BOOK FIRST.--PARIS STUDIED IN ITS ATOM

CHAPTER I--PARVULUS

Paris has a child, and the forest has a bird; the bird is called the sparrow; the child is called the gamin.

Couple these two ideas which contain, the one all the furnace, the other all the dawn; strike these two sparks together, Paris, childhood; there leaps out from them a little being. Homuncio, Plautus would say.

This little being is joyous. He has not food every day, and he goes to the play every evening, if he sees good. He has no shirt on his body, no shoes on his feet, no roof over his head; he is like the flies of heaven, who have none of these things. He is from seven to thirteen years of age, he lives in bands, roams the streets, lodges in the open air, wears an old pair of trousers of his father's, which descend below his heels, an old hat of some other father, which descends below his ears, a single suspender of yellow listing; he runs, lies in wait, rummages about, wastes time, blackens pipes, swears like a convict, haunts the wine-shop, knows thieves, calls gay women thou, talks slang, sings obscene songs, and has no evil in his heart. This is because he has in his heart a pearl, innocence; and pearls are not to be dissolved

in mud. So long as man is in his childhood, God wills that he shall be innocent.

If one were to ask that enormous city: "What is this?" she would reply: "It is my little one."

CHAPTER II--SOME OF HIS PARTICULAR CHARACTERISTICS

The gamin--the street Arab--of Paris is the dwarf of the giant.

Let us not exaggerate, this cherub of the gutter sometimes has a shirt, but, in that case, he owns but one; he sometimes has shoes, but then they have no soles; he sometimes has a lodging, and he loves it, for he finds his mother there; but he prefers the street, because there he finds liberty. He has his own games, his own bits of mischief, whose foundation consists of hatred for the bourgeois; his peculiar metaphors: to be dead is to eat dandelions by the root; his own occupations, calling hackney-coaches, letting down carriage-steps, establishing means of transit between the two sides of a street in heavy rains, which he calls making the bridge of arts, crying discourses pronounced by the authorities in favor of the French people, cleaning out the cracks in the pavement; he has his own coinage, which is composed of all the little morsels of worked copper which are found on the public streets. This curious money, which receives the name of loques--rags--has an invariable and well-regulated currency in this little Bohemia of children.

Lastly, he has his own fauna, which he observes attentively in the corners; the lady-bird, the death's-head plant-louse, the daddy-long-legs, "the devil," a black insect, which menaces by twisting about its tail armed with two horns. He has his fabulous monster, which has scales under its belly, but is not a lizard, which has pustules on

its back, but is not a toad, which inhabits the nooks of old lime-kilns and wells that have run dry, which is black, hairy, sticky, which crawls sometimes slowly, sometimes rapidly, which has no cry, but which has a look, and is so terrible that no one has ever beheld it; he calls this monster "the deaf thing." The search for these "deaf things" among the stones is a joy of formidable nature. Another pleasure consists in suddenly prying up a paving-stone, and taking a look at the wood-lice. Each region of Paris is celebrated for the interesting treasures which are to be found there. There are ear-wigs in the timber-yards of the Ursulines, there are millepeds in the Pantheon, there are tadpoles in the ditches of the Champs-de-Mars.

As far as sayings are concerned, this child has as many of them as Talleyrand. He is no less cynical, but he is more honest. He is endowed with a certain indescribable, unexpected joviality; he upsets the composure of the shopkeeper with his wild laughter. He ranges boldly from high comedy to farce.

A funeral passes by. Among those who accompany the dead there is a doctor. "Hey there!" shouts some street Arab, "how long has it been customary for doctors to carry home their own work?"

Another is in a crowd. A grave man, adorned with spectacles and trinkets, turns round indignantly: "You good-for-nothing, you have seized my wife's waist!"--"I, sir? Search me!"

CHAPTER III--HE IS AGREEABLE

In the evening, thanks to a few sous, which he always finds means to procure, the homuncio enters a theatre. On crossing that magic threshold, he becomes transfigured; he was the street Arab, he becomes the titi.[18] Theatres are a sort of ship turned upside down with the keel in the air. It is in that keel that the titi huddle together.
The titi is to the gamin what the moth is to the larva; the same being endowed with wings and soaring. It suffices for him to be there, with his radiance of happiness, with his power of enthusiasm and joy, with his hand-clapping, which resembles a clapping of wings, to confer on that narrow, dark, fetid, sordid, unhealthy, hideous, abominable keel, the name of Paradise.

Bestow on an individual the useless and deprive him of the necessary, and you have the gamin.

The gamin is not devoid of literary intuition. His tendency, and we say it with the proper amount of regret, would not constitute classic taste. He is not very academic by nature. Thus, to give an example, the popularity of Mademoiselle Mars among that little audience of stormy children was seasoned with a touch of irony. The gamin called her Mademoiselle Muche--"hide yourself."

This being bawls and scoffs and ridicules and fights, has rags like a

baby and tatters like a philosopher, fishes in the sewer, hunts in the cesspool, extracts mirth from foulness, whips up the squares with his wit, grins and bites, whistles and sings, shouts, and shrieks, tempers Alleluia with Matantur-lurette, chants every rhythm from the De Profundis to the Jack-pudding, finds without seeking, knows what he is ignorant of, is a Spartan to the point of thieving, is mad to wisdom, is lyrical to filth, would crouch down on Olympus, wallows in the dunghill and emerges from it covered with stars. The gamin of Paris is Rabelais in this youth.

He is not content with his trousers unless they have a watch-pocket.

He is not easily astonished, he is still less easily terrified, he makes songs on superstitions, he takes the wind out of exaggerations, he twits mysteries, he thrusts out his tongue at ghosts, he takes the poetry out of stilted things, he introduces caricature into epic extravaganzas.
It is not that he is prosaic; far from that; but he replaces the solemn vision by the farcical phantasmagoria. If Adamastor were to appear to him, the street Arab would say: "Hi there! The bugaboo!"

CHAPTER IV--HE MAY BE OF USE

Paris begins with the lounger and ends with the street Arab, two beings of which no other city is capable; the passive acceptance, which contents itself with gazing, and the inexhaustible initiative; Prudhomme and Fouillou. Paris alone has this in its natural history. The whole of the monarchy is contained in the lounger; the whole of anarchy in the gamin.

This pale child of the Parisian faubourgs lives and develops, makes connections, "grows supple" in suffering, in the presence of social realities and of human things, a thoughtful witness. He thinks himself heedless; and he is not. He looks and is on the verge of laughter; he is on the verge of something else also. Whoever you may be, if your name is Prejudice, Abuse, Ignorance, Oppression, Iniquity, Despotism, Injustice, Fanaticism, Tyranny, beware of the gaping gamin.

The little fellow will grow up.

Of what clay is he made? Of the first mud that comes to hand. A handful of dirt, a breath, and behold Adam. It suffices for a God to pass by. A God has always passed over the street Arab. Fortune labors at this tiny being. By the word "fortune" we mean chance, to some extent. That pigmy kneaded out of common earth, ignorant, unlettered, giddy, vulgar, low. Will that become an Ionian or a Boeotian? Wait, currit rota, the Spirit of Paris, that demon which creates the children of chance and the men

of destiny, reversing the process of the Latin potter, makes of a jug an amphora.

CHAPTER V--HIS FRONTIERS

The gamin loves the city, he also loves solitude, since he has something of the sage in him. Urbis amator, like Fuscus; ruris amator, like Flaccus.

To roam thoughtfully about, that is to say, to lounge, is a fine employment of time in the eyes of the philosopher; particularly in that rather illegitimate species of campaign, which is tolerably ugly but odd and composed of two natures, which surrounds certain great cities, notably Paris. To study the suburbs is to study the amphibious animal. End of the trees, beginning of the roofs; end of the grass, beginning of the pavements; end of the furrows, beginning of the shops, end of the wheel-ruts, beginning of the passions; end of the divine murmur, beginning of the human uproar; hence an extraordinary interest.

Hence, in these not very attractive places, indelibly stamped by the passing stroller with the epithet: melancholy, the apparently objectless promenades of the dreamer.

He who writes these lines has long been a prowler about the barriers of Paris, and it is for him a source of profound souvenirs. That close-shaven turf, those pebbly paths, that chalk, those pools, those harsh monotonies of waste and fallow lands, the plants of early market-garden suddenly springing into sight in a bottom, that mixture of the savage and the citizen, those vast desert nooks where the garrison

drums practise noisily, and produce a sort of lisping of battle, those hermits by day and cut-throats by night, that clumsy mill which turns in the wind, the hoisting-wheels of the quarries, the tea-gardens at the corners of the cemeteries; the mysterious charm of great, sombre walls squarely intersecting immense, vague stretches of land inundated with sunshine and full of butterflies,--all this attracted him.

There is hardly any one on earth who is not acquainted with those singular spots, the Glaciere, the Cunette, the hideous wall of Grenelle all speckled with balls, Mont-Parnasse, the Fosse-aux-Loups, Aubiers on the bank of the Marne, Mont-Souris, the Tombe-Issoire, the Pierre-Plate de Chatillon, where there is an old, exhausted quarry which no longer serves any purpose except to raise mushrooms, and which is closed, on a level with the ground, by a trap-door of rotten planks. The campagna of Rome is one idea, the banlieue of Paris is another; to behold nothing but fields, houses, or trees in what a stretch of country offers us, is to remain on the surface; all aspects of things are thoughts of God. The spot where a plain effects its junction with a city is always stamped with a certain piercing melancholy. Nature and humanity both appeal to you at the same time there. Local originalities there make their appearance.

Any one who, like ourselves, has wandered about in these solitudes contiguous to our faubourgs, which may be designated as the limbos of Paris, has seen here and there, in the most desert spot, at the most unexpected moment, behind a meagre hedge, or in the corner of a

lugubrious wall, children grouped tumultuously, fetid, muddy, dusty, ragged, dishevelled, playing hide-and-seek, and crowned with corn-flowers. All of them are little ones who have made their escape from poor families. The outer boulevard is their breathing space; the suburbs belong to them. There they are eternally playing truant. There they innocently sing their repertory of dirty songs. There they are, or rather, there they exist, far from every eye, in the sweet light of May or June, kneeling round a hole in the ground, snapping marbles with their thumbs, quarrelling over half-farthings, irresponsible, volatile, free and happy; and, no sooner do they catch sight of you than they recollect that they have an industry, and that they must earn their living, and they offer to sell you an old woollen stocking filled with cockchafers, or a bunch of lilacs. These encounters with strange children are one of the charming and at the same time poignant graces of the environs of Paris.

Sometimes there are little girls among the throng of boys,--are they their sisters?--who are almost young maidens, thin, feverish, with sunburnt hands, covered with freckles, crowned with poppies and ears of rye, gay, haggard, barefooted. They can be seen devouring cherries among the wheat. In the evening they can be heard laughing. These groups, warmly illuminated by the full glow of midday, or indistinctly seen in the twilight, occupy the thoughtful man for a very long time, and these visions mingle with his dreams.

Paris, centre, banlieue, circumference; this constitutes all the earth

to those children. They never venture beyond this. They can no more escape from the Parisian atmosphere than fish can escape from the water. For them, nothing exists two leagues beyond the barriers: Ivry, Gentilly, Arcueil, Belleville, Aubervilliers, Menilmontant, Choisy-le-Roi, Billancourt, Mendon, Issy, Vanvre, Sevres, Puteaux, Neuilly, Gennevilliers, Colombes, Romainville, Chatou, Asnieres, Bougival, Nanterre, Enghien, Noisy-le-Sec, Nogent, Gournay, Drancy, Gonesse; the universe ends there.

CHAPTER VI--A BIT OF HISTORY

At the epoch, nearly contemporary by the way, when the action of this book takes place, there was not, as there is to-day, a policeman at the corner of every street (a benefit which there is no time to discuss here); stray children abounded in Paris. The statistics give an average of two hundred and sixty homeless children picked up annually at that period, by the police patrols, in unenclosed lands, in houses in process of construction, and under the arches of the bridges. One of these nests, which has become famous, produced "the swallows of the bridge of Arcola." This is, moreover, the most disastrous of social symptoms. All crimes of the man begin in the vagabondage of the child.

Let us make an exception in favor of Paris, nevertheless. In a relative measure, and in spite of the souvenir which we have just recalled, the exception is just. While in any other great city the vagabond child is a lost man, while nearly everywhere the child left to itself is, in some sort, sacrificed and abandoned to a kind of fatal immersion in the public vices which devour in him honesty and conscience, the street boy of Paris, we insist on this point, however defaced and injured on the surface, is almost intact on the interior. It is a magnificent thing to put on record, and one which shines forth in the splendid probity of our popular revolutions, that a certain incorruptibility results from the idea which exists in the air of Paris, as salt exists in the water of the ocean. To breathe Paris preserves the soul.

What we have just said takes away nothing of the anguish of heart which one experiences every time that one meets one of these children around whom one fancies that he beholds floating the threads of a broken family. In the civilization of the present day, incomplete as it still is, it is not a very abnormal thing to behold these fractured families pouring themselves out into the darkness, not knowing clearly what has become of their children, and allowing their own entrails to fall on the public highway. Hence these obscure destinies. This is called, for this sad thing has given rise to an expression, "to be cast on the pavements of Paris."

Let it be said by the way, that this abandonment of children was not discouraged by the ancient monarchy. A little of Egypt and Bohemia in the lower regions suited the upper spheres, and compassed the aims of the powerful. The hatred of instruction for the children of the people was a dogma. What is the use of "half-lights"? Such was the countersign. Now, the erring child is the corollary of the ignorant child.

Besides this, the monarchy sometimes was in need of children, and in that case it skimmed the streets.

Under Louis XIV., not to go any further back, the king rightly desired to create a fleet. The idea was a good one. But let us consider the means. There can be no fleet, if, beside the sailing ship, that plaything of the winds, and for the purpose of towing it, in case of necessity, there is not the vessel which goes where it pleases, either

by means of oars or of steam; the galleys were then to the marine what steamers are to-day. Therefore, galleys were necessary; but the galley is moved only by the galley-slave; hence, galley-slaves were required. Colbert had the commissioners of provinces and the parliaments make as many convicts as possible. The magistracy showed a great deal of complaisance in the matter. A man kept his hat on in the presence of a procession--it was a Huguenot attitude; he was sent to the galleys. A child was encountered in the streets; provided that he was fifteen years of age and did not know where he was to sleep, he was sent to the galleys. Grand reign; grand century.

Under Louis XV. children disappeared in Paris; the police carried them off, for what mysterious purpose no one knew. People whispered with terror monstrous conjectures as to the king's baths of purple. Barbier speaks ingenuously of these things. It sometimes happened that the exempts of the guard, when they ran short of children, took those who had fathers. The fathers, in despair, attacked the exempts. In that case, the parliament intervened and had some one hung. Who? The exempts? No, the fathers.

CHAPTER VII--THE GAMIN SHOULD HAVE HIS PLACE IN THE CLASSIFICATIONS OF INDIA

The body of street Arabs in Paris almost constitutes a caste. One might almost say: Not every one who wishes to belong to it can do so.

This word gamin was printed for the first time, and reached popular speech through the literary tongue, in 1834. It is in a little work entitled Claude Gueux that this word made its appearance. The horror was lively. The word passed into circulation.

The elements which constitute the consideration of the gamins for each other are very various. We have known and associated with one who was greatly respected and vastly admired because he had seen a man fall from the top of the tower of Notre-Dame; another, because he had succeeded in making his way into the rear courtyard where the statues of the dome of the Invalides had been temporarily deposited, and had "prigged" some lead from them; a third, because he had seen a diligence tip over; still another, because he "knew" a soldier who came near putting out the eye of a citizen.

This explains that famous exclamation of a Parisian gamin, a profound epiphonema, which the vulgar herd laughs at without comprehending,--Dieu de Dieu! What ill-luck I do have! to think that I have never yet seen anybody tumble from a fifth-story window! (I have pronounced I'ave and fifth pronounced fift'.)

Surely, this saying of a peasant is a fine one: "Father So-and-So, your wife has died of her malady; why did you not send for the doctor?" "What would you have, sir, we poor folks die of ourselves." But if the peasant's whole passivity lies in this saying, the whole of the free-thinking anarchy of the brat of the faubourgs is, assuredly, contained in this other saying. A man condemned to death is listening to his confessor in the tumbrel. The child of Paris exclaims: "He is talking to his black cap! Oh, the sneak!"

A certain audacity on matters of religion sets off the gamin. To be strong-minded is an important item.

To be present at executions constitutes a duty. He shows himself at the guillotine, and he laughs. He calls it by all sorts of pet names: The End of the Soup, The Growler, The Mother in the Blue (the sky), The Last Mouthful, etc., etc. In order not to lose anything of the affair, he scales the walls, he hoists himself to balconies, he ascends trees, he suspends himself to gratings, he clings fast to chimneys. The gamin is born a tiler as he is born a mariner. A roof inspires him with no more fear than a mast. There is no festival which comes up to an execution on the Place de Greve. Samson and the Abbe Montes are the truly popular names. They hoot at the victim in order to encourage him. They sometimes admire him. Lacenaire, when a gamin, on seeing the hideous Dautin die bravely, uttered these words which contain a future: "I was jealous of him." In the brotherhood of gamins Voltaire is not known, but Papavoine

is. "Politicians" are confused with assassins in the same legend.
They have a tradition as to everybody's last garment. It is known that Tolleron had a fireman's cap, Avril an otter cap, Losvel a round hat, that old Delaporte was bald and bare-headed, that Castaing was all ruddy and very handsome, that Bories had a romantic small beard, that Jean Martin kept on his suspenders, that Lecouffe and his mother quarrelled. "Don't reproach each other for your basket," shouted a gamin to them. Another, in order to get a look at Debacker as he passed, and being too small in the crowd, caught sight of the lantern on the quay and climbed it. A gendarme stationed opposite frowned. "Let me climb up, m'sieu le gendarme," said the gamin. And, to soften the heart of the authorities he added: "I will not fall." "I don't care if you do," retorted the gendarme.

In the brotherhood of gamins, a memorable accident counts for a great deal. One reaches the height of consideration if one chances to cut one's self very deeply, "to the very bone."

The fist is no mediocre element of respect. One of the things that the gamin is fondest of saying is: "I am fine and strong, come now!" To be left-handed renders you very enviable. A squint is highly esteemed.

CHAPTER VIII--IN WHICH THE READER WILL FIND A CHARMING SAYING OF THE LAST KING

In summer, he metamorphoses himself into a frog; and in the evening, when night is falling, in front of the bridges of Austerlitz and Jena, from the tops of coal wagons, and the washerwomen's boats, he hurls himself headlong into the Seine, and into all possible infractions of the laws of modesty and of the police. Nevertheless the police keep an eye on him, and the result is a highly dramatic situation which once gave rise to a fraternal and memorable cry; that cry which was celebrated about 1830, is a strategic warning from gamin to gamin; it scans like a verse from Homer, with a notation as inexpressible as the eleusiac chant of the Panathenaea, and in it one encounters again the ancient Evohe. Here it is: "Ohe, Titi, oheee! Here comes the bobby, here comes the p'lice, pick up your duds and be off, through the sewer with you!"

Sometimes this gnat--that is what he calls himself--knows how to read; sometimes he knows how to write; he always knows how to daub. He does not hesitate to acquire, by no one knows what mysterious mutual instruction, all the talents which can be of use to the public; from 1815 to 1830, he imitated the cry of the turkey; from 1830 to 1848, he scrawled pears on the walls. One summer evening, when Louis Philippe was returning home on foot, he saw a little fellow, no higher than his knee, perspiring and climbing up to draw a gigantic pear in charcoal on one of the pillars of the gate of Neuilly; the King, with that good-nature

which came to him from Henry IV., helped the gamin, finished the pear, and gave the child a louis, saying: "The pear is on that also."[19]
The gamin loves uproar. A certain state of violence pleases him. He execrates "the cures." One day, in the Rue de l'Universite, one of these scamps was putting his thumb to his nose at the carriage gate of No. 69. "Why are you doing that at the gate?" a passer-by asked. The boy replied: "There is a cure there." It was there, in fact, that the Papal Nuncio lived.

Nevertheless, whatever may be the Voltairianism of the small gamin, if the occasion to become a chorister presents itself, it is quite possible that he will accept, and in that case he serves the mass civilly. There are two things to which he plays Tantalus, and which he always desires without ever attaining them: to overthrow the government, and to get his trousers sewed up again.

The gamin in his perfect state possesses all the policemen of Paris, and can always put the name to the face of any one which he chances to meet. He can tell them off on the tips of his fingers. He studies their habits, and he has special notes on each one of them. He reads the souls of the police like an open book. He will tell you fluently and without flinching: "Such an one is a traitor; such another is very malicious; such another is great; such another is ridiculous." (All these words: traitor, malicious, great, ridiculous, have a particular meaning in his mouth.) That one imagines that he owns the Pont-Neuf, and he prevents people from walking on the cornice outside the parapet; that other has a

mania for pulling person's ears; etc., etc.

CHAPTER IX--THE OLD SOUL OF GAUL

There was something of that boy in Poquelin, the son of the fish-market; Beaumarchais had something of it. Gaminerie is a shade of the Gallic spirit. Mingled with good sense, it sometimes adds force to the latter, as alcohol does to wine. Sometimes it is a defect. Homer repeats himself eternally, granted; one may say that Voltaire plays the gamin. Camille Desmoulins was a native of the faubourgs. Championnet, who treated miracles brutally, rose from the pavements of Paris; he had, when a small lad, inundated the porticos of Saint-Jean de Beauvais, and of Saint-Etienne du Mont; he had addressed the shrine of Sainte-Genevieve familiarly to give orders to the phial of Saint Januarius.

The gamin of Paris is respectful, ironical, and insolent. He has villainous teeth, because he is badly fed and his stomach suffers, and handsome eyes because he has wit. If Jehovah himself were present, he would go hopping up the steps of paradise on one foot. He is strong on boxing. All beliefs are possible to him. He plays in the gutter, and straightens himself up with a revolt; his effrontery persists even in the presence of grape-shot; he was a scapegrace, he is a hero; like the little Theban, he shakes the skin from the lion; Barra the drummer-boy was a gamin of Paris; he Shouts: "Forward!" as the horse of Scripture says "Vah!" and in a moment he has passed from the small brat to the giant.

This child of the puddle is also the child of the ideal. Measure that

spread of wings which reaches from Moliere to Barra.

To sum up the whole, and in one word, the gamin is a being who amuses himself, because he is unhappy.

CHAPTER X--ECCE PARIS, ECCE HOMO

To sum it all up once more, the Paris gamin of to-day, like the graeculus of Rome in days gone by, is the infant populace with the wrinkle of the old world on his brow.

The gamin is a grace to the nation, and at the same time a disease; a disease which must be cured, how? By light.

Light renders healthy.

Light kindles.

All generous social irradiations spring from science, letters, arts, education. Make men, make men. Give them light that they may warm you. Sooner or later the splendid question of universal education will present itself with the irresistible authority of the absolute truth; and then, those who govern under the superintendence of the French idea will have to make this choice; the children of France or the gamins of Paris; flames in the light or will-o'-the-wisps in the gloom.

The gamin expresses Paris, and Paris expresses the world.

For Paris is a total. Paris is the ceiling of the human race. The whole of this prodigious city is a foreshortening of dead manners and living manners. He who sees Paris thinks he sees the bottom of all history with

heaven and constellations in the intervals. Paris has a capital, the Town-Hall, a Parthenon, Notre-Dame, a Mount Aventine, the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, an Asinarium, the Sorbonne, a Pantheon, the Pantheon, a Via Sacra, the Boulevard des Italiens, a temple of the winds, opinion; and it replaces the Gemoniae by ridicule. Its majo is called "faraud," its Transteverin is the man of the faubourgs, its hammal is the market-porter, its lazzarone is the pegre, its cockney is the native of Ghent. Everything that exists elsewhere exists at Paris. The fishwoman of Dumarsais can retort on the herb-seller of Euripides, the discobols Vejanus lives again in the Forioso, the tight-rope dancer. Therapontigonus Miles could walk arm in arm with Vadeboncoeur the grenadier, Damasippus the second-hand dealer would be happy among bric-a-brac merchants, Vincennes could grasp Socrates in its fist as just as Agora could imprison Diderot, Grimod de la Reyniere discovered larded roast beef, as Curtillus invented roast hedgehog, we see the trapeze which figures in Plautus reappear under the vault of the Arc of l'Etoile, the sword-eater of Poecilus encountered by Apuleius is a sword-swallower on the Pont Neuf, the nephew of Rameau and Curculio the parasite make a pair, Ergasilus could get himself presented to Cambaceres by d'Aigrefeuille; the four dandies of Rome: Alcesimarchus, Phoedromus, Diabolus, and Argyrippus, descend from Courtille in Labatut's posting-chaise; Aulus Gellius would halt no longer in front of Congrio than would Charles Nodier in front of Punchinello; Marto is not a tigress, but Pardalisca was not a dragon; Pantolabus the wag jeers in the Cafe Anglais at Nomentanus the fast liver, Hermogenus is a tenor in the Champs-Elysees, and round him, Thracius the beggar, clad like

Bobeche, takes up a collection; the bore who stops you by the button of your coat in the Tuileries makes you repeat after a lapse of two thousand years Thesprion's apostrophe: Quis properantem me prehendit pallio? The wine on Surene is a parody of the wine of Alba, the red border of Desaugiers forms a balance to the great cutting of Balatro, Pere Lachaise exhales beneath nocturnal rains same gleams as the Esquiliae, and the grave of the poor bought for five years, is certainly the equivalent of the slave's hived coffin.

Seek something that Paris has not. The vat of Trophonius contains nothing that is not in Mesmer's tub; Ergaphilas lives again in Cagliostro; the Brahmin Vasaphanta become incarnate in the Comte de Saint-Germain; the cemetery of Saint-Medard works quite as good miracles as the Mosque of Oumoumie at Damascus.

Paris has an AEsop-Mayeux, and a Canidia, Mademoiselle Lenormand. It is terrified, like Delphos at the fulgurating realities of the vision; it makes tables turn as Dodona did tripods. It places the grisette on the throne, as Rome placed the courtesan there; and, taking it altogether, if Louis XV. is worse than Claudian, Madame Dubarry is better than Messalina. Paris combines in an unprecedented type, which has existed and which we have elbowed, Grecian nudity, the Hebraic ulcer, and the Gascon pun. It mingles Diogenes, Job, and Jack-pudding, dresses up a spectre in old numbers of the Constitutional, and makes Chodruc Duclos.

Although Plutarch says: the tyrant never grows old, Rome, under Sylla as

under Domitian, resigned itself and willingly put water in its wine. The Tiber was a Lethe, if the rather doctrinary eulogium made of it by Varus Vibiscus is to be credited: Contra Gracchos Tiberim habemus, Bibere Tiberim, id est seditionem oblivisci. Paris drinks a million litres of water a day, but that does not prevent it from occasionally beating the general alarm and ringing the tocsin.

With that exception, Paris is amiable. It accepts everything royally; it is not too particular about its Venus; its Callipyge is Hottentot; provided that it is made to laugh, it condones; ugliness cheers it, deformity provokes it to laughter, vice diverts it; be eccentric and you may be an eccentric; even hypocrisy, that supreme cynicism, does not disgust it; it is so literary that it does not hold its nose before Basile, and is no more scandalized by the prayer of Tartuffe than Horace was repelled by the "hiccup" of Priapus. No trait of the universal face is lacking in the profile of Paris. The bal Mabile is not the polymnia dance of the Janiculum, but the dealer in ladies' wearing apparel there devours the lorette with her eyes, exactly as the procuress Staphyla lay in wait for the virgin Planesium. The Barriere du Combat is not the Coliseum, but people are as ferocious there as though Caesar were looking on. The Syrian hostess has more grace than Mother Saguet, but, if Virgil haunted the Roman wine-shop, David d'Angers, Balzac and Charlet have sat at the tables of Parisian taverns. Paris reigns. Geniuses flash forth there, the red tails prosper there. Adonai passes on his chariot with its twelve wheels of thunder and lightning; Silenus makes his entry there on his ass. For Silenus read Ramponneau.

Paris is the synonym of Cosmos, Paris is Athens, Sybaris, Jerusalem, Pantin. All civilizations are there in an abridged form, all barbarisms also. Paris would greatly regret it if it had not a guillotine.

A little of the Place de Greve is a good thing. What would all that eternal festival be without this seasoning? Our laws are wisely provided, and thanks to them, this blade drips on this Shrove Tuesday.

CHAPTER XI--TO SCOFF, TO REIGN

There is no limit to Paris. No city has had that domination which sometimes derides those whom it subjugates. To please you, O Athenians! exclaimed Alexander. Paris makes more than the law, it makes the fashion; Paris sets more than the fashion, it sets the routine. Paris may be stupid, if it sees fit; it sometimes allows itself this luxury; then the universe is stupid in company with it; then Paris awakes, rubs its eyes, says: "How stupid I am!" and bursts out laughing in the face of the human race. What a marvel is such a city! it is a strange thing that this grandioseness and this burlesque should be amicable neighbors, that all this majesty should not be thrown into disorder by all this parody, and that the same mouth can to-day blow into the trump of the Judgment Day, and to-morrow into the reed-flute! Paris has a sovereign joviality. Its gayety is of the thunder and its farce holds a sceptre.

Its tempest sometimes proceeds from a grimace. Its explosions, its days, its masterpieces, its prodigies, its epics, go forth to the bounds of the universe, and so also do its cock-and-bull stories. Its laugh is the mouth of a volcano which spatters the whole earth. Its jests are sparks. It imposes its caricatures as well as its ideal on people; the highest monuments of human civilization accept its ironies and lend their eternity to its mischievous pranks. It is superb; it has a prodigious 14th of July, which delivers the globe; it forces all nations to take the oath of tennis; its night of the 4th of August dissolves in three hours a thousand years of feudalism; it makes of its logic the muscle

of unanimous will; it multiplies itself under all sorts of forms of the sublime; it fills with its light Washington, Kosciusko, Bolivar, Bozzaris, Riego, Bem, Manin, Lopez, John Brown, Garibaldi; it is everywhere where the future is being lighted up, at Boston in 1779, at the Isle de Leon in 1820, at Pesth in 1848, at Palermo in 1860, it whispers the mighty countersign: Liberty, in the ear of the American abolitionists grouped about the boat at Harper's Ferry, and in the ear of the patriots of Ancona assembled in the shadow, to the Archi before the Gozzi inn on the seashore; it creates Canaris; it creates Quiroga; it creates Pisacane; it irradiates the great on earth; it was while proceeding whither its breath urge them, that Byron perished at Missolonghi, and that Mazet died at Barcelona; it is the tribune under the feet of Mirabeau, and a crater under the feet of Robespierre; its books, its theatre, its art, its science, its literature, its philosophy, are the manuals of the human race; it has Pascal, Regnier, Corneille, Descartes, Jean-Jacques: Voltaire for all moments, Moliere for all centuries; it makes its language to be talked by the universal mouth, and that language becomes the word; it constructs in all minds the idea of progress, the liberating dogmas which it forges are for the generations trusty friends, and it is with the soul of its thinkers and its poets that all heroes of all nations have been made since 1789; this does not prevent vagabondism, and that enormous genius which is called Paris, while transfiguring the world by its light, sketches in charcoal Bouginier's nose on the wall of the temple of Theseus and writes Credeville the thief on the Pyramids.

Paris is always showing its teeth; when it is not scolding it is laughing.

Such is Paris. The smoke of its roofs forms the ideas of the universe. A heap of mud and stone, if you will, but, above all, a moral being. It is more than great, it is immense. Why? Because it is daring.

To dare; that is the price of progress.

All sublime conquests are, more or less, the prizes of daring. In order that the Revolution should take place, it does not suffice that Montesquieu should foresee it, that Diderot should preach it, that Beaumarchais should announce it, that Condorcet should calculate it, that Arouet should prepare it, that Rousseau should premeditate it; it is necessary that Danton should dare it.

The cry: Audacity! is a Fiat lux. It is necessary, for the sake of the forward march of the human race, that there should be proud lessons of courage permanently on the heights. Daring deeds dazzle history and are one of man's great sources of light. The dawn dares when it rises. To attempt, to brave, to persist, to persevere, to be faithful to one's self, to grasp fate bodily, to astound catastrophe by the small amount of fear that it occasions us, now to affront unjust power, again to insult drunken victory, to hold one's position, to stand one's ground; that is the example which nations need, that is the light which electrifies them. The same formidable lightning proceeds from the torch

of Prometheus to Cambronne's short pipe.

CHAPTER XII--THE FUTURE LATENT IN THE PEOPLE

As for the Parisian populace, even when a man grown, it is always the street Arab; to paint the child is to paint the city; and it is for that reason that we have studied this eagle in this arrant sparrow. It is in the faubourgs, above all, we maintain, that the Parisian race appears; there is the pure blood; there is the true physiognomy; there this people toils and suffers, and suffering and toil are the two faces of man. There exist there immense numbers of unknown beings, among whom swarm types of the strangest, from the porter of la Rapee to the knacker of Montfaucon. Fex urbis, exclaims Cicero; mob, adds Burke, indignantly; rabble, multitude, populace. These are words and quickly uttered. But so be it. What does it matter? What is it to me if they do go barefoot! They do not know how to read; so much the worse. Would you abandon them for that? Would you turn their distress into a malediction? Cannot the light penetrate these masses? Let us return to that cry: Light! and let us obstinately persist therein! Light! Light! Who knows whether these opacities will not become transparent? Are not revolutions transfigurations? Come, philosophers, teach, enlighten, light up, think aloud, speak aloud, hasten joyously to the great sun, fraternize with the public place, announce the good news, spend your alphabets lavishly, proclaim rights, sing the Marseillaises, sow enthusiasms, tear green boughs from the oaks. Make a whirlwind of the idea. This crowd may be rendered sublime. Let us learn how to make use of that vast conflagration of principles and virtues, which sparkles, bursts forth and quivers at certain hours. These bare feet, these bare arms, these

rags, these ignorances, these abjectnesses, these darknesses, may be employed in the conquest of the ideal. Gaze past the people, and you will perceive truth. Let that vile sand which you trample under foot be cast into the furnace, let it melt and seethe there, it will become a splendid crystal, and it is thanks to it that Galileo and Newton will discover stars.

CHAPTER XIII--LITTLE GAVROCHE

Eight or nine years after the events narrated in the second part of this story, people noticed on the Boulevard du Temple, and in the regions of the Chateau-d'Eau, a little boy eleven or twelve years of age, who would have realized with tolerable accuracy that ideal of the gamin sketched out above, if, with the laugh of his age on his lips, he had not had a heart absolutely sombre and empty. This child was well muffled up in a pair of man's trousers, but he did not get them from his father, and a woman's chemise, but he did not get it from his mother. Some people or other had clothed him in rags out of charity. Still, he had a father and a mother. But his father did not think of him, and his mother did not love him.

He was one of those children most deserving of pity, among all, one of those who have father and mother, and who are orphans nevertheless.

This child never felt so well as when he was in the street. The pavements were less hard to him than his mother's heart.

His parents had despatched him into life with a kick.

He simply took flight.

He was a boisterous, pallid, nimble, wide-awake, jeering, lad, with a vivacious but sickly air. He went and came, sang, played at hopscotch,

scraped the gutters, stole a little, but, like cats and sparrows, gayly laughed when he was called a rogue, and got angry when called a thief. He had no shelter, no bread, no fire, no love; but he was merry because he was free.

When these poor creatures grow to be men, the millstones of the social order meet them and crush them, but so long as they are children, they escape because of their smallness. The tiniest hole saves them.

Nevertheless, abandoned as this child was, it sometimes happened, every two or three months, that he said, "Come, I'll go and see mamma!" Then he quitted the boulevard, the Cirque, the Porte Saint-Martin, descended to the quays, crossed the bridges, reached the suburbs, arrived at the Salpetriere, and came to a halt, where? Precisely at that double number 50-52 with which the reader is acquainted--at the Gorbeau hovel.

At that epoch, the hovel 50-52 generally deserted and eternally decorated with the placard: "Chambers to let," chanced to be, a rare thing, inhabited by numerous individuals who, however, as is always the case in Paris, had no connection with each other. All belonged to that indigent class which begins to separate from the lowest of petty bourgeoisie in straitened circumstances, and which extends from misery to misery into the lowest depths of society down to those two beings in whom all the material things of civilization end, the sewer-man who sweeps up the mud, and the ragpicker who collects scraps.

The "principal lodger" of Jean Valjean's day was dead and had been replaced by another exactly like her. I know not what philosopher has said: "Old women are never lacking."

This new old woman was named Madame Bourgon, and had nothing remarkable about her life except a dynasty of three paroquets, who had reigned in succession over her soul.

The most miserable of those who inhabited the hovel were a family of four persons, consisting of father, mother, and two daughters, already well grown, all four of whom were lodged in the same attic, one of the cells which we have already mentioned.

At first sight, this family presented no very special feature except its extreme destitution; the father, when he hired the chamber, had stated that his name was Jondrette. Some time after his moving in, which had borne a singular resemblance to the entrance of nothing at all, to borrow the memorable expression of the principal tenant, this Jondrette had said to the woman, who, like her predecessor, was at the same time portress and stair-sweeper: "Mother So-and-So, if any one should chance to come and inquire for a Pole or an Italian, or even a Spaniard, perchance, it is I."

This family was that of the merry barefoot boy. He arrived there and found distress, and, what is still sadder, no smile; a cold hearth and cold hearts. When he entered, he was asked: "Whence come you?" He

replied: "From the street." When he went away, they asked him: "Whither are you going?" He replied: "Into the streets." His mother said to him: "What did you come here for?"

This child lived, in this absence of affection, like the pale plants which spring up in cellars. It did not cause him suffering, and he blamed no one. He did not know exactly how a father and mother should be.

Nevertheless, his mother loved his sisters.

We have forgotten to mention, that on the Boulevard du Temple this child was called Little Gavroche. Why was he called Little Gavroche?

Probably because his father's name was Jondrette.

It seems to be the instinct of certain wretched families to break the thread.

The chamber which the Jondrettes inhabited in the Gorbeau hovel was the last at the end of the corridor. The cell next to it was occupied by a very poor young man who was called M. Marius.

Let us explain who this M. Marius was.