

## BOOK FOURTH.--THE GORBEAU HOVEL

### CHAPTER I--MASTER GORBEAU

Forty years ago, a rambler who had ventured into that unknown country of the Salpetriere, and who had mounted to the Barriere d'Italie by way of the boulevard, reached a point where it might be said that Paris disappeared. It was no longer solitude, for there were passers-by; it was not the country, for there were houses and streets; it was not the city, for the streets had ruts like highways, and the grass grew in them; it was not a village, the houses were too lofty. What was it, then? It was an inhabited spot where there was no one; it was a desert place where there was some one; it was a boulevard of the great city, a street of Paris; more wild at night than the forest, more gloomy by day than a cemetery.

It was the old quarter of the Marche-aux-Chevaux.

The rambler, if he risked himself outside the four decrepit walls of this Marche-aux-Chevaux; if he consented even to pass beyond the Rue du Petit-Banquier, after leaving on his right a garden protected by high walls; then a field in which tan-bark mills rose like gigantic beaver huts; then an enclosure encumbered with timber, with a heap of stumps,

sawdust, and shavings, on which stood a large dog, barking; then a long, low, utterly dilapidated wall, with a little black door in mourning, laden with mosses, which were covered with flowers in the spring; then, in the most deserted spot, a frightful and decrepit building, on which ran the inscription in large letters: POST NO BILLS,--this daring rambler would have reached little known latitudes at the corner of the Rue des Vignes-Saint-Marcel. There, near a factory, and between two garden walls, there could be seen, at that epoch, a mean building, which, at the first glance, seemed as small as a thatched hovel, and which was, in reality, as large as a cathedral. It presented its side and gable to the public road; hence its apparent diminutiveness. Nearly the whole of the house was hidden. Only the door and one window could be seen.

This hovel was only one story high.

The first detail that struck the observer was, that the door could never have been anything but the door of a hovel, while the window, if it had been carved out of dressed stone instead of being in rough masonry, might have been the lattice of a lordly mansion.

The door was nothing but a collection of worm-eaten planks roughly bound together by cross-beams which resembled roughly hewn logs. It opened directly on a steep staircase of lofty steps, muddy, chalky, plaster-stained, dusty steps, of the same width as itself, which could be seen from the street, running straight up like a ladder and

disappearing in the darkness between two walls. The top of the shapeless bay into which this door shut was masked by a narrow scantling in the centre of which a triangular hole had been sawed, which served both as wicket and air-hole when the door was closed. On the inside of the door the figures 52 had been traced with a couple of strokes of a brush dipped in ink, and above the scantling the same hand had daubed the number 50, so that one hesitated. Where was one? Above the door it said, "Number 50"; the inside replied, "no, Number 52." No one knows what dust-colored figures were suspended like draperies from the triangular opening.

The window was large, sufficiently elevated, garnished with Venetian blinds, and with a frame in large square panes; only these large panes were suffering from various wounds, which were both concealed and betrayed by an ingenious paper bandage. And the blinds, dislocated and unpasted, threatened passers-by rather than screened the occupants. The horizontal slats were missing here and there and had been naively replaced with boards nailed on perpendicularly; so that what began as a blind ended as a shutter. This door with an unclean, and this window with an honest though dilapidated air, thus beheld on the same house, produced the effect of two incomplete beggars walking side by side, with different miens beneath the same rags, the one having always been a mendicant, and the other having once been a gentleman.

The staircase led to a very vast edifice which resembled a shed which had been converted into a house. This edifice had, for its intestinal

tube, a long corridor, on which opened to right and left sorts of compartments of varied dimensions which were inhabitable under stress of circumstances, and rather more like stalls than cells. These chambers received their light from the vague waste grounds in the neighborhood.

All this was dark, disagreeable, wan, melancholy, sepulchral; traversed according as the crevices lay in the roof or in the door, by cold rays or by icy winds. An interesting and picturesque peculiarity of this sort of dwelling is the enormous size of the spiders.

To the left of the entrance door, on the boulevard side, at about the height of a man from the ground, a small window which had been walled up formed a square niche full of stones which the children had thrown there as they passed by.

A portion of this building has recently been demolished. From what still remains of it one can form a judgment as to what it was in former days. As a whole, it was not over a hundred years old. A hundred years is youth in a church and age in a house. It seems as though man's lodging partook of his ephemeral character, and God's house of his eternity.

The postmen called the house Number 50-52; but it was known in the neighborhood as the Gorbeau house.

Let us explain whence this appellation was derived.

Collectors of petty details, who become herbalists of anecdotes, and prick slippery dates into their memories with a pin, know that there was in Paris, during the last century, about 1770, two attorneys at the Chatelet named, one Corbeau (Raven), the other Renard (Fox). The two names had been forestalled by La Fontaine. The opportunity was too fine for the lawyers; they made the most of it. A parody was immediately put in circulation in the galleries of the court-house, in verses that limped a little:--

Maitre Corbeau, sur un dossier perche,[13]

Tenait dans son bee une saisie executoire;

Maitre Renard, par l'odeur alleche,

Lui fit a peu pres cette histoire:

He! bonjour. Etc.

The two honest practitioners, embarrassed by the jests, and finding the bearing of their heads interfered with by the shouts of laughter which followed them, resolved to get rid of their names, and hit upon the expedient of applying to the king.

Their petition was presented to Louis XV. on the same day when the Papal Nuncio, on the one hand, and the Cardinal de la Roche-Aymon on the other, both devoutly kneeling, were each engaged in putting on, in his Majesty's presence, a slipper on the bare feet of Madame du Barry, who

had just got out of bed. The king, who was laughing, continued to laugh, passed gayly from the two bishops to the two lawyers, and bestowed on these limbs of the law their former names, or nearly so. By the king's command, Maitre Corbeau was permitted to add a tail to his initial letter and to call himself Gorbeau. Maitre Renard was less lucky; all he obtained was leave to place a P in front of his R, and to call himself Prenard; so that the second name bore almost as much resemblance as the first.

Now, according to local tradition, this Maitre Gorbeau had been the proprietor of the building numbered 50-52 on the Boulevard de l'Hopital. He was even the author of the monumental window.

Hence the edifice bore the name of the Gorbeau house.

Opposite this house, among the trees of the boulevard, rose a great elm which was three-quarters dead; almost directly facing it opens the Rue de la Barriere des Gobelins, a street then without houses, unpaved, planted with unhealthy trees, which was green or muddy according to the season, and which ended squarely in the exterior wall of Paris. An odor of copperas issued in puffs from the roofs of the neighboring factory.

The barrier was close at hand. In 1823 the city wall was still in existence.

This barrier itself evoked gloomy fancies in the mind. It was the

road to Bicetre. It was through it that, under the Empire and the Restoration, prisoners condemned to death re-entered Paris on the day of their execution. It was there, that, about 1829, was committed that mysterious assassination, called "The assassination of the Fontainebleau barrier," whose authors justice was never able to discover; a melancholy problem which has never been elucidated, a frightful enigma which has never been unriddled. Take a few steps, and you come upon that fatal Rue Croulebarbe, where Ulbach stabbed the goat-girl of Ivry to the sound of thunder, as in the melodramas. A few paces more, and you arrive at the abominable pollarded elms of the Barriere Saint-Jacques, that expedient of the philanthropist to conceal the scaffold, that miserable and shameful Place de Grove of a shop-keeping and bourgeois society, which recoiled before the death penalty, neither daring to abolish it with grandeur, nor to uphold it with authority.

Leaving aside this Place Saint-Jacques, which was, as it were, predestined, and which has always been horrible, probably the most mournful spot on that mournful boulevard, seven and thirty years ago, was the spot which even to-day is so unattractive, where stood the building Number 50-52.

Bourgeois houses only began to spring up there twenty-five years later. The place was unpleasant. In addition to the gloomy thoughts which assailed one there, one was conscious of being between the Salpetriere, a glimpse of whose dome could be seen, and Bicetre, whose outskirts one was fairly touching; that is to say, between the madness of women and

the madness of men. As far as the eye could see, one could perceive nothing but the abattoirs, the city wall, and the fronts of a few factories, resembling barracks or monasteries; everywhere about stood hovels, rubbish, ancient walls blackened like cerecloths, new white walls like winding-sheets; everywhere parallel rows of trees, buildings erected on a line, flat constructions, long, cold rows, and the melancholy sadness of right angles. Not an unevenness of the ground, not a caprice in the architecture, not a fold. The ensemble was glacial, regular, hideous. Nothing oppresses the heart like symmetry. It is because symmetry is ennui, and ennui is at the very foundation of grief. Despair yawns. Something more terrible than a hell where one suffers may be imagined, and that is a hell where one is bored. If such a hell existed, that bit of the Boulevard de l'Hopital might have formed the entrance to it.

Nevertheless, at nightfall, at the moment when the daylight is vanishing, especially in winter, at the hour when the twilight breeze tears from the elms their last russet leaves, when the darkness is deep and starless, or when the moon and the wind are making openings in the clouds and losing themselves in the shadows, this boulevard suddenly becomes frightful. The black lines sink inwards and are lost in the shades, like morsels of the infinite. The passer-by cannot refrain from recalling the innumerable traditions of the place which are connected with the gibbet. The solitude of this spot, where so many crimes have been committed, had something terrible about it. One almost had a presentiment of meeting with traps in that darkness; all the confused



forms of the darkness seemed suspicious, and the long, hollow square, of which one caught a glimpse between each tree, seemed graves: by day it was ugly; in the evening melancholy; by night it was sinister.

In summer, at twilight, one saw, here and there, a few old women seated at the foot of the elm, on benches mouldy with rain. These good old women were fond of begging.

However, this quarter, which had a superannuated rather than an antique air, was tending even then to transformation. Even at that time any one who was desirous of seeing it had to make haste. Each day some detail of the whole effect was disappearing. For the last twenty years the station of the Orleans railway has stood beside the old faubourg and distracted it, as it does to-day. Wherever it is placed on the borders of a capital, a railway station is the death of a suburb and the birth of a city. It seems as though, around these great centres of the movements of a people, the earth, full of germs, trembled and yawned, to engulf the ancient dwellings of men and to allow new ones to spring forth, at the rattle of these powerful machines, at the breath of these monstrous horses of civilization which devour coal and vomit fire. The old houses crumble and new ones rise.

Since the Orleans railway has invaded the region of the Salpetriere, the ancient, narrow streets which adjoin the moats Saint-Victor and the Jardin des Plantes tremble, as they are violently traversed three or four times each day by those currents of coach fiacres and omnibuses

which, in a given time, crowd back the houses to the right and the left; for there are things which are odd when said that are rigorously exact; and just as it is true to say that in large cities the sun makes the southern fronts of houses to vegetate and grow, it is certain that the frequent passage of vehicles enlarges streets. The symptoms of a new life are evident. In this old provincial quarter, in the wildest nooks, the pavement shows itself, the sidewalks begin to crawl and to grow longer, even where there are as yet no pedestrians. One morning,--a memorable morning in July, 1845,--black pots of bitumen were seen smoking there; on that day it might be said that civilization had arrived in the Rue de l'Ourcine, and that Paris had entered the suburb of Saint-Marceau.

## CHAPTER II--A NEST FOR OWL AND A WARBLER

It was in front of this Gorbeau house that Jean Valjean halted. Like wild birds, he had chosen this desert place to construct his nest.

He fumbled in his waistcoat pocket, drew out a sort of a pass-key, opened the door, entered, closed it again carefully, and ascended the staircase, still carrying Cosette.

At the top of the stairs he drew from his pocket another key, with which he opened another door. The chamber which he entered, and which he closed again instantly, was a kind of moderately spacious attic, furnished with a mattress laid on the floor, a table, and several chairs; a stove in which a fire was burning, and whose embers were visible, stood in one corner. A lantern on the boulevard cast a vague light into this poor room. At the extreme end there was a dressing-room with a folding bed; Jean Valjean carried the child to this bed and laid her down there without waking her.

He struck a match and lighted a candle. All this was prepared beforehand on the table, and, as he had done on the previous evening, he began to scrutinize Cosette's face with a gaze full of ecstasy, in which the expression of kindness and tenderness almost amounted to aberration. The little girl, with that tranquil confidence which belongs only to extreme strength and extreme weakness, had fallen asleep without knowing with whom she was, and continued to sleep without knowing where she was.

Jean Valjean bent down and kissed that child's hand.

Nine months before he had kissed the hand of the mother, who had also just fallen asleep.

The same sad, piercing, religious sentiment filled his heart.

He knelt beside Cosette's bed.

It was broad daylight, and the child still slept. A wan ray of the December sun penetrated the window of the attic and lay upon the ceiling in long threads of light and shade. All at once a heavily laden carrier's cart, which was passing along the boulevard, shook the frail bed, like a clap of thunder, and made it quiver from top to bottom.

"Yes, madame!" cried Cosette, waking with a start, "here I am! here I am!"

And she sprang out of bed, her eyes still half shut with the heaviness of sleep, extending her arms towards the corner of the wall.

"Ah! mon Dieu, my broom!" said she.

She opened her eyes wide now, and beheld the smiling countenance of Jean Valjean.

"Ah! so it is true!" said the child. "Good morning, Monsieur."

Children accept joy and happiness instantly and familiarly, being themselves by nature joy and happiness.

Cosette caught sight of Catherine at the foot of her bed, and took possession of her, and, as she played, she put a hundred questions to Jean Valjean. Where was she? Was Paris very large? Was Madame Thenardier very far away? Was she to go back? etc., etc. All at once she exclaimed, "How pretty it is here!"

It was a frightful hole, but she felt free.

"Must I sweep?" she resumed at last.

"Play!" said Jean Valjean.

The day passed thus. Cosette, without troubling herself to understand anything, was inexpressibly happy with that doll and that kind man.

### CHAPTER III--TWO MISFORTUNES MAKE ONE PIECE OF GOOD FORTUNE

On the following morning, at daybreak, Jean Valjean was still by Cosette's bedside; he watched there motionless, waiting for her to wake.

Some new thing had come into his soul.

Jean Valjean had never loved anything; for twenty-five years he had been alone in the world. He had never been father, lover, husband, friend. In the prison he had been vicious, gloomy, chaste, ignorant, and shy. The heart of that ex-convict was full of virginity. His sister and his sister's children had left him only a vague and far-off memory which had finally almost completely vanished; he had made every effort to find them, and not having been able to find them, he had forgotten them. Human nature is made thus; the other tender emotions of his youth, if he had ever had any, had fallen into an abyss.

When he saw Cosette, when he had taken possession of her, carried her off, and delivered her, he felt his heart moved within him.

All the passion and affection within him awoke, and rushed towards that child. He approached the bed, where she lay sleeping, and trembled with joy. He suffered all the pangs of a mother, and he knew not what it meant; for that great and singular movement of a heart which begins to love is a very obscure and a very sweet thing.

Poor old man, with a perfectly new heart!

Only, as he was five and fifty, and Cosette eight years of age, all that might have been love in the whole course of his life flowed together into a sort of ineffable light.

It was the second white apparition which he had encountered. The Bishop had caused the dawn of virtue to rise on his horizon; Cosette caused the dawn of love to rise.

The early days passed in this dazzled state.

Cosette, on her side, had also, unknown to herself, become another being, poor little thing! She was so little when her mother left her, that she no longer remembered her. Like all children, who resemble young shoots of the vine, which cling to everything, she had tried to love; she had not succeeded. All had repulsed her,--the Thenardiers, their children, other children. She had loved the dog, and he had died, after which nothing and nobody would have anything to do with her. It is a sad thing to say, and we have already intimated it, that, at eight years of age, her heart was cold. It was not her fault; it was not the faculty of loving that she lacked; alas! it was the possibility. Thus, from the very first day, all her sentient and thinking powers loved this kind man. She felt that which she had never felt before--a sensation of expansion.

The man no longer produced on her the effect of being old or poor; she thought Jean Valjean handsome, just as she thought the hovel pretty.

These are the effects of the dawn, of childhood, of joy. The novelty of the earth and of life counts for something here. Nothing is so charming as the coloring reflection of happiness on a garret. We all have in our past a delightful garret.

Nature, a difference of fifty years, had set a profound gulf between Jean Valjean and Cosette; destiny filled in this gulf. Destiny suddenly united and wedded with its irresistible power these two uprooted existences, differing in age, alike in sorrow. One, in fact, completed the other. Cosette's instinct sought a father, as Jean Valjean's instinct sought a child. To meet was to find each other. At the mysterious moment when their hands touched, they were welded together. When these two souls perceived each other, they recognized each other as necessary to each other, and embraced each other closely.

Taking the words in their most comprehensive and absolute sense, we may say that, separated from every one by the walls of the tomb, Jean Valjean was the widower, and Cosette was the orphan: this situation caused Jean Valjean to become Cosette's father after a celestial fashion.

And in truth, the mysterious impression produced on Cosette in the depths of the forest of Chelles by the hand of Jean Valjean grasping



hers in the dark was not an illusion, but a reality. The entrance of that man into the destiny of that child had been the advent of God.

Moreover, Jean Valjean had chosen his refuge well. There he seemed perfectly secure.

The chamber with a dressing-room, which he occupied with Cosette, was the one whose window opened on the boulevard. This being the only window in the house, no neighbors' glances were to be feared from across the way or at the side.

The ground-floor of Number 50-52, a sort of dilapidated penthouse, served as a wagon-house for market-gardeners, and no communication existed between it and the first story. It was separated by the flooring, which had neither traps nor stairs, and which formed the diaphragm of the building, as it were. The first story contained, as we have said, numerous chambers and several attics, only one of which was occupied by the old woman who took charge of Jean Valjean's housekeeping; all the rest was uninhabited.

It was this old woman, ornamented with the name of the principal lodger, and in reality intrusted with the functions of portress, who had let him the lodging on Christmas eve. He had represented himself to her as a gentleman of means who had been ruined by Spanish bonds, who was coming there to live with his little daughter. He had paid her six months in advance, and had commissioned the old woman to furnish the chamber and

dressing-room, as we have seen. It was this good woman who had lighted the fire in the stove, and prepared everything on the evening of their arrival.

Week followed week; these two beings led a happy life in that hovel.

Cosette laughed, chattered, and sang from daybreak. Children have their morning song as well as birds.

It sometimes happened that Jean Valjean clasped her tiny red hand, all cracked with chilblains, and kissed it. The poor child, who was used to being beaten, did not know the meaning of this, and ran away in confusion.

At times she became serious and stared at her little black gown. Cosette was no longer in rags; she was in mourning. She had emerged from misery, and she was entering into life.

Jean Valjean had undertaken to teach her to read. Sometimes, as he made the child spell, he remembered that it was with the idea of doing evil that he had learned to read in prison. This idea had ended in teaching a child to read. Then the ex-convict smiled with the pensive smile of the angels.

He felt in it a premeditation from on high, the will of some one who was not man, and he became absorbed in revery. Good thoughts have their

abysses as well as evil ones.

To teach Cosette to read, and to let her play, this constituted nearly the whole of Jean Valjean's existence. And then he talked of her mother, and he made her pray.

She called him father, and knew no other name for him.

He passed hours in watching her dressing and undressing her doll, and in listening to her prattle. Life, henceforth, appeared to him to be full of interest; men seemed to him good and just; he no longer reproached any one in thought; he saw no reason why he should not live to be a very old man, now that this child loved him. He saw a whole future stretching out before him, illuminated by Cosette as by a charming light. The best of us are not exempt from egotistical thoughts. At times, he reflected with a sort of joy that she would be ugly.

This is only a personal opinion; but, to utter our whole thought, at the point where Jean Valjean had arrived when he began to love Cosette, it is by no means clear to us that he did not need this encouragement in order that he might persevere in well-doing. He had just viewed the malice of men and the misery of society under a new aspect--incomplete aspects, which unfortunately only exhibited one side of the truth, the fate of woman as summed up in Fantine, and public authority as personified in Javert. He had returned to prison, this time for having done right; he had quaffed fresh bitterness; disgust and lassitude were

overpowering him; even the memory of the Bishop probably suffered a temporary eclipse, though sure to reappear later on luminous and triumphant; but, after all, that sacred memory was growing dim.

Who knows whether Jean Valjean had not been on the eve of growing discouraged and of falling once more? He loved and grew strong again.

Alas! he walked with no less indecision than Cosette. He protected her, and she strengthened him. Thanks to him, she could walk through life; thanks to her, he could continue in virtue. He was that child's stay, and she was his prop. Oh, unfathomable and divine mystery of the balances of destiny!

#### CHAPTER IV--THE REMARKS OF THE PRINCIPAL TENANT

Jean Valjean was prudent enough never to go out by day. Every evening, at twilight, he walked for an hour or two, sometimes alone, often with Cosette, seeking the most deserted side alleys of the boulevard, and entering churches at nightfall. He liked to go to Saint-Medard, which is the nearest church. When he did not take Cosette with him, she remained with the old woman; but the child's delight was to go out with the good man. She preferred an hour with him to all her rapturous tete-a-tetes with Catherine. He held her hand as they walked, and said sweet things to her.

It turned out that Cosette was a very gay little person.

The old woman attended to the housekeeping and cooking and went to market.

They lived soberly, always having a little fire, but like people in very moderate circumstances. Jean Valjean had made no alterations in the furniture as it was the first day; he had merely had the glass door leading to Cosette's dressing-room replaced by a solid door.

He still wore his yellow coat, his black breeches, and his old hat.

In the street, he was taken for a poor man. It sometimes happened that kind-hearted women turned back to bestow a sou on him. Jean Valjean accepted the sou with a deep bow. It also happened occasionally that he

encountered some poor wretch asking alms; then he looked behind him to make sure that no one was observing him, stealthily approached the unfortunate man, put a piece of money into his hand, often a silver coin, and walked rapidly away. This had its disadvantages. He began to be known in the neighborhood under the name of the beggar who gives alms.

The old principal lodger, a cross-looking creature, who was thoroughly permeated, so far as her neighbors were concerned, with the inquisitiveness peculiar to envious persons, scrutinized Jean Valjean a great deal, without his suspecting the fact. She was a little deaf, which rendered her talkative. There remained to her from her past, two teeth,--one above, the other below,--which she was continually knocking against each other. She had questioned Cosette, who had not been able to tell her anything, since she knew nothing herself except that she had come from Montfermeil. One morning, this spy saw Jean Valjean, with an air which struck the old gossip as peculiar, entering one of the uninhabited compartments of the hovel. She followed him with the step of an old cat, and was able to observe him without being seen, through a crack in the door, which was directly opposite him. Jean Valjean had his back turned towards this door, by way of greater security, no doubt. The old woman saw him fumble in his pocket and draw thence a case, scissors, and thread; then he began to rip the lining of one of the skirts of his coat, and from the opening he took a bit of yellowish paper, which he unfolded. The old woman recognized, with terror, the fact that it was a bank-bill for a thousand francs. It was the second or third only that

she had seen in the course of her existence. She fled in alarm.

A moment later, Jean Valjean accosted her, and asked her to go and get this thousand-franc bill changed for him, adding that it was his quarterly income, which he had received the day before. "Where?" thought the old woman. "He did not go out until six o'clock in the evening, and the government bank certainly is not open at that hour." The old woman went to get the bill changed, and mentioned her surmises. That thousand-franc note, commented on and multiplied, produced a vast amount of terrified discussion among the gossips of the Rue des Vignes Saint-Marcel.

A few days later, it chanced that Jean Valjean was sawing some wood, in his shirt-sleeves, in the corridor. The old woman was in the chamber, putting things in order. She was alone. Cosette was occupied in admiring the wood as it was sawed. The old woman caught sight of the coat hanging on a nail, and examined it. The lining had been sewed up again. The good woman felt of it carefully, and thought she observed in the skirts and revers thicknesses of paper. More thousand-franc bank-bills, no doubt!

She also noticed that there were all sorts of things in the pockets. Not only the needles, thread, and scissors which she had seen, but a big pocket-book, a very large knife, and--a suspicious circumstance--several wigs of various colors. Each pocket of this coat had the air of being in a manner provided against unexpected accidents.

Thus the inhabitants of the house reached the last days of winter.



## CHAPTER V--A FIVE-FRANC PIECE FALLS ON THE GROUND AND PRODUCES A TUMULT

Near Saint-Medard's church there was a poor man who was in the habit of crouching on the brink of a public well which had been condemned, and on whom Jean Valjean was fond of bestowing charity. He never passed this man without giving him a few sous. Sometimes he spoke to him. Those who envied this mendicant said that he belonged to the police. He was an ex-beadle of seventy-five, who was constantly mumbling his prayers.

One evening, as Jean Valjean was passing by, when he had not Cosette with him, he saw the beggar in his usual place, beneath the lantern which had just been lighted. The man seemed engaged in prayer, according to his custom, and was much bent over. Jean Valjean stepped up to him and placed his customary alms in his hand. The mendicant raised his eyes suddenly, stared intently at Jean Valjean, then dropped his head quickly. This movement was like a flash of lightning. Jean Valjean was seized with a shudder. It seemed to him that he had just caught sight, by the light of the street lantern, not of the placid and beaming visage of the old beadle, but of a well-known and startling face. He experienced the same impression that one would have on finding one's self, all of a sudden, face to face, in the dark, with a tiger. He recoiled, terrified, petrified, daring neither to breathe, to speak, to remain, nor to flee, staring at the beggar who had dropped his head, which was enveloped in a rag, and no longer appeared to know that he was there. At this strange moment, an instinct--possibly the mysterious

instinct of self-preservation,--restrained Jean Valjean from uttering a word. The beggar had the same figure, the same rags, the same appearance as he had every day. "Bah!" said Jean Valjean, "I am mad! I am dreaming! Impossible!" And he returned profoundly troubled.

He hardly dared to confess, even to himself, that the face which he thought he had seen was the face of Javert.

That night, on thinking the matter over, he regretted not having questioned the man, in order to force him to raise his head a second time.

On the following day, at nightfall, he went back. The beggar was at his post. "Good day, my good man," said Jean Valjean, resolutely, handing him a sou. The beggar raised his head, and replied in a whining voice, "Thanks, my good sir." It was unmistakably the ex-beadle.

Jean Valjean felt completely reassured. He began to laugh. "How the deuce could I have thought that I saw Javert there?" he thought. "Am I going to lose my eyesight now?" And he thought no more about it.

A few days afterwards,--it might have been at eight o'clock in the evening,--he was in his room, and engaged in making Cosette spell aloud, when he heard the house door open and then shut again. This struck him as singular. The old woman, who was the only inhabitant of the house except himself, always went to bed at nightfall, so that she might not

burn out her candles. Jean Valjean made a sign to Cosette to be quiet. He heard some one ascending the stairs. It might possibly be the old woman, who might have fallen ill and have been out to the apothecary's. Jean Valjean listened.

The step was heavy, and sounded like that of a man; but the old woman wore stout shoes, and there is nothing which so strongly resembles the step of a man as that of an old woman. Nevertheless, Jean Valjean blew out his candle.

He had sent Cosette to bed, saying to her in a low voice, "Get into bed very softly"; and as he kissed her brow, the steps paused.

Jean Valjean remained silent, motionless, with his back towards the door, seated on the chair from which he had not stirred, and holding his breath in the dark.

After the expiration of a rather long interval, he turned round, as he heard nothing more, and, as he raised his eyes towards the door of his chamber, he saw a light through the keyhole. This light formed a sort of sinister star in the blackness of the door and the wall. There was evidently some one there, who was holding a candle in his hand and listening.

Several minutes elapsed thus, and the light retreated. But he heard no sound of footsteps, which seemed to indicate that the person who had

been listening at the door had removed his shoes.

Jean Valjean threw himself, all dressed as he was, on his bed, and could not close his eyes all night.

At daybreak, just as he was falling into a doze through fatigue, he was awakened by the creaking of a door which opened on some attic at the end of the corridor, then he heard the same masculine footstep which had ascended the stairs on the preceding evening. The step was approaching. He sprang off the bed and applied his eye to the keyhole, which was tolerably large, hoping to see the person who had made his way by night into the house and had listened at his door, as he passed. It was a man, in fact, who passed, this time without pausing, in front of Jean Valjean's chamber. The corridor was too dark to allow of the person's face being distinguished; but when the man reached the staircase, a ray of light from without made it stand out like a silhouette, and Jean Valjean had a complete view of his back. The man was of lofty stature, clad in a long frock-coat, with a cudgel under his arm. The formidable neck and shoulders belonged to Javert.

Jean Valjean might have attempted to catch another glimpse of him through his window opening on the boulevard, but he would have been obliged to open the window: he dared not.

It was evident that this man had entered with a key, and like himself. Who had given him that key? What was the meaning of this?

When the old woman came to do the work, at seven o'clock in the morning, Jean Valjean cast a penetrating glance on her, but he did not question her. The good woman appeared as usual.

As she swept up she remarked to him:--

"Possibly Monsieur may have heard some one come in last night?"

At that age, and on that boulevard, eight o'clock in the evening was the dead of the night.

"That is true, by the way," he replied, in the most natural tone possible. "Who was it?"

"It was a new lodger who has come into the house," said the old woman.

"And what is his name?"

"I don't know exactly; Dumont, or Daumont, or some name of that sort."

"And who is this Monsieur Dumont?"

The old woman gazed at him with her little polecat eyes, and answered:--

"A gentleman of property, like yourself."

Perhaps she had no ulterior meaning. Jean Valjean thought he perceived one.

When the old woman had taken her departure, he did up a hundred francs which he had in a cupboard, into a roll, and put it in his pocket. In spite of all the precautions which he took in this operation so that he might not be heard rattling silver, a hundred-sou piece escaped from his hands and rolled noisily on the floor.

When darkness came on, he descended and carefully scrutinized both sides of the boulevard. He saw no one. The boulevard appeared to be absolutely deserted. It is true that a person can conceal himself behind trees.

He went up stairs again.

"Come." he said to Cosette.

He took her by the hand, and they both went out.