BOOK TWELFTH.--CORINTHE

CHAPTER I--HISTORY OF CORINTHE FROM ITS FOUNDATION

The Parisians who nowadays on entering on the Rue Rambuteau at the end near the Halles, notice on their right, opposite the Rue Mondetour, a basket-maker's shop having for its sign a basket in the form of Napoleon the Great with this inscription:--

NAPOLEON IS MADE
WHOLLY OF WILLOW,

have no suspicion of the terrible scenes which this very spot witnessed hardly thirty years ago.

It was there that lay the Rue de la Chanvrerie, which ancient deeds spell Chanverrerie, and the celebrated public-house called Corinthe.

The reader will remember all that has been said about the barricade effected at this point, and eclipsed, by the way, by the barricade Saint-Merry. It was on this famous barricade of the Rue de la Chanvrerie, now fallen into profound obscurity, that we are about to shed a little light.

May we be permitted to recur, for the sake of clearness in the recital, to the simple means which we have already employed in the case of Waterloo. Persons who wish to picture to themselves in a tolerably exact manner the constitution of the houses which stood at that epoch near the Pointe Saint-Eustache, at the northeast angle of the Halles of Paris, where to-day lies the embouchure of the Rue Rambuteau, have only to imagine an N touching the Rue Saint-Denis with its summit and the Halles with its base, and whose two vertical bars should form the Rue de la Grande-Truanderie, and the Rue de la Chanvrerie, and whose transverse bar should be formed by the Rue de la Petite-Truanderie. The old Rue Mondetour cut the three strokes of the N at the most crooked angles, so that the labyrinthine confusion of these four streets sufficed to form, on a space three fathoms square, between the Halles and the Rue Saint-Denis on the one hand, and between the Rue du Cygne and the Rue des Precheurs on the other, seven islands of houses, oddly cut up, of varying sizes, placed crosswise and hap-hazard, and barely separated, like the blocks of stone in a dock, by narrow crannies.

We say narrow crannies, and we can give no more just idea of those dark, contracted, many-angled alleys, lined with eight-story buildings. These buildings were so decrepit that, in the Rue de la Chanvrerie and the Rue de la Petite-Truanderie, the fronts were shored up with beams running from one house to another. The street was narrow and the gutter broad, the pedestrian there walked on a pavement that was always wet, skirting little stalls resembling cellars, big posts encircled with iron hoops,

excessive heaps of refuse, and gates armed with enormous, century-old gratings. The Rue Rambuteau has devastated all that.

The name of Mondetour paints marvellously well the sinuosities of that whole set of streets. A little further on, they are found still better expressed by the Rue Pirouette, which ran into the Rue Mondetour.

The passer-by who got entangled from the Rue Saint-Denis in the Rue de la Chanvrerie beheld it gradually close in before him as though he had entered an elongated funnel. At the end of this street, which was very short, he found further passage barred in the direction of the Halles by a tall row of houses, and he would have thought himself in a blind alley, had he not perceived on the right and left two dark cuts through which he could make his escape. This was the Rue Mondetour, which on one side ran into the Rue de Precheurs, and on the other into the Rue du Cygne and the Petite-Truanderie. At the bottom of this sort of cul-de-sac, at the angle of the cutting on the right, there was to be seen a house which was not so tall as the rest, and which formed a sort of cape in the street. It is in this house, of two stories only, that an illustrious wine-shop had been merrily installed three hundred years before. This tavern created a joyous noise in the very spot which old Theophilus described in the following couplet:--

> La branle le squelette horrible
> D'un pauvre amant qui se pendit.[47]

The situation was good, and tavern-keepers succeeded each other there, from father to son.

In the time of Mathurin Regnier, this cabaret was called the Pot-aux-Roses, and as the rebus was then in fashion, it had for its sign-board, a post (poteau) painted rose-color. In the last century, the worthy Natoire, one of the fantastic masters nowadays despised by the stiff school, having got drunk many times in this wine-shop at the very table where Regnier had drunk his fill, had painted, by way of gratitude, a bunch of Corinth grapes on the pink post. The keeper of the cabaret, in his joy, had changed his device and had caused to be placed in gilt letters beneath the bunch these words: "At the Bunch of Corinth Grapes" ("Au Raisin de Corinthe"). Hence the name of Corinthe. Nothing is more natural to drunken men than ellipses. The ellipsis is the zig-zag of the phrase. Corinthe gradually dethroned the Pot-aux-Roses. The last proprietor of the dynasty, Father Hucheloup, no longer acquainted even with the tradition, had the post painted blue.

A room on the ground floor, where the bar was situated, one on the first floor containing a billiard-table, a wooden spiral staircase piercing the ceiling, wine on the tables, smoke on the walls, candles in broad daylight,--this was the style of this cabaret. A staircase with a trap-door in the lower room led to the cellar. On the second floor were the lodgings of the Hucheloup family. They were reached by a staircase which was a ladder rather than a staircase, and had for their entrance

only a private door in the large room on the first floor. Under the roof, in two mansard attics, were the nests for the servants. The kitchen shared the ground-floor with the tap-room.

Father Hucheloup had, possibly, been born a chemist, but the fact is that he was a cook; people did not confine themselves to drinking alone in his wine-shop, they also ate there. Hucheloup had invented a capital thing which could be eaten nowhere but in his house, stuffed carps, which he called carpes au gras. These were eaten by the light of a tallow candle or of a lamp of the time of Louis XVI., on tables to which were nailed waxed cloths in lieu of table-cloths. People came thither from a distance. Hucheloup, one fine morning, had seen fit to notify passers-by of this "specialty"; he had dipped a brush in a pot of black paint, and as he was an orthographer on his own account, as well as a cook after his own fashion, he had improvised on his wall this remarkable inscription:--

CARPES HO GRAS.

One winter, the rain-storms and the showers had taken a fancy to obliterate the S which terminated the first word, and the G which began the third; this is what remained:--

CARPE HO RAS.

Time and rain assisting, a humble gastronomical announcement had become a profound piece of advice.

In this way it came about, that though he knew no French, Father Hucheloup understood Latin, that he had evoked philosophy from his kitchen, and that, desirous simply of effacing Lent, he had equalled Horace. And the striking thing about it was, that that also meant: "Enter my wine-shop."

Nothing of all this is in existence now. The Mondetour labyrinth was disembowelled and widely opened in 1847, and probably no longer exists at the present moment. The Rue de la Chanvrerie and Corinthe have disappeared beneath the pavement of the Rue Rambuteau.

As we have already said, Corinthe was the meeting-place if not the rallying-point, of Courfeyrac and his friends. It was Grantaire who had discovered Corinthe. He had entered it on account of the Carpe horas, and had returned thither on account of the Carpes au gras. There they drank, there they ate, there they shouted; they did not pay much, they paid badly, they did not pay at all, but they were always welcome. Father Hucheloup was a jovial host.

Hucheloup, that amiable man, as was just said, was a wine-shop-keeper with a mustache; an amusing variety. He always had an ill-tempered air, seemed to wish to intimidate his customers, grumbled at the people who

entered his establishment, and had rather the mien of seeking a quarrel with them than of serving them with soup. And yet, we insist upon the word, people were always welcome there. This oddity had attracted customers to his shop, and brought him young men, who said to each other: "Come hear Father Hucheloup growl." He had been a fencing-master. All of a sudden, he would burst out laughing. A big voice, a good fellow. He had a comic foundation under a tragic exterior, he asked nothing better than to frighten you, very much like those snuff-boxes which are in the shape of a pistol. The detonation makes one sneeze.

Mother Hucheloup, his wife, was a bearded and a very homely creature.

About 1830, Father Hucheloup died. With him disappeared the secret of stuffed carps. His inconsolable widow continued to keep the wine-shop. But the cooking deteriorated, and became execrable; the wine, which had always been bad, became fearfully bad. Nevertheless, Courfeyrac and his friends continued to go to Corinthe,--out of pity, as Bossuet said.

The Widow Hucheloup was breathless and misshapen and given to rustic recollections. She deprived them of their flatness by her pronunciation. She had a way of her own of saying things, which spiced her reminiscences of the village and of her springtime. It had formerly been her delight, so she affirmed, to hear the loups-de-gorge (rouges-gorges) chanter dans les ogrepines (aubepines)--to hear the redbreasts sing in the hawthorn-trees.

The hall on the first floor, where "the restaurant" was situated, was a large and long apartment encumbered with stools, chairs, benches, and tables, and with a crippled, lame, old billiard-table. It was reached by a spiral staircase which terminated in the corner of the room at a square hole like the hatchway of a ship.

This room, lighted by a single narrow window, and by a lamp that was always burning, had the air of a garret. All the four-footed furniture comported itself as though it had but three legs--the whitewashed walls had for their only ornament the following quatrain in honor of Mame Hucheloup:--

> Elle etonne a dix pas, elle epouvente a deux,
> Une verrue habite en son nez hasardeux;
> On tremble a chaque instant qu'elle ne vous la mouche
> Et qu'un beau jour son nez ne tombe dans sa bouche.[48]

This was scrawled in charcoal on the wall.

Mame Hucheloup, a good likeness, went and came from morning till night before this quatrain with the most perfect tranquillity. Two serving-maids, named Matelote and Gibelotte,[49] and who had never been known by any other names, helped Mame Hucheloup to set on the tables the jugs of poor wine, and the various broths which were served to the hungry patrons in earthenware bowls. Matelote, large, plump, redhaired,

and noisy, the favorite ex-sultana of the defunct Hucheloup, was homelier than any mythological monster, be it what it may; still, as it becomes the servant to always keep in the rear of the mistress, she was less homely than Mame Hucheloup. Gibelotte, tall, delicate, white with a lymphatic pallor, with circles round her eyes, and drooping lids, always languid and weary, afflicted with what may be called chronic lassitude, the first up in the house and the last in bed, waited on every one, even the other maid, silently and gently, smiling through her fatigue with a vague and sleepy smile.

Before entering the restaurant room, the visitor read on the door the following line written there in chalk by Courfeyrac:--

> Regale si tu peux et mange si tu l'oses.[50]

CHAPTER II--PRELIMINARY GAYETIES

Laigle de Meaux, as the reader knows, lived more with Joly than elsewhere. He had a lodging, as a bird has one on a branch. The two friends lived together, ate together, slept together. They had everything in common, even Musichetta, to some extent. They were, what the subordinate monks who accompany monks are called, bini. On the morning of the 5th of June, they went to Corinthe to breakfast. Joly, who was all stuffed up, had a catarrh which Laigle was beginning to share. Laigle's coat was threadbare, but Joly was well dressed.

It was about nine o'clock in the morning, when they opened the door of Corinthe.

They ascended to the first floor.

Matelote and Gibelotte received them.

"Oysters, cheese, and ham," said Laigle.

And they seated themselves at a table.

The wine-shop was empty; there was no one there but themselves.

Gibelotte, knowing Joly and Laigle, set a bottle of wine on the table.

While they were busy with their first oysters, a head appeared at the hatchway of the staircase, and a voice said:--

"I am passing by. I smell from the street a delicious odor of Brie cheese. I enter." It was Grantaire.

Grantaire took a stool and drew up to the table.

At the sight of Grantaire, Gibelotte placed two bottles of wine on the table.

That made three.

"Are you going to drink those two bottles?" Laigle inquired of Grantaire.

Grantaire replied:--

"All are ingenious, thou alone art ingenuous. Two bottles never yet astonished a man."

The others had begun by eating, Grantaire began by drinking. Half a bottle was rapidly gulped down.

"So you have a hole in your stomach?" began Laigle again.

"You have one in your elbow," said Grantaire.

And after having emptied his glass, he added:--

"Ah, by the way, Laigle of the funeral oration, your coat is old."

"I should hope so," retorted Laigle. "That's why we get on well together, my coat and I. It has acquired all my folds, it does not bind me anywhere, it is moulded on my deformities, it falls in with all my movements, I am only conscious of it because it keeps me warm. Old coats are just like old friends."

"That's true," ejaculated Joly, striking into the dialogue, "an old goat is an old abi" (ami, friend).

"Especially in the mouth of a man whose head is stuffed up," said Grantaire.

"Grantaire," demanded Laigle, "have you just come from the boulevard?"

"No."

"We have just seen the head of the procession pass, Joly and I."

"It's a marvellous sight," said Joly.

"How quiet this street is!" exclaimed Laigle. "Who would suspect that Paris was turned upside down? How plainly it is to be seen that in former days there were nothing but convents here! In this neighborhood! Du Breul and Sauval give a list of them, and so does the Abbe Lebeuf. They were all round here, they fairly swarmed, booted and barefooted, shaven, bearded, gray, black, white, Franciscans, Minims, Capuchins, Carmelites, Little Augustines, Great Augustines, old Augustines--there was no end of them."

"Don't let's talk of monks," interrupted Grantaire, "it makes one want to scratch one's self."

Then he exclaimed:--

"Bouh! I've just swallowed a bad oyster. Now hypochondria is taking possession of me again. The oysters are spoiled, the servants are ugly. I hate the human race. I just passed through the Rue Richelieu, in front of the big public library. That pile of oyster-shells which is called a library is disgusting even to think of. What paper! What ink! What scrawling! And all that has been written! What rascal was it who said that man was a featherless biped?[51] And then, I met a pretty girl of my acquaintance, who is as beautiful as the spring, worthy to be called Floreal, and who is delighted, enraptured, as happy as the angels, because a wretch yesterday, a frightful banker all spotted with small-pox, deigned to take a fancy to her! Alas! woman keeps on the watch for a protector as much as for a lover; cats chase mice as well

as birds. Two months ago that young woman was virtuous in an attic, she adjusted little brass rings in the eyelet-holes of corsets, what do you call it? She sewed, she had a camp bed, she dwelt beside a pot of flowers, she was contented. Now here she is a bankeress. This transformation took place last night. I met the victim this morning in high spirits. The hideous point about it is, that the jade is as pretty to-day as she was yesterday. Her financier did not show in her face. Roses have this advantage or disadvantage over women, that the traces left upon them by caterpillars are visible. Ah! there is no morality on earth. I call to witness the myrtle, the symbol of love, the laurel, the symbol of air, the olive, that ninny, the symbol of peace, the apple-tree which came nearest rangling Adam with its pips, and the fig-tree, the grandfather of petticoats. As for right, do you know what right is? The Gauls covet Clusium, Rome protects Clusium, and demands what wrong Clusium has done to them. Brennus answers: 'The wrong that Alba did to you, the wrong that Fidenae did to you, the wrong that the Eques, the Volsci, and the Sabines have done to you. They were your neighbors. The Clusians are ours. We understand neighborliness just as you do. You have stolen Alba, we shall take Clusium.' Rome said: 'You shall not take Clusium.' Brennus took Rome. Then he cried: 'Vae victis!' That is what right is. Ah! what beasts of prey there are in this world! What eagles! It makes my flesh creep."

He held out his glass to Joly, who filled it, then he drank and went on, having hardly been interrupted by this glass of wine, of which no one, not even himself, had taken any notice:--

"Brennus, who takes Rome, is an eagle; the banker who takes the grisette is an eagle. There is no more modesty in the one case than in the other. So we believe in nothing. There is but one reality: drink. Whatever your opinion may be in favor of the lean cock, like the Canton of Uri, or in favor of the fat cock, like the Canton of Glaris, it matters little, drink. You talk to me of the boulevard, of that procession, et caetera, et caetera. Come now, is there going to be another revolution? This poverty of means on the part of the good God astounds me. He has to keep greasing the groove of events every moment. There is a hitch, it won't work. Quick, a revolution! The good God has his hands perpetually black with that cart-grease. If I were in his place, I'd be perfectly simple about it, I would not wind up my mechanism every minute, I'd lead the human race in a straightforward way, I'd weave matters mesh by mesh, without breaking the thread, I would have no provisional arrangements, I would have no extraordinary repertory. What the rest of you call progress advances by means of two motors, men and events. But, sad to say, from time to time, the exceptional becomes necessary. The ordinary troupe suffices neither for event nor for men: among men geniuses are required, among events revolutions. Great accidents are the law; the order of things cannot do without them; and, judging from the apparition of comets, one would be tempted to think that Heaven itself finds actors needed for its performance. At the moment when one expects it the least, God placards a meteor on the wall of the firmament. Some queer star turns up, underlined by an enormous tail. And that causes the death of Caesar. Brutus deals him a blow with a knife, and God a blow with a

comet. Crac, and behold an aurora borealis, behold a revolution, behold a great man; '93 in big letters, Napoleon on guard, the comet of 1811 at the head of the poster. Ah! what a beautiful blue theatre all studded with unexpected flashes! Boum! Boum! extraordinary show! Raise your eyes, boobies. Everything is in disorder, the star as well as the drama. Good God, it is too much and not enough. These resources, gathered from exception, seem magnificence and poverty. My friends, Providence has come down to expedients. What does a revolution prove? That God is in a quandry. He effects a coup d'etat because he, God, has not been able to make both ends meet. In fact, this confirms me in my conjectures as to Jehovah's fortune; and when I see so much distress in heaven and on earth, from the bird who has not a grain of millet to myself without a hundred thousand livres of income, when I see human destiny, which is very badly worn, and even royal destiny, which is threadbare, witness the Prince de Conde hung, when I see winter, which is nothing but a rent in the zenith through which the wind blows, when I see so many rags even in the perfectly new purple of the morning on the crests of hills, when I see the drops of dew, those mock pearls, when I see the frost, that paste, when I see humanity ripped apart and events patched up, and so many spots on the sun and so many holes in the moon, when I see so much misery everywhere, I suspect that God is not rich. The appearance exists, it is true, but I feel that he is hard up. He gives a revolution as a tradesman whose money-box is empty gives a ball. God must not be judged from appearances. Beneath the gilding of heaven I perceive a poverty-stricken universe. Creation is bankrupt. That is why I am discontented. Here it is the 4th of June, it is almost night; ever since

this morning I have been waiting for daylight to come; it has not come, and I bet that it won't come all day. This is the inexactness of an ill-paid clerk. Yes, everything is badly arranged, nothing fits anything else, this old world is all warped, I take my stand on the opposition, everything goes awry; the universe is a tease. It's like children, those who want them have none, and those who don't want them have them. Total: I'm vexed. Besides, Laigle de Meaux, that bald-head, offends my sight. It humiliates me to think that I am of the same age as that baldy. However, I criticise, but I do not insult. The universe is what it is. I speak here without evil intent and to ease my conscience. Receive, Eternal Father, the assurance of my distinguished consideration. Ah! by all the saints of Olympus and by all the gods of paradise, I was not intended to be a Parisian, that is to say, to rebound forever, like a shuttlecock between two battledores, from the group of the loungers to the group of the roysterers. I was made to be a Turk, watching oriental houris all day long, executing those exquisite Egyptian dances, as sensuous as the dream of a chaste man, or a Beauceron peasant, or a Venetian gentleman surrounded by gentlewomen, or a petty German prince, furnishing the half of a foot-soldier to the Germanic confederation, and occupying his leisure with drying his breeches on his hedge, that is to say, his frontier. Those are the positions for which I was born! Yes, I have said a Turk, and I will not retract. I do not understand how people can habitually take Turks in bad part; Mohammed had his good points; respect for the inventor of seraglios with houris and paradises with odalisques! Let us not insult Mohammedanism, the only religion which is ornamented with a hen-roost! Now, I insist on a drink. The earth is a

great piece of stupidity. And it appears that they are going to fight, all those imbeciles, and to break each other's profiles and to massacre each other in the heart of summer, in the month of June, when they might go off with a creature on their arm, to breathe the immense heaps of new-mown hay in the meadows! Really, people do commit altogether too many follies. An old broken lantern which I have just seen at a bric-a-brac merchant's suggests a reflection to my mind; it is time to enlighten the human race. Yes, behold me sad again. That's what comes of swallowing an oyster and a revolution the wrong way! I am growing melancholy once more. Oh! frightful old world. People strive, turn each other out, prostitute themselves, kill each other, and get used to it!"

And Grantaire, after this fit of eloquence, had a fit of coughing, which was well earned.

"A propos of revolution," said Joly, "it is decidedly abberent that Barius is in lub."

"Does any one know with whom?" demanded Laigle.

"Do."

"No?"

"Do! I tell you."

"Marius' love affairs!" exclaimed Grantaire. "I can imagine it. Marius is a fog, and he must have found a vapor. Marius is of the race of poets. He who says poet, says fool, madman, Tymbraeus Apollo. Marius and his Marie, or his Marion, or his Maria, or his Mariette. They must make a queer pair of lovers. I know just what it is like. Ecstasies in which they forget to kiss. Pure on earth, but joined in heaven. They are souls possessed of senses. They lie among the stars."

Grantaire was attacking his second bottle and, possibly, his second harangue, when a new personage emerged from the square aperture of the stairs. It was a boy less than ten years of age, ragged, very small, yellow, with an odd phiz, a vivacious eye, an enormous amount of hair drenched with rain, and wearing a contented air.

The child unhesitatingly making his choice among the three, addressed himself to Laigle de Meaux.

"Are you Monsieur Bossuet?"

"That is my nickname," replied Laigle. "What do you want with me?"

"This. A tall blonde fellow on the boulevard said to me: 'Do you know Mother Hucheloup?' I said: 'Yes, Rue Chanvrerie, the old man's widow;' he said to me: 'Go there. There you will find M. Bossuet. Tell him from me: "A B C".' It's a joke that they're playing on you, isn't it. He gave me ten sous."

"Joly, lend me ten sous," said Laigle; and, turning to Grantaire: "Grantaire, lend me ten sous."

This made twenty sous, which Laigle handed to the lad.

"Thank you, sir," said the urchin.

"What is your name?" inquired Laigle.

"Navet, Gavroche's friend."

"Stay with us," said Laigle.

"Breakfast with us," said Grantaire.

The child replied:--

"I can't, I belong in the procession, I'm the one to shout 'Down with Polignac!'"

And executing a prolonged scrape of his foot behind him, which is the most respectful of all possible salutes, he took his departure.

The child gone, Grantaire took the word:--

"That is the pure-bred gamin. There are a great many varieties of the gamin species. The notary's gamin is called Skip-the-Gutter, the cook's gamin is called a scullion, the baker's gamin is called a mitron, the lackey's gamin is called a groom, the marine gamin is called the cabin-boy, the soldier's gamin is called the drummer-boy, the painter's gamin is called paint-grinder, the tradesman's gamin is called an errand-boy, the courtesan gamin is called the minion, the kingly gamin is called the dauphin, the god gamin is called the bambino."

In the meantime, Laigle was engaged in reflection; he said half aloud:--

"A B C, that is to say: the burial of Lamarque."

"The tall blonde," remarked Grantaire, "is Enjolras, who is sending you a warning."

"Shall we go?" ejaculated Bossuet.

"It's raiding," said Joly. "I have sworn to go through fire, but not through water. I don't wand to ged a gold."

"I shall stay here," said Grantaire. "I prefer a breakfast to a hearse."

"Conclusion: we remain," said Laigle. "Well, then, let us drink. Besides, we might miss the funeral without missing the riot."

"Ah! the riot, I am with you!" cried Joly.

Laigle rubbed his hands.

"Now we're going to touch up the revolution of 1830. As a matter of fact, it does hurt the people along the seams."

"I don't think much of your revolution," said Grantaire. "I don't execrate this Government. It is the crown tempered by the cotton night-cap. It is a sceptre ending in an umbrella. In fact, I think that to-day, with the present weather, Louis Philippe might utilize his royalty in two directions, he might extend the tip of the sceptre end against the people, and open the umbrella end against heaven."

The room was dark, large clouds had just finished the extinction of daylight. There was no one in the wine-shop, or in the street, every one having gone off "to watch events."

"Is it mid-day or midnight?" cried Bossuet. "You can't see your hand before your face. Gibelotte, fetch a light."

Grantaire was drinking in a melancholy way.

"Enjolras disdains me," he muttered. "Enjolras said: 'Joly is ill, Grantaire is drunk.' It was to Bossuet that he sent Navet. If he had come for me, I would have followed him. So much the worse for Enjolras!

I won't go to his funeral."

This resolution once arrived at, Bossuet, Joly, and Grantaire did not stir from the wine-shop. By two o'clock in the afternoon, the table at which they sat was covered with empty bottles. Two candles were burning on it, one in a flat copper candlestick which was perfectly green, the other in the neck of a cracked carafe. Grantaire had seduced Joly and Bossuet to wine; Bossuet and Joly had conducted Grantaire back towards cheerfulness.

As for Grantaire, he had got beyond wine, that merely moderate inspirer of dreams, ever since mid-day. Wine enjoys only a conventional popularity with serious drinkers. There is, in fact, in the matter of inebriety, white magic and black magic; wine is only white magic. Grantaire was a daring drinker of dreams. The blackness of a terrible fit of drunkenness yawning before him, far from arresting him, attracted him. He had abandoned the bottle and taken to the beerglass. The beer-glass is the abyss. Having neither opium nor hashish on hand, and being desirous of filling his brain with twilight, he had had recourse to that fearful mixture of brandy, stout, absinthe, which produces the most terrible of lethargies. It is of these three vapors, beer, brandy, and absinthe, that the lead of the soul is composed. They are three grooms; the celestial butterfly is drowned in them; and there are formed there in a membranous smoke, vaguely condensed into the wing of the bat, three mute furies, Nightmare, Night, and Death, which hover about the slumbering Psyche.

Grantaire had not yet reached that lamentable phase; far from it. He was tremendously gay, and Bossuet and Joly retorted. They clinked glasses. Grantaire added to the eccentric accentuation of words and ideas, a peculiarity of gesture; he rested his left fist on his knee with dignity, his arm forming a right angle, and, with cravat untied, seated astride a stool, his full glass in his right hand, he hurled solemn words at the big maid-servant Matelote:--

"Let the doors of the palace be thrown open! Let every one be a member of the French Academy and have the right to embrace Madame Hucheloup. Let us drink."

And turning to Madame Hucheloup, he added:--

"Woman ancient and consecrated by use, draw near that I may contemplate thee!"

And Joly exclaimed:--

"Matelote and Gibelotte, dod't gib Grantaire anything more to drink. He has already devoured, since this bording, in wild prodigality, two francs and ninety-five centibes."

And Grantaire began again:--

"Who has been unhooking the stars without my permission, and putting them on the table in the guise of candles?"

Bossuet, though very drunk, preserved his equanimity.

He was seated on the sill of the open window, wetting his back in the falling rain, and gazing at his two friends.

All at once, he heard a tumult behind him, hurried footsteps, cries of "To arms!" He turned round and saw in the Rue Saint-Denis, at the end of the Rue de la Chanvrerie, Enjolras passing, gun in hand, and Gavroche with his pistol, Feuilly with his sword, Courfeyrac with his sword, and Jean Prouvaire with his blunderbuss, Combeferre with his gun, Bahorel with his gun, and the whole armed and stormy rabble which was following them.

The Rue de la Chanvrerie was not more than a gunshot long. Bossuet improvised a speaking-trumpet from his two hands placed around his mouth, and shouted:--

"Courfeyrac! Courfeyrac! Hohee!"

Courfeyrac heard the shout, caught sight of Bossuet, and advanced a few paces into the Rue de la Chanvrerie, shouting: "What do you want?" which crossed a "Where are you going?"

"To make a barricade," replied Courfeyrac.

"Well, here! This is a good place! Make it here!"

"That's true, Aigle," said Courfeyrac.

And at a signal from Courfeyrac, the mob flung themselves into the Rue de la Chanvrerie.

CHAPTER III--NIGHT BEGINS TO DESCEND UPON GRANTAIRE

The spot was, in fact, admirably adapted, the entrance to the street widened out, the other extremity narrowed together into a pocket without exit. Corinthe created an obstacle, the Rue Mondetour was easily barricaded on the right and the left, no attack was possible except from the Rue Saint-Denis, that is to say, in front, and in full sight. Bossuet had the comprehensive glance of a fasting Hannibal.

Terror had seized on the whole street at the irruption of the mob. There was not a passer-by who did not get out of sight. In the space of a flash of lightning, in the rear, to right and left, shops, stables, area-doors, windows, blinds, attic skylights, shutters of every description were closed, from the ground floor to the roof. A terrified old woman fixed a mattress in front of her window on two clothes-poles for drying linen, in order to deaden the effect of musketry. The wine-shop alone remained open; and that for a very good reason, that the mob had rushed into it.--"Ah my God! Ah my God!" sighed Mame Hucheloup.

Bossuet had gone down to meet Courfeyrac.

Joly, who had placed himself at the window, exclaimed:--

"Courfeyrac, you ought to have brought an umbrella. You will gatch gold."

In the meantime, in the space of a few minutes, twenty iron bars had been wrenched from the grated front of the wine-shop, ten fathoms of street had been unpaved; Gavroche and Bahorel had seized in its passage, and overturned, the dray of a lime-dealer named Anceau; this dray contained three barrels of lime, which they placed beneath the piles of paving-stones: Enjolras raised the cellar trap, and all the widow Hucheloup's empty casks were used to flank the barrels of lime; Feuilly, with his fingers skilled in painting the delicate sticks of fans, had backed up the barrels and the dray with two massive heaps of blocks of rough stone. Blocks which were improvised like the rest and procured no one knows where. The beams which served as props were torn from the neighboring house-fronts and laid on the casks. When Bossuet and Courfeyrac turned round, half the street was already barred with a rampart higher than a man. There is nothing like the hand of the populace for building everything that is built by demolishing.

Matelote and Gibelotte had mingled with the workers. Gibelotte went and came loaded with rubbish. Her lassitude helped on the barricade. She served the barricade as she would have served wine, with a sleepy air.

An omnibus with two white horses passed the end of the street.

Bossuet strode over the paving-stones, ran to it, stopped the driver, made the passengers alight, offered his hand to "the ladies," dismissed the conductor, and returned, leading the vehicle and the horses by the bridle.

"Omnibuses," said he, "do not pass the Corinthe. Non licet omnibus adire Corinthum."

An instant later, the horses were unharnessed and went off at their will, through the Rue Mondetour, and the omnibus lying on its side completed the bar across the street.

Mame Hucheloup, quite upset, had taken refuge in the first story.

Her eyes were vague, and stared without seeing anything, and she cried in a low tone. Her terrified shrieks did not dare to emerge from her throat.

"The end of the world has come," she muttered.

Joly deposited a kiss on Mame Hucheloup's fat, red, wrinkled neck, and said to Grantaire: "My dear fellow, I have always regarded a woman's neck as an infinitely delicate thing."

But Grantaire attained to the highest regions of dithryamb. Matelote had mounted to the first floor once more, Grantaire seized her round her waist, and gave vent to long bursts of laughter at the window.

"Matelote is homely!" he cried: "Matelote is of a dream of ugliness! Matelote is a chimaera. This is the secret of her birth: a Gothic

Pygmalion, who was making gargoyles for cathedrals, fell in love with one of them, the most horrible, one fine morning. He besought Love to give it life, and this produced Matelote. Look at her, citizens! She has chromate-of-lead-colored hair, like Titian's mistress, and she is a good girl. I guarantee that she will fight well. Every good girl contains a hero. As for Mother Hucheloup, she's an old warrior. Look at her moustaches! She inherited them from her husband. A hussar indeed! She will fight too. These two alone will strike terror to the heart of the banlieue. Comrades, we shall overthrow the government as true as there are fifteen intermediary acids between margaric acid and formic acid; however, that is a matter of perfect indifference to me. Gentlemen, my father always detested me because I could not understand mathematics. I understand only love and liberty. I am Grantaire, the good fellow. Having never had any money, I never acquired the habit of it, and the result is that I have never lacked it; but, if I had been rich, there would have been no more poor people! You would have seen! Oh, if the kind hearts only had fat purses, how much better things would go! I picture myself Jesus Christ with Rothschild's fortune! How much good he would do! Matelote, embrace me! You are voluptuous and timid! You have cheeks which invite the kiss of a sister, and lips which claim the kiss of a lover."

"Hold your tongue, you cask!" said Courfeyrac.

Grantaire retorted:--

"I am the capitoul[52] and the master of the floral games!"

Enjolras, who was standing on the crest of the barricade, gun in hand, raised his beautiful, austere face. Enjolras, as the reader knows, had something of the Spartan and of the Puritan in his composition. He would have perished at Thermopylae with Leonidas, and burned at Drogheda with Cromwell.

"Grantaire," he shouted, "go get rid of the fumes of your wine somewhere else than here. This is the place for enthusiasm, not for drunkenness. Don't disgrace the barricade!"

This angry speech produced a singular effect on Grantaire. One would have said that he had had a glass of cold water flung in his face. He seemed to be rendered suddenly sober.

He sat down, put his elbows on a table near the window, looked at Enjolras with indescribable gentleness, and said to him:--

"Let me sleep here."

"Go and sleep somewhere else," cried Enjolras.

But Grantaire, still keeping his tender and troubled eyes fixed on him, replied:--

"Let me sleep here,--until I die."

Enjolras regarded him with disdainful eyes:--

"Grantaire, you are incapable of believing, of thinking, of willing, of living, and of dying."

Grantaire replied in a grave tone:--

"You will see."

He stammered a few more unintelligible words, then his head fell heavily on the table, and, as is the usual effect of the second period of inebriety, into which Enjolras had roughly and abruptly thrust him, an instant later he had fallen asleep.

CHAPTER IV--AN ATTEMPT TO CONSOLE THE WIDOW HUCHELOUP

Bahorel, in ecstasies over the barricade, shouted:--

"Here's the street in its low-necked dress! How well it looks!"

Courfeyrac, as he demolished the wine-shop to some extent, sought to console the widowed proprietress.

"Mother Hucheloup, weren't you complaining the other day because you had had a notice served on you for infringing the law, because Gibelotte shook a counterpane out of your window?"

"Yes, my good Monsieur Courfeyrac. Ah! good Heavens, are you going to put that table of mine in your horror, too? And it was for the counterpane, and also for a pot of flowers which fell from the attic window into the street, that the government collected a fine of a hundred francs. If that isn't an abomination, what is!"

"Well, Mother Hucheloup, we are avenging you."

Mother Hucheloup did not appear to understand very clearly the benefit which she was to derive from these reprisals made on her account. She was satisfied after the manner of that Arab woman, who, having received a box on the ear from her husband, went to complain to her father, and cried for vengeance, saying: "Father, you owe my husband affront for

affront." The father asked: "On which cheek did you receive the blow?" "On the left cheek." The father slapped her right cheek and said: "Now you are satisfied. Go tell your husband that he boxed my daughter's ears, and that I have accordingly boxed his wife's."

The rain had ceased. Recruits had arrived. Workmen had brought under their blouses a barrel of powder, a basket containing bottles of vitriol, two or three carnival torches, and a basket filled with fire-pots, "left over from the King's festival." This festival was very recent, having taken place on the 1st of May. It was said that these munitions came from a grocer in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine named Pepin. They smashed the only street lantern in the Rue de la Chanvrerie, the lantern corresponding to one in the Rue Saint-Denis, and all the lanterns in the surrounding streets, de Mondetour, du Cygne, des Precheurs, and de la Grande and de la Petite-Truanderie.

Enjolras, Combeferre, and Courfeyrac directed everything. Two barricades were now in process of construction at once, both of them resting on the Corinthe house and forming a right angle; the larger shut off the Rue de la Chanvrerie, the other closed the Rue Mondetour, on the side of the Rue de Cygne. This last barricade, which was very narrow, was constructed only of casks and paving-stones. There were about fifty workers on it; thirty were armed with guns; for, on their way, they had effected a wholesale loan from an armorer's shop.

Nothing could be more bizarre and at the same time more motley than this

troop. One had a round-jacket, a cavalry sabre, and two holster-pistols, another was in his shirt-sleeves, with a round hat, and a powder-horn slung at his side, a third wore a plastron of nine sheets of gray paper and was armed with a saddler's awl. There was one who was shouting: "Let us exterminate them to the last man and die at the point of our bayonet." This man had no bayonet. Another spread out over his coat the cross-belt and cartridge-box of a National Guardsman, the cover of the cartridge-box being ornamented with this inscription in red worsted: Public Order. There were a great many guns bearing the numbers of the legions, few hats, no cravats, many bare arms, some pikes. Add to this, all ages, all sorts of faces, small, pale young men, and bronzed longshoremen. All were in haste; and as they helped each other, they discussed the possible chances. That they would receive succor about three o'clock in the morning--that they were sure of one regiment, that Paris would rise. Terrible sayings with which was mingled a sort of cordial joviality. One would have pronounced them brothers, but they did not know each other's names. Great perils have this fine characteristic, that they bring to light the fraternity of strangers. A fire had been lighted in the kitchen, and there they were engaged in moulding into bullets, pewter mugs, spoons, forks, and all the brass table-ware of the establishment. In the midst of it all, they drank. Caps and buckshot were mixed pell-mell on the tables with glasses of wine. In the billiard-hall, Mame Hucheloup, Matelote, and Gibelotte, variously modified by terror, which had stupefied one, rendered another breathless, and roused the third, were tearing up old dish-cloths and making lint; three insurgents were assisting them, three bushy-haired,

jolly blades with beards and moustaches, who plucked away at the linen with the fingers of seamstresses and who made them tremble.

The man of lofty stature whom Courfeyrac, Combeferre, and Enjolras had observed at the moment when he joined the mob at the corner of the Rue des Billettes, was at work on the smaller barricade and was making himself useful there. Gavroche was working on the larger one. As for the young man who had been waiting for Courfeyrac at his lodgings, and who had inquired for M. Marius, he had disappeared at about the time when the omnibus had been overturned.

Gavroche, completely carried away and radiant, had undertaken to get everything in readiness. He went, came, mounted, descended, re-mounted, whistled, and sparkled. He seemed to be there for the encouragement of all. Had he any incentive? Yes, certainly, his poverty; had he wings? yes, certainly, his joy. Gavroche was a whirlwind. He was constantly visible, he was incessantly audible. He filled the air, as he was everywhere at once. He was a sort of almost irritating ubiquity; no halt was possible with him. The enormous barricade felt him on its haunches. He troubled the loungers, he excited the idle, he reanimated the weary, he grew impatient over the thoughtful, he inspired gayety in some, and breath in others, wrath in others, movement in all, now pricking a student, now biting an artisan; he alighted, paused, flew off again, hovered over the tumult, and the effort, sprang from one party to another, murmuring and humming, and harassed the whole company; a fly on the immense revolutionary coach.

Perpetual motion was in his little arms and perpetual clamor in his little lungs.

"Courage! more paving-stones! more casks! more machines! Where are you now? A hod of plaster for me to stop this hole with! Your barricade is very small. It must be carried up. Put everything on it, fling everything there, stick it all in. Break down the house. A barricade is Mother Gibou's tea. Hullo, here's a glass door."

This elicited an exclamation from the workers.

"A glass door? what do you expect us to do with a glass door, tubercle?"

"Hercules yourselves!" retorted Gavroche. "A glass door is an excellent thing in a barricade. It does not prevent an attack, but it prevents the enemy taking it. So you've never prigged apples over a wall where there were broken bottles? A glass door cuts the corns of the National Guard when they try to mount on the barricade. Pardi! glass is a treacherous thing. Well, you haven't a very wildly lively imagination, comrades."

However, he was furious over his triggerless pistol. He went from one to another, demanding: "A gun, I want a gun! Why don't you give me a gun?"

"Give you a gun!" said Combeferre.

"Come now!" said Gavroche, "why not? I had one in 1830 when we had a dispute with Charles X."

Enjolras shrugged his shoulders.

"When there are enough for the men, we will give some to the children."

Gavroche wheeled round haughtily, and answered:--

"If you are killed before me, I shall take yours."

"Gamin!" said Enjolras.

"Greenhorn!" said Gavroche.

A dandy who had lost his way and who lounged past the end of the street created a diversion! Gavroche shouted to him:--

"Come with us, young fellow! well now, don't we do anything for this old country of ours?"

The dandy fled.

CHAPTER V--PREPARATIONS

The journals of the day which said that that nearly impregnable structure, of the barricade of the Rue de la Chanvrerie, as they call it, reached to the level of the first floor, were mistaken. The fact is, that it did not exceed an average height of six or seven feet. It was built in such a manner that the combatants could, at their will, either disappear behind it or dominate the barrier and even scale its crest by means of a quadruple row of paving-stones placed on top of each other and arranged as steps in the interior. On the outside, the front of the barricade, composed of piles of paving-stones and casks bound together by beams and planks, which were entangled in the wheels of Anceau's dray and of the overturned omnibus, had a bristling and inextricable aspect.

An aperture large enough to allow a man to pass through had been made between the wall of the houses and the extremity of the barricade which was furthest from the wine-shop, so that an exit was possible at this point. The pole of the omnibus was placed upright and held up with ropes, and a red flag, fastened to this pole, floated over the barricade.

The little Mondetour barricade, hidden behind the wine-shop building, was not visible. The two barricades united formed a veritable redoubt. Enjolras and Courfeyrac had not thought fit to barricade the other fragment of the Rue Mondetour which opens through the Rue des Precheurs an issue into the Halles, wishing, no doubt, to preserve a possible

communication with the outside, and not entertaining much fear of an attack through the dangerous and difficult street of the Rue des Precheurs.

With the exception of this issue which was left free, and which constituted what Folard in his strategical style would have termed a branch and taking into account, also, the narrow cutting arranged on the Rue de la Chanvrerie, the interior of the barricade, where the wine-shop formed a salient angle, presented an irregular square, closed on all sides. There existed an interval of twenty paces between the grand barrier and the lofty houses which formed the background of the street, so that one might say that the barricade rested on these houses, all inhabited, but closed from top to bottom.

All this work was performed without any hindrance, in less than an hour, and without this handful of bold men seeing a single bear-skin cap or a single bayonet make their appearance. The very bourgeois who still ventured at this hour of riot to enter the Rue Saint-Denis cast a glance at the Rue de la Chanvrerie, caught sight of the barricade, and redoubled their pace.

The two barricades being finished, and the flag run up, a table was dragged out of the wine-shop; and Courfeyrac mounted on the table. Enjolras brought the square coffer, and Courfeyrac opened it. This coffer was filled with cartridges. When the mob saw the cartridges, a tremor ran through the bravest, and a momentary silence ensued.

Courfeyrac distributed them with a smile.

Each one received thirty cartridges. Many had powder, and set about making others with the bullets which they had run. As for the barrel of powder, it stood on a table on one side, near the door, and was held in reserve.

The alarm beat which ran through all Paris, did not cease, but it had finally come to be nothing more than a monotonous noise to which they no longer paid any attention. This noise retreated at times, and again drew near, with melancholy undulations.

They loaded the guns and carbines, all together, without haste, with solemn gravity. Enjolras went and stationed three sentinels outside the barricades, one in the Rue de la Chanvrerie, the second in the Rue des Precheurs, the third at the corner of the Rue de la Petite Truanderie.

Then, the barricades having been built, the posts assigned, the guns loaded, the sentinels stationed, they waited, alone in those redoubtable streets through which no one passed any longer, surrounded by those dumb houses which seemed dead and in which no human movement palpitated, enveloped in the deepening shades of twilight which was drawing on, in the midst of that silence through which something could be felt advancing, and which had about it something tragic and terrifying, isolated, armed, determined, and tranquil.

CHAPTER VI--WAITING

During those hours of waiting, what did they do?

We must needs tell, since this is a matter of history.

While the men made bullets and the women lint, while a large saucepan of melted brass and lead, destined to the bullet-mould smoked over a glowing brazier, while the sentinels watched, weapon in hand, on the barricade, while Enjolras, whom it was impossible to divert, kept an eye on the sentinels, Combeferre, Courfeyrac, Jean Prouvaire, Feuilly, Bossuet, Joly, Bahorel, and some others, sought each other out and united as in the most peaceful days of their conversations in their student life, and, in one corner of this wine-shop which had been converted into a casement, a couple of paces distant from the redoubt which they had built, with their carbines loaded and primed resting against the backs of their chairs, these fine young fellows, so close to a supreme hour, began to recite love verses.

What verses? These:--

Vous rappelez-vous notre douce vie,
  Lorsque nous etions si jeunes tous deux,
Et que nous n'avions au coeur d'autre envie
  Que d'etre bien mis et d'etre amoureux,

Lorsqu'en ajoutant votre age a mon age,
  Nous ne comptions pas a deux quarante ans,
Et que, dans notre humble et petit menage,
  Tout, meme l'hiver, nous etait printemps?

Beaux jours! Manuel etait fier et sage,
  Paris s'asseyait a de saints banquets,
Foy lancait la foudre, et votre corsage
  Avait une epingle ou je me piquais.

Tout vous contemplait. Avocat sans causes,
  Quand je vous menais au Prado diner,
Vous etiez jolie au point que les roses
  Me faisaient l'effet de se retourner.

Je les entendais dire: Est elle belle!
  Comme elle sent bon! Quels cheveux a flots!
Sous son mantelet elle cache une aile,
  Son bonnet charmant est a peine eclos.

J'errais avec toi, pressant ton bras souple.
  Les passants crovaient que l'amour charme
Avait marie, dans notre heureux couple,
  Le doux mois d'avril au beau mois de mai.

Nous vivions caches, contents, porte close,
Devorant l'amour, bon fruit defendu,
Ma bouche n'avait pas dit une chose
Que deja ton coeur avait repondu.

La Sorbonne etait l'endroit bucolique
Ou je t'adorais du soir au matin.
C'est ainsi qu'une ame amoureuse applique
La carte du Tendre au pays Latin.

O place Maubert! o place Dauphine!
Quand, dans le taudis frais et printanier,
Tu tirais ton bas sur ton jambe fine,
Je voyais un astre au fond du grenier.

J'ai fort lu Platon, mais rien ne m'en reste;
Mieux que Malebranche et que Lamennais,
Tu me demontrais la bonte celeste
Avec une fleur que tu me donnais.

Je t'obeissais, tu m' etais soumise;
O grenier dore! te lacer! te voir
Aller et venir des l'aube en chemise,
Mirant ton jeune front a ton vieux miroir.

Et qui done pourrait perde la memoire

De ces temps d'aurore et de firmament,
De rubans, de fleurs, de gaze et de moire,
Ou l'amour begaye un argot charmant?

Nos jardins etaient un pot de tulipe;
Tu masquais la vitre avec un jupon;
Je prenais le bol de terre de pipe,
Et je te donnais le tasse en japon.

Et ces grands malheurs qui nous faisaient rire!
Ton manchon brule, ton boa perdu!
Et ce cher portrait du divin Shakespeare
Qu'un soir pour souper nons avons vendu!

J'etais mendiant et toi charitable.
Je baisais au vol tes bras frais et ronds.
Dante in folio nous servait de table
Pour manger gaiment un cent de marrons.

La premiere fois qu'en mon joyeux bouge
Je pris un baiser a ton levre en feu,
Quand tu t'en allais decoiffee et rouge,
Je restai tout pale et je crus en Dieu!

Te rappelles-tu nos bonheurs sans nombre,
Et tous ces fichus changes en chiffons?

Oh que de soupirs, de nos coeurs pleins d'ombre,

Se sont envoles dans les cieux profonds![53]

The hour, the spot, these souvenirs of youth recalled, a few stars which began to twinkle in the sky, the funeral repose of those deserted streets, the imminence of the inexorable adventure, which was in preparation, gave a pathetic charm to these verses murmured in a low tone in the dusk by Jean Prouvaire, who, as we have said, was a gentle poet.

In the meantime, a lamp had been lighted in the small barricade, and in the large one, one of those wax torches such as are to be met with on Shrove-Tuesday in front of vehicles loaded with masks, on their way to la Courtille. These torches, as the reader has seen, came from the Faubourg Saint-Antoine.

The torch had been placed in a sort of cage of paving-stones closed on three sides to shelter it from the wind, and disposed in such a fashion that all the light fell on the flag. The street and the barricade remained sunk in gloom, and nothing was to be seen except the red flag formidably illuminated as by an enormous dark-lantern.

This light enhanced the scarlet of the flag, with an indescribable and terrible purple.

CHAPTER VII--THE MAN RECRUITED IN THE RUE DES BILLETTES

Night was fully come, nothing made its appearance. All that they heard was confused noises, and at intervals, fusillades; but these were rare, badly sustained and distant. This respite, which was thus prolonged, was a sign that the Government was taking its time, and collecting its forces. These fifty men were waiting for sixty thousand.

Enjolras felt attacked by that impatience which seizes on strong souls on the threshold of redoubtable events. He went in search of Gavroche, who had set to making cartridges in the tap-room, by the dubious light of two candles placed on the counter by way of precaution, on account of the powder which was scattered on the tables. These two candles cast no gleam outside. The insurgents had, moreover, taken pains not to have any light in the upper stories.

Gavroche was deeply preoccupied at that moment, but not precisely with his cartridges. The man of the Rue des Billettes had just entered the tap-room and had seated himself at the table which was the least lighted. A musket of large model had fallen to his share, and he held it between his legs. Gavroche, who had been, up to that moment, distracted by a hundred "amusing" things, had not even seen this man.

When he entered, Gavroche followed him mechanically with his eyes, admiring his gun; then, all at once, when the man was seated, the street urchin sprang to his feet. Any one who had spied upon that man up to

that moment, would have seen that he was observing everything in the barricade and in the band of insurgents, with singular attention; but, from the moment when he had entered this room, he had fallen into a sort of brown study, and no longer seemed to see anything that was going on. The gamin approached this pensive personage, and began to step around him on tiptoe, as one walks in the vicinity of a person whom one is afraid of waking. At the same time, over his childish countenance which was, at once so impudent and so serious, so giddy and so profound, so gay and so heart-breaking, passed all those grimaces of an old man which signify: Ah bah! impossible! My sight is bad! I am dreaming! can this be? no, it is not! but yes! why, no! etc. Gavroche balanced on his heels, clenched both fists in his pockets, moved his neck around like a bird, expended in a gigantic pout all the sagacity of his lower lip. He was astounded, uncertain, incredulous, convinced, dazzled. He had the mien of the chief of the eunuchs in the slave mart, discovering a Venus among the blowsy females, and the air of an amateur recognizing a Raphael in a heap of daubs. His whole being was at work, the instinct which scents out, and the intelligence which combines. It was evident that a great event had happened in Gavroche's life.

It was at the most intense point of this preoccupation that Enjolras accosted him.

"You are small," said Enjolras, "you will not be seen. Go out of the barricade, slip along close to the houses, skirmish about a bit in the streets, and come back and tell me what is going on."

Gavroche raised himself on his haunches.

"So the little chaps are good for something! that's very lucky! I'll go! In the meanwhile, trust to the little fellows, and distrust the big ones." And Gavroche, raising his head and lowering his voice, added, as he indicated the man of the Rue des Billettes: "Do you see that big fellow there?"

"Well?"

"He's a police spy."

"Are you sure of it?"

"It isn't two weeks since he pulled me off the cornice of the Port Royal, where I was taking the air, by my ear."

Enjolras hastily quitted the urchin and murmured a few words in a very low tone to a longshoreman from the winedocks who chanced to be at hand. The man left the room, and returned almost immediately, accompanied by three others. The four men, four porters with broad shoulders, went and placed themselves without doing anything to attract his attention, behind the table on which the man of the Rue des Billettes was leaning with his elbows. They were evidently ready to hurl themselves upon him.

Then Enjolras approached the man and demanded of him:--

"Who are you?"

At this abrupt query, the man started. He plunged his gaze deep into Enjolras' clear eyes and appeared to grasp the latter's meaning. He smiled with a smile than which nothing more disdainful, more energetic, and more resolute could be seen in the world, and replied with haughty gravity:--

"I see what it is. Well, yes!"

"You are a police spy?"

"I am an agent of the authorities."

"And your name?"

"Javert."

Enjolras made a sign to the four men. In the twinkling of an eye, before Javert had time to turn round, he was collared, thrown down, pinioned and searched.

They found on him a little round card pasted between two pieces of glass, and bearing on one side the arms of France, engraved, and with

this motto: Supervision and vigilance, and on the other this note: "JAVERT, inspector of police, aged fifty-two," and the signature of the Prefect of Police of that day, M. Gisquet.

Besides this, he had his watch and his purse, which contained several gold pieces. They left him his purse and his watch. Under the watch, at the bottom of his fob, they felt and seized a paper in an envelope, which Enjolras unfolded, and on which he read these five lines, written in the very hand of the Prefect of Police:--

"As soon as his political mission is accomplished, Inspector Javert will make sure, by special supervision, whether it is true that the malefactors have instituted intrigues on the right bank of the Seine, near the Jena bridge."

The search ended, they lifted Javert to his feet, bound his arms behind his back, and fastened him to that celebrated post in the middle of the room which had formerly given the wine-shop its name.

Gavroche, who had looked on at the whole of this scene and had approved of everything with a silent toss of his head, stepped up to Javert and said to him:--

"It's the mouse who has caught the cat."

All this was so rapidly executed, that it was all over when those about

the wine-shop noticed it.

Javert had not uttered a single cry.

At the sight of Javert bound to the post, Courfeyrac, Bossuet, Joly, Combeferre, and the men scattered over the two barricades came running up.

Javert, with his back to the post, and so surrounded with ropes that he could not make a movement, raised his head with the intrepid serenity of the man who has never lied.

"He is a police spy," said Enjolras.

And turning to Javert: "You will be shot ten minutes before the barricade is taken."

Javert replied in his most imperious tone:--

"Why not at once?"

"We are saving our powder."

"Then finish the business with a blow from a knife."

"Spy," said the handsome Enjolras, "we are judges and not assassins."

Then he called Gavroche:--

"Here you! go about your business! Do what I told you!"

"I'm going!" cried Gavroche.

And halting as he was on the point of setting out:--

"By the way, you will give me his gun!" and he added: "I leave you the musician, but I want the clarionet."

The gamin made the military salute and passed gayly through the opening in the large barricade.

CHAPTER VIII--MANY INTERROGATION POINTS WITH REGARD TO A CERTAIN LE CABUC WHOSE NAME MAY NOT HAVE BEEN LE CABUC

The tragic picture which we have undertaken would not be complete, the reader would not see those grand moments of social birth-pangs in a revolutionary birth, which contain convulsion mingled with effort, in their exact and real relief, were we to omit, in the sketch here outlined, an incident full of epic and savage horror which occurred almost immediately after Gavroche's departure.

Mobs, as the reader knows, are like a snowball, and collect as they roll along, a throng of tumultuous men. These men do not ask each other whence they come. Among the passers-by who had joined the rabble led by Enjolras, Combeferre, and Courfeyrac, there had been a person wearing the jacket of a street porter, which was very threadbare on the shoulders, who gesticulated and vociferated, and who had the look of a drunken savage. This man, whose name or nickname was Le Cabuc, and who was, moreover, an utter stranger to those who pretended to know him, was very drunk, or assumed the appearance of being so, and had seated himself with several others at a table which they had dragged outside of the wine-shop. This Cabuc, while making those who vied with him drunk seemed to be examining with a thoughtful air the large house at the extremity of the barricade, whose five stories commanded the whole street and faced the Rue Saint-Denis. All at once he exclaimed:--

"Do you know, comrades, it is from that house yonder that we must fire.

When we are at the windows, the deuce is in it if any one can advance into the street!"

"Yes, but the house is closed," said one of the drinkers.

"Let us knock!"

"They will not open."

"Let us break in the door!"

Le Cabuc runs to the door, which had a very massive knocker, and knocks. The door opens not. He strikes a second blow. No one answers. A third stroke. The same silence.

"Is there any one here?" shouts Cabuc.

Nothing stirs.

Then he seizes a gun and begins to batter the door with the butt end.

It was an ancient alley door, low, vaulted, narrow, solid, entirely of oak, lined on the inside with a sheet of iron and iron stays, a genuine prison postern. The blows from the butt end of the gun made the house tremble, but did not shake the door.

Nevertheless, it is probable that the inhabitants were disturbed, for a tiny, square window was finally seen to open on the third story, and at this aperture appeared the reverend and terrified face of a gray-haired old man, who was the porter, and who held a candle.

The man who was knocking paused.

"Gentlemen," said the porter, "what do you want?"

"Open!" said Cabuc.

"That cannot be, gentlemen."

"Open, nevertheless."

"Impossible, gentlemen."

Le Cabuc took his gun and aimed at the porter; but as he was below, and as it was very dark, the porter did not see him.

"Will you open, yes or no?"

"No, gentlemen."

"Do you say no?"

"I say no, my goo--"

The porter did not finish. The shot was fired; the ball entered under his chin and came out at the nape of his neck, after traversing the jugular vein.

The old man fell back without a sigh. The candle fell and was extinguished, and nothing more was to be seen except a motionless head lying on the sill of the small window, and a little whitish smoke which floated off towards the roof.

"There!" said Le Cabuc, dropping the butt end of his gun to the pavement.

He had hardly uttered this word, when he felt a hand laid on his shoulder with the weight of an eagle's talon, and he heard a voice saying to him:--

"On your knees."

The murderer turned round and saw before him Enjolras' cold, white face.

Enjolras held a pistol in his hand.

He had hastened up at the sound of the discharge.

He had seized Cabuc's collar, blouse, shirt, and suspender with his left hand.

"On your knees!" he repeated.

And, with an imperious motion, the frail young man of twenty years bent the thickset and sturdy porter like a reed, and brought him to his knees in the mire.

Le Cabuc attempted to resist, but he seemed to have been seized by a superhuman hand.

Enjolras, pale, with bare neck and dishevelled hair, and his woman's face, had about him at that moment something of the antique Themis. His dilated nostrils, his downcast eyes, gave to his implacable Greek profile that expression of wrath and that expression of Chastity which, as the ancient world viewed the matter, befit Justice.

The whole barricade hastened up, then all ranged themselves in a circle at a distance, feeling that it was impossible to utter a word in the presence of the thing which they were about to behold.

Le Cabuc, vanquished, no longer tried to struggle, and trembled in every limb.

Enjolras released him and drew out his watch.

"Collect yourself," said he. "Think or pray. You have one minute."

"Mercy!" murmured the murderer; then he dropped his head and stammered a few inarticulate oaths.

Enjolras never took his eyes off of him: he allowed a minute to pass, then he replaced his watch in his fob. That done, he grasped Le Cabuc by the hair, as the latter coiled himself into a ball at his knees and shrieked, and placed the muzzle of the pistol to his ear. Many of those intrepid men, who had so tranquilly entered upon the most terrible of adventures, turned aside their heads.

An explosion was heard, the assassin fell to the pavement face downwards.

Enjolras straightened himself up, and cast a convinced and severe glance around him. Then he spurned the corpse with his foot and said:--

"Throw that outside."

Three men raised the body of the unhappy wretch, which was still agitated by the last mechanical convulsions of the life that had fled, and flung it over the little barricade into the Rue Mondetour.

Enjolras was thoughtful. It is impossible to say what grandiose shadows

slowly spread over his redoubtable serenity. All at once he raised his voice.

A silence fell upon them.

"Citizens," said Enjolras, "what that man did is frightful, what I have done is horrible. He killed, therefore I killed him. I had to do it, because insurrection must have its discipline. Assassination is even more of a crime here than elsewhere; we are under the eyes of the Revolution, we are the priests of the Republic, we are the victims of duty, and must not be possible to slander our combat. I have, therefore, tried that man, and condemned him to death. As for myself, constrained as I am to do what I have done, and yet abhorring it, I have judged myself also, and you shall soon see to what I have condemned myself."

Those who listened to him shuddered.

"We will share thy fate," cried Combeferre.

"So be it," replied Enjolras. "One word more. In executing this man, I have obeyed necessity; but necessity is a monster of the old world, necessity's name is Fatality. Now, the law of progress is, that monsters shall disappear before the angels, and that Fatality shall vanish before Fraternity. It is a bad moment to pronounce the word love. No matter, I do pronounce it. And I glorify it. Love, the future is thine. Death, I make use of thee, but I hate thee. Citizens, in the future there will

be neither darkness nor thunderbolts; neither ferocious ignorance, nor bloody retaliation. As there will be no more Satan, there will be no more Michael. In the future no one will kill any one else, the earth will beam with radiance, the human race will love. The day will come, citizens, when all will be concord, harmony, light, joy and life; it will come, and it is in order that it may come that we are about to die."

Enjolras ceased. His virgin lips closed; and he remained for some time standing on the spot where he had shed blood, in marble immobility. His staring eye caused those about him to speak in low tones.

Jean Prouvaire and Combeferre pressed each other's hands silently, and, leaning against each other in an angle of the barricade, they watched with an admiration in which there was some compassion, that grave young man, executioner and priest, composed of light, like crystal, and also of rock.

Let us say at once that later on, after the action, when the bodies were taken to the morgue and searched, a police agent's card was found on Le Cabuc. The author of this book had in his hands, in 1848, the special report on this subject made to the Prefect of Police in 1832.

We will add, that if we are to believe a tradition of the police, which is strange but probably well founded, Le Cabuc was Claquesous. The fact is, that dating from the death of Le Cabuc, there was no longer any

question of Claquesous. Claquesous had nowhere left any trace of his disappearance; he would seem to have amalgamated himself with the invisible. His life had been all shadows, his end was night.

The whole insurgent group was still under the influence of the emotion of that tragic case which had been so quickly tried and so quickly terminated, when Courfeyrac again beheld on the barricade, the small young man who had inquired of him that morning for Marius.

This lad, who had a bold and reckless air, had come by night to join the insurgents.