoulders.

"This Fantine is surprising. I am coming to take a look at her out of curiosity. She is dazzled by the simplest things. Suppose a case: I am a traveller; I say to the diligence, 'I will go on in advance; you shall pick me up on the quay as you pass.' The diligence passes, sees me, halts, and takes me. That is done every day. You do not know life, my dear."

In this manner a certain time elapsed. All at once Favourite made a

movement, like a person who is just waking up.

"Well," said she, "and the surprise?"

"Yes, by the way," joined in Dahlia, "the famous surprise?"

"They are a very long time about it!" said Fantine.

As Fantine concluded this sigh, the waiter who had served them at dinner entered. He held in his hand something which resembled a letter.

"What is that?" demanded Favourite.

The waiter replied:--

"It is a paper that those gentlemen left for these ladies."

"Why did you not bring it at once?"

"Because," said the waiter, "the gentlemen ordered me not to deliver it to the ladies for an hour."

Favourite snatched the paper from the waiter's hand. It was, in fact, a letter.

"Stop!" said she; "there is no address; but this is what is written on

it--"

"THIS IS THE SURPRISE."

She tore the letter open hastily, opened it, and read [she knew how to read]:--

"OUR BELOVED:--

"You must know that we have parents. Parents--you do not know much about such things. They are called fathers and mothers by the civil code, which is puerile and honest. Now, these parents groan, these old folks implore us, these good men and these good women call us prodigal sons; they desire our return, and offer to kill calves for us. Being virtuous, we obey them. At the hour when you read this, five fiery horses will be bearing us to our papas and mammas. We are pulling up our stakes, as Bossuet says. We are going; we are gone. We flee in the arms of Lafitte and on the wings of Caillard. The Toulouse diligence tears us from the abyss, and the abyss is you, O our little beauties! We return to society, to duty, to respectability, at full trot, at the rate of three leagues an hour. It is necessary for the good of the country that we should be, like the rest of the world, prefects, fathers of families, rural police, and councillors of state. Venerate us. We are sacrificing ourselves. Mourn for us in haste, and replace us with speed. If this letter lacerates you, do the same by it. Adieu.

"For the space of nearly two years we have made you happy. We bear you no grudge for that. "Signed:

BLACHEVELLE.

FAMUEIL.

LISTOLIER.

FELIX THOLOMYES.

"Postscriptum. The dinner is paid for."

The four young women looked at each other.

Favourite was the first to break the silence.

"Well!" she exclaimed, "it's a very pretty farce, all the same."

"It is very droll," said Zephine.

"That must have been Blachevelle's idea," resumed Favourite. "It makes me in love with him. No sooner is he gone than he is loved. This is an adventure, indeed."

"No," said Dahlia; "it was one of Tholomyes' ideas. That is evident.

"In that case," retorted Favourite, "death to Blachevelle, and long live

Tholomyes!"

"Long live Tholomyes!" exclaimed Dahlia and Zephine.

And they burst out laughing.

Fantine laughed with the rest.

An hour later, when she had returned to her room, she wept. It was her first love affair, as we have said; she had given herself to this Tholomyes as to a husband, and the poor girl had a child.