BOOK FIFTH.--GRANDSON AND GRANDFATHER

CHAPTER I--IN WHICH THE TREE WITH THE ZINC PLASTER APPEARS AGAIN

Some time after the events which we have just recorded, Sieur Boulatruelle experienced a lively emotion.

Sieur Boulatruelle was that road-mender of Montfermeil whom the reader has already seen in the gloomy parts of this book.

Boulatruelle, as the reader may, perchance, recall, was a man who was occupied with divers and troublesome matters. He broke stones and damaged travellers on the highway.

Road-mender and thief as he was, he cherished one dream; he believed in the treasures buried in the forest of Montfermeil. He hoped some day to find the money in the earth at the foot of a tree; in the meanwhile, he lived to search the pockets of passers-by.

Nevertheless, for an instant, he was prudent. He had just escaped neatly. He had been, as the reader is aware, picked up in Jondrette's garret in company with the other ruffians. Utility of a vice: his drunkenness had been his salvation. The authorities had never been able

to make out whether he had been there in the quality of a robber or a man who had been robbed. An order of nolle prosequi, founded on his well authenticated state of intoxication on the evening of the ambush, had set him at liberty. He had taken to his heels. He had returned to his road from Gagny to Lagny, to make, under administrative supervision, broken stone for the good of the state, with downcast mien, in a very pensive mood, his ardor for theft somewhat cooled; but he was addicted none the less tenderly to the wine which had recently saved him.

As for the lively emotion which he had experienced a short time after his return to his road-mender's turf-thatched cot, here it is:

One morning, Boulatruelle, while on his way as was his wont, to his work, and possibly also to his ambush, a little before daybreak caught sight, through the branches of the trees, of a man, whose back alone he saw, but the shape of whose shoulders, as it seemed to him at that distance and in the early dusk, was not entirely unfamiliar to him. Boulatruelle, although intoxicated, had a correct and lucid memory, a defensive arm that is indispensable to any one who is at all in conflict with legal order.

"Where the deuce have I seen something like that man yonder?" he said to himself. But he could make himself no answer, except that the man resembled some one of whom his memory preserved a confused trace.

However, apart from the identity which he could not manage to catch,

Boulatruelle put things together and made calculations. This man did not belong in the country-side. He had just arrived there. On foot, evidently. No public conveyance passes through Montfermeil at that hour. He had walked all night. Whence came he? Not from a very great distance; for he had neither haversack, nor bundle. From Paris, no doubt. Why was he in these woods? why was he there at such an hour? what had he come there for?

Boulatruelle thought of the treasure. By dint of ransacking his memory, he recalled in a vague way that he had already, many years before, had a similar alarm in connection with a man who produced on him the effect that he might well be this very individual.

"By the deuce," said Boulatruelle, "I'll find him again. I'll discover the parish of that parishioner. This prowler of Patron-Minette has a reason, and I'll know it. People can't have secrets in my forest if I don't have a finger in the pie."

He took his pick-axe which was very sharply pointed.

"There now," he grumbled, "is something that will search the earth and a man."

And, as one knots one thread to another thread, he took up the line of march at his best pace in the direction which the man must follow, and set out across the thickets.

When he had compassed a hundred strides, the day, which was already beginning to break, came to his assistance. Footprints stamped in the sand, weeds trodden down here and there, heather crushed, young branches in the brushwood bent and in the act of straightening themselves up again with the graceful deliberation of the arms of a pretty woman who stretches herself when she wakes, pointed out to him a sort of track. He followed it, then lost it. Time was flying. He plunged deeper into the woods and came to a sort of eminence. An early huntsman who was passing in the distance along a path, whistling the air of Guillery, suggested to him the idea of climbing a tree. Old as he was, he was agile. There stood close at hand a beech-tree of great size, worthy of Tityrus and of Boulatruelle. Boulatruelle ascended the beech as high as he was able.

The idea was a good one. On scrutinizing the solitary waste on the side where the forest is thoroughly entangled and wild, Boulatruelle suddenly caught sight of his man.

Hardly had he got his eye upon him when he lost sight of him.

The man entered, or rather, glided into, an open glade, at a considerable distance, masked by large trees, but with which Boulatruelle was perfectly familiar, on account of having noticed, near a large pile of porous stones, an ailing chestnut-tree bandaged with a sheet of zinc nailed directly upon the bark. This glade was the one which was formerly called the Blaru-bottom. The heap of stones, destined

for no one knows what employment, which was visible there thirty years ago, is doubtless still there. Nothing equals a heap of stones in longevity, unless it is a board fence. They are temporary expedients. What a reason for lasting!

Boulatruelle, with the rapidity of joy, dropped rather than descended from the tree. The lair was unearthed, the question now was to seize the beast. That famous treasure of his dreams was probably there.

It was no small matter to reach that glade. By the beaten paths, which indulge in a thousand teasing zigzags, it required a good quarter of an hour. In a bee-line, through the underbrush, which is peculiarly dense, very thorny, and very aggressive in that locality, a full half hour was necessary. Boulatruelle committed the error of not comprehending this. He believed in the straight line; a respectable optical illusion which ruins many a man. The thicket, bristling as it was, struck him as the best road.

"Let's take to the wolves' Rue de Rivoli," said he.

Boulatruelle, accustomed to taking crooked courses, was on this occasion guilty of the fault of going straight.

He flung himself resolutely into the tangle of undergrowth.

He had to deal with holly bushes, nettles, hawthorns, eglantines,

thistles, and very irascible brambles. He was much lacerated.

At the bottom of the ravine he found water which he was obliged to traverse.

At last he reached the Blaru-bottom, after the lapse of forty minutes, sweating, soaked, breathless, scratched, and ferocious.

There was no one in the glade. Boulatruelle rushed to the heap of stones. It was in its place. It had not been carried off.

As for the man, he had vanished in the forest. He had made his escape. Where? in what direction? into what thicket? Impossible to guess.

And, heartrending to say, there, behind the pile of stones, in front of the tree with the sheet of zinc, was freshly turned earth, a pick-axe, abandoned or forgotten, and a hole.

The hole was empty.

"Thief!" shrieked Boulatruelle, shaking his fist at the horizon.

CHAPTER II--MARIUS, EMERGING FROM CIVIL WAR, MAKES READY FOR DOMESTIC WAR

For a long time, Marius was neither dead nor alive. For many weeks he lay in a fever accompanied by delirium, and by tolerably grave cerebral symptoms, caused more by the shocks of the wounds on the head than by the wounds themselves.

He repeated Cosette's name for whole nights in the melancholy loquacity of fever, and with the sombre obstinacy of agony. The extent of some of the lesions presented a serious danger, the suppuration of large wounds being always liable to become re-absorbed, and consequently, to kill the sick man, under certain atmospheric conditions; at every change of weather, at the slightest storm, the physician was uneasy.

"Above all things," he repeated, "let the wounded man be subjected to no emotion." The dressing of the wounds was complicated and difficult, the fixation of apparatus and bandages by cerecloths not having been invented as yet, at that epoch. Nicolette used up a sheet "as big as the ceiling," as she put it, for lint. It was not without difficulty that the chloruretted lotions and the nitrate of silver overcame the gangrene. As long as there was any danger, M. Gillenormand, seated in despair at his grandson's pillow, was, like Marius, neither alive nor dead.

Every day, sometimes twice a day, a very well dressed gentleman with

white hair,--such was the description given by the porter,--came to inquire about the wounded man, and left a large package of lint for the dressings.

Finally, on the 7th of September, four months to a day, after the sorrowful night when he had been brought back to his grandfather in a dying condition, the doctor declared that he would answer for Marius. Convalescence began. But Marius was forced to remain for two months more stretched out on a long chair, on account of the results called up by the fracture of his collar-bone. There always is a last wound like that which will not close, and which prolongs the dressings indefinitely, to the great annoyance of the sick person.

However, this long illness and this long convalescence saved him from all pursuit. In France, there is no wrath, not even of a public character, which six months will not extinguish. Revolts, in the present state of society, are so much the fault of every one, that they are followed by a certain necessity of shutting the eyes.

Let us add, that the inexcusable Gisquet order, which enjoined doctors to lodge information against the wounded, having outraged public opinion, and not opinion alone, but the King first of all, the wounded were covered and protected by this indignation; and, with the exception of those who had been made prisoners in the very act of combat, the councils of war did not dare to trouble any one. So Marius was left in peace.

M. Gillenormand first passed through all manner of anguish, and then through every form of ecstasy. It was found difficult to prevent his passing every night beside the wounded man; he had his big arm-chair carried to Marius' bedside; he required his daughter to take the finest linen in the house for compresses and bandages. Mademoiselle Gillenormand, like a sage and elderly person, contrived to spare the fine linen, while allowing the grandfather to think that he was obeyed. M. Gillenormand would not permit any one to explain to him, that for the preparation of lint batiste is not nearly so good as coarse linen, nor new linen as old linen. He was present at all the dressings of the wounds from which Mademoiselle Gillenormand modestly absented herself. When the dead flesh was cut away with scissors, he said: "Aie! aie!" Nothing was more touching than to see him with his gentle, senile palsy, offer the wounded man a cup of his cooling-draught. He overwhelmed the doctor with questions. He did not observe that he asked the same ones over and over again.

On the day when the doctor announced to him that Marius was out of danger, the good man was in a delirium. He made his porter a present of three louis. That evening, on his return to his own chamber, he danced a gavotte, using his thumb and forefinger as castanets, and he sang the following song:

"Jeanne est nee a Fougere
Vrai nid d'une bergere;

"Amour, tu vis en elle;
Car c'est dans sa prunelle

J'adore son jupon, Que tu mets ton carquois.
Fripon. Narquois!

"Moi, je la chante, et j'aime,
Plus que Diane meme,
Jeanne et ses durs tetons
Bretons."[61]

"Love, thou dwellest in her; For 'tis in her eyes that thou placest thy quiver, sly scamp!

"As for me, I sing her, and I love, more than Diana herself, Jeanne and her firm Breton breasts."

Then he knelt upon a chair, and Basque, who was watching him through the half-open door, made sure that he was praying.

Up to that time, he had not believed in God.

At each succeeding phase of improvement, which became more and more pronounced, the grandfather raved. He executed a multitude of mechanical actions full of joy; he ascended and descended the stairs, without knowing why. A pretty female neighbor was amazed one morning at receiving a big bouquet; it was M. Gillenormand who had sent it to

her. The husband made a jealous scene. M. Gillenormand tried to draw Nicolette upon his knees. He called Marius, "M. le Baron." He shouted: "Long live the Republic!"

Every moment, he kept asking the doctor: "Is he no longer in danger?" He gazed upon Marius with the eyes of a grandmother. He brooded over him while he ate. He no longer knew himself, he no longer rendered himself an account of himself. Marius was the master of the house, there was abdication in his joy, he was the grandson of his grandson.

In the state of joy in which he then was, he was the most venerable of children. In his fear lest he might fatigue or annoy the convalescent, he stepped behind him to smile. He was content, joyous, delighted, charming, young. His white locks added a gentle majesty to the gay radiance of his visage. When grace is mingled with wrinkles, it is adorable. There is an indescribable aurora in beaming old age.

As for Marius, as he allowed them to dress his wounds and care for him, he had but one fixed idea: Cosette.

After the fever and delirium had left him, he did not again pronounce her name, and it might have been supposed that he no longer thought of her. He held his peace, precisely because his soul was there.

He did not know what had become of Cosette; the whole affair of the Rue de la Chanvrerie was like a cloud in his memory; shadows that were

almost indistinct, floated through his mind, Eponine, Gavroche, Mabeuf, the Thenardiers, all his friends gloomily intermingled with the smoke of the barricade; the strange passage of M. Fauchelevent through that adventure produced on him the effect of a puzzle in a tempest; he understood nothing connected with his own life, he did not know how nor by whom he had been saved, and no one of those around him knew this; all that they had been able to tell him was, that he had been brought home at night in a hackney-coach, to the Rue des Filles-du-Calvaire; past, present, future were nothing more to him than the mist of a vague idea; but in that fog there was one immovable point, one clear and precise outline, something made of granite, a resolution, a will; to find Cosette once more. For him, the idea of life was not distinct from the idea of Cosette. He had decreed in his heart that he would not accept the one without the other, and he was immovably resolved to exact of any person whatever, who should desire to force him to live,--from his grandfather, from fate, from hell,--the restitution of his vanished Eden.

He did not conceal from himself the fact that obstacles existed.

Let us here emphasize one detail, he was not won over and was but little softened by all the solicitude and tenderness of his grandfather. In the first place, he was not in the secret; then, in his reveries of an invalid, which were still feverish, possibly, he distrusted this tenderness as a strange and novel thing, which had for its object his conquest. He remained cold. The grandfather absolutely wasted his poor

old smile. Marius said to himself that it was all right so long as he, Marius, did not speak, and let things take their course; but that when it became a question of Cosette, he would find another face, and that his grandfather's true attitude would be unmasked. Then there would be an unpleasant scene; a recrudescence of family questions, a confrontation of positions, every sort of sarcasm and all manner of objections at one and the same time, Fauchelevent, Coupelevent, fortune, poverty, a stone about his neck, the future. Violent resistance; conclusion: a refusal. Marius stiffened himself in advance.

And then, in proportion as he regained life, the old ulcers of his memory opened once more, he reflected again on the past, Colonel Pontmercy placed himself once more between M. Gillenormand and him, Marius, he told himself that he had no true kindness to expect from a person who had been so unjust and so hard to his father. And with health, there returned to him a sort of harshness towards his grandfather. The old man was gently pained by this. M. Gillenormand, without however allowing it to appear, observed that Marius, ever since the latter had been brought back to him and had regained consciousness, had not once called him father. It is true that he did not say "monsieur" to him; but he contrived not to say either the one or the other, by means of a certain way of turning his phrases. Obviously, a crisis was approaching.

As almost always happens in such cases, Marius skirmished before giving battle, by way of proving himself. This is called "feeling the ground."

One morning it came to pass that M. Gillenormand spoke slightingly of the Convention, apropos of a newspaper which had fallen into his hands, and gave vent to a Royalist harangue on Danton, Saint-Juste and Robespierre.--"The men of '93 were giants," said Marius with severity. The old man held his peace, and uttered not a sound during the remainder of that day.

Marius, who had always present to his mind the inflexible grandfather of his early years, interpreted this silence as a profound concentration of wrath, augured from it a hot conflict, and augmented his preparations for the fray in the inmost recesses of his mind.

He decided that, in case of a refusal, he would tear off his bandages, dislocate his collar-bone, that he would lay bare all the wounds which he had left, and would reject all food. His wounds were his munitions of war. He would have Cosette or die.

He awaited the propitious moment with the crafty patience of the sick.

That moment arrived.

CHAPTER III--MARIUS ATTACKED

One day, M. Gillenormand, while his daughter was putting in order the phials and cups on the marble of the commode, bent over Marius and said to him in his tenderest accents: "Look here, my little Marius, if I were in your place, I would eat meat now in preference to fish. A fried sole is excellent to begin a convalescence with, but a good cutlet is needed to put a sick man on his feet."

Marius, who had almost entirely recovered his strength, collected the whole of it, drew himself up into a sitting posture, laid his two clenched fists on the sheets of his bed, looked his grandfather in the face, assumed a terrible air, and said:

"This leads me to say something to you."

"What is it?"

"That I wish to marry."

"Agreed," said his grandfather.--And he burst out laughing.

"How agreed?"

"Yes, agreed. You shall have your little girl."

Marius, stunned and overwhelmed with the dazzling shock, trembled in every limb.

M. Gillenormand went on:

"Yes, you shall have her, that pretty little girl of yours. She comes every day in the shape of an old gentleman to inquire after you. Ever since you were wounded, she has passed her time in weeping and making lint. I have made inquiries. She lives in the Rue de l'Homme Arme, No. 7. Ah! There we have it! Ah! so you want her! Well, you shall have her. You're caught. You had arranged your little plot, you had said to yourself:--'I'm going to signify this squarely to my grandfather, to that mummy of the Regency and of the Directory, to that ancient beau, to that Dorante turned Geronte; he has indulged in his frivolities also, that he has, and he has had his love affairs, and his grisettes and his Cosettes; he has made his rustle, he has had his wings, he has eaten of the bread of spring; he certainly must remember it.' Ah! you take the cockchafer by the horns. That's good. I offer you a cutlet and you answer me: 'By the way, I want to marry.' There's a transition for you! Ah! you reckoned on a bickering! You do not know that I am an old coward. What do you say to that? You are vexed? You did not expect to find your grandfather still more foolish than yourself, you are wasting the discourse which you meant to bestow upon me, Mr. Lawyer, and that's vexatious. Well, so much the worse, rage away. I'll do whatever you wish, and that cuts you short, imbecile! Listen. I have made my inquiries, I'm cunning too; she is charming, she is discreet, it is not

true about the lancer, she has made heaps of lint, she's a jewel, she adores you, if you had died, there would have been three of us, her coffin would have accompanied mine. I have had an idea, ever since you have been better, of simply planting her at your bedside, but it is only in romances that young girls are brought to the bedsides of handsome young wounded men who interest them. It is not done. What would your aunt have said to it? You were nude three quarters of the time, my good fellow. Ask Nicolette, who has not left you for a moment, if there was any possibility of having a woman here. And then, what would the doctor have said? A pretty girl does not cure a man of fever. In short, it's all right, let us say no more about it, all's said, all's done, it's all settled, take her. Such is my ferocity. You see, I perceived that you did not love me. I said to myself: 'Here now, I have my little Cosette right under my hand, I'm going to give her to him, he will be obliged to love me a little then, or he must tell the reason why.' Ah! so you thought that the old man was going to storm, to put on a big voice, to shout no, and to lift his cane at all that aurora. Not a bit of it. Cosette, so be it; love, so be it; I ask nothing better. Pray take the trouble of getting married, sir. Be happy, my well-beloved child."

That said, the old man burst forth into sobs.

And he seized Marius' head, and pressed it with both arms against his breast, and both fell to weeping. This is one of the forms of supreme happiness.

"Father!" cried Marius.

"Ah, so you love me!" said the old man.

An ineffable moment ensued. They were choking and could not speak.

At length the old man stammered:

"Come! his mouth is unstopped at last. He has said: 'Father' to me."

Marius disengaged his head from his grandfather's arms, and said gently:

"But, father, now that I am quite well, it seems to me that I might see her."

"Agreed again, you shall see her to-morrow."

"Father!"

"What?"

"Why not to-day?"

"Well, to-day then. Let it be to-day. You have called me 'father' three times, and it is worth it. I will attend to it. She shall be brought hither. Agreed, I tell you. It has already been put into verse. This is

the ending of the elegy of the 'Jeune Malade' by Andre Chenier, by Andre Chenier whose throat was cut by the ras . . . by the giants of '93."

M. Gillenormand fancied that he detected a faint frown on the part of Marius, who, in truth, as we must admit, was no longer listening to him, and who was thinking far more of Cosette than of 1793.

The grandfather, trembling at having so inopportunely introduced Andre Chenier, resumed precipitately:

"Cut his throat is not the word. The fact is that the great revolutionary geniuses, who were not malicious, that is incontestable, who were heroes, pardi! found that Andre Chenier embarrassed them somewhat, and they had him guillot . . . that is to say, those great men on the 7th of Thermidor, besought Andre Chenier, in the interests of public safety, to be so good as to go . . ."

M. Gillenormand, clutched by the throat by his own phrase, could not proceed. Being able neither to finish it nor to retract it, while his daughter arranged the pillow behind Marius, who was overwhelmed with so many emotions, the old man rushed headlong, with as much rapidity as his age permitted, from the bed-chamber, shut the door behind him, and, purple, choking and foaming at the mouth, his eyes starting from his head, he found himself nose to nose with honest Basque, who was blacking boots in the anteroom. He seized Basque by the collar, and shouted full in his face in fury:--"By the hundred thousand Javottes of the devil,

those ruffians did assassinate him!"

"Who, sir?"

"Andre Chenier!"

"Yes, sir," said Basque in alarm.

CHAPTER IV--MADEMOISELLE GILLENORMAND ENDS BY NO LONGER THINKING IT A BAD THING THAT M. FAUCHELEVENT SHOULD HAVE ENTERED WITH SOMETHING UNDER HIS ARM

Cosette and Marius beheld each other once more.

What that interview was like we decline to say. There are things which one must not attempt to depict; the sun is one of them.

The entire family, including Basque and Nicolette, were assembled in Marius' chamber at the moment when Cosette entered it.

Precisely at that moment, the grandfather was on the point of blowing his nose; he stopped short, holding his nose in his handkerchief, and gazing over it at Cosette.

She appeared on the threshold; it seemed to him that she was surrounded by a glory.

"Adorable!" he exclaimed.

Then he blew his nose noisily.

Cosette was intoxicated, delighted, frightened, in heaven. She was as thoroughly alarmed as any one can be by happiness. She stammered all pale, yet flushed, she wanted to fling herself into Marius' arms, and dared not. Ashamed of loving in the presence of all these people. People

are pitiless towards happy lovers; they remain when the latter most desire to be left alone. Lovers have no need of any people whatever.

With Cosette, and behind her, there had entered a man with white hair who was grave yet smiling, though with a vague and heartrending smile. It was "Monsieur Fauchelevent"; it was Jean Valjean.

He was very well dressed, as the porter had said, entirely in black, in perfectly new garments, and with a white cravat.

The porter was a thousand leagues from recognizing in this correct bourgeois, in this probable notary, the fear-inspiring bearer of the corpse, who had sprung up at his door on the night of the 7th of June, tattered, muddy, hideous, haggard, his face masked in blood and mire, supporting in his arms the fainting Marius; still, his porter's scent was aroused. When M. Fauchelevent arrived with Cosette, the porter had not been able to refrain from communicating to his wife this aside: "I don't know why it is, but I can't help fancying that I've seen that face before."

M. Fauchelevent in Marius' chamber, remained apart near the door. He had under his arm, a package which bore considerable resemblance to an octavo volume enveloped in paper. The enveloping paper was of a greenish hue, and appeared to be mouldy.

"Does the gentleman always have books like that under his arm?"

Mademoiselle Gillenormand, who did not like books, demanded in a low tone of Nicolette.

"Well," retorted M. Gillenormand, who had overheard her, in the same tone, "he's a learned man. What then? Is that his fault? Monsieur Boulard, one of my acquaintances, never walked out without a book under his arm either, and he always had some old volume hugged to his heart like that."

And, with a bow, he said aloud:

"Monsieur Tranchelevent . . ."

Father Gillenormand did not do it intentionally, but inattention to proper names was an aristocratic habit of his.

"Monsieur Tranchelevent, I have the honor of asking you, on behalf of my grandson, Baron Marius Pontmercy, for the hand of Mademoiselle."

Monsieur Tranchelevent bowed.

"That's settled," said the grandfather.

And, turning to Marius and Cosette, with both arms extended in blessing, he cried:

"Permission to adore each other!"

They did not require him to repeat it twice. So much the worse! the chirping began. They talked low. Marius, resting on his elbow on his reclining chair, Cosette standing beside him. "Oh, heavens!" murmured Cosette, "I see you once again! it is thou! it is you! The idea of going and fighting like that! But why? It is horrible. I have been dead for four months. Oh! how wicked it was of you to go to that battle! What had I done to you? I pardon you, but you will never do it again. A little while ago, when they came to tell us to come to you, I still thought that I was about to die, but it was from joy. I was so sad! I have not taken the time to dress myself, I must frighten people with my looks! What will your relatives say to see me in a crumpled collar? Do speak! You let me do all the talking. We are still in the Rue de l'Homme Arme. It seems that your shoulder was terrible. They told me that you could put your fist in it. And then, it seems that they cut your flesh with the scissors. That is frightful. I have cried till I have no eyes left. It is queer that a person can suffer like that. Your grandfather has a very kindly air. Don't disturb yourself, don't rise on your elbow, you will injure yourself. Oh! how happy I am! So our unhappiness is over! I am quite foolish. I had things to say to you, and I no longer know in the least what they were. Do you still love me? We live in the Rue de l'Homme Arme. There is no garden. I made lint all the time; stay, sir, look, it is your fault, I have a callous on my fingers."

"Angel!" said Marius.

Angel is the only word in the language which cannot be worn out. No other word could resist the merciless use which lovers make of it.

Then as there were spectators, they paused and said not a word more, contenting themselves with softly touching each other's hands.

M. Gillenormand turned towards those who were in the room and cried:

"Talk loud, the rest of you. Make a noise, you people behind the scenes. Come, a little uproar, the deuce! so that the children can chatter at their ease."

And, approaching Marius and Cosette, he said to them in a very low voice:

"Call each other thou. Don't stand on ceremony."

Aunt Gillenormand looked on in amazement at this irruption of light in her elderly household. There was nothing aggressive about this amazement; it was not the least in the world like the scandalized and envious glance of an owl at two turtle-doves, it was the stupid eye of a poor innocent seven and fifty years of age; it was a life which had been a failure gazing at that triumph, love.

"Mademoiselle Gillenormand senior," said her father to her, "I told you

that this is what would happen to you."

He remained silent for a moment, and then added:

"Look at the happiness of others."

Then he turned to Cosette.

"How pretty she is! how pretty she is! She's a Greuze. So you are going to have that all to yourself, you scamp! Ah! my rogue, you are getting off nicely with me, you are happy; if I were not fifteen years too old, we would fight with swords to see which of us should have her. Come now! I am in love with you, mademoiselle. It's perfectly simple. It is your right. You are in the right. Ah! what a sweet, charming little wedding this will make! Our parish is Saint-Denis du Saint Sacrament, but I will get a dispensation so that you can be married at Saint-Paul. The church is better. It was built by the Jesuits. It is more coquettish. It is opposite the fountain of Cardinal de Birague. The masterpiece of Jesuit architecture is at Namur. It is called Saint-Loup. You must go there after you are married. It is worth the journey. Mademoiselle, I am quite of your mind, I think girls ought to marry; that is what they are made for. There is a certain Sainte-Catherine whom I should always like to see uncoiffed.[62] It's a fine thing to remain a spinster, but it is chilly. The Bible says: Multiply. In order to save the people, Jeanne d'Arc is needed; but in order to make people, what is needed is Mother Goose. So, marry, my beauties. I really do not see the use in remaining

a spinster! I know that they have their chapel apart in the church, and that they fall back on the Society of the Virgin; but, sapristi, a handsome husband, a fine fellow, and at the expiration of a year, a big, blond brat who nurses lustily, and who has fine rolls of fat on his thighs, and who musses up your breast in handfuls with his little rosy paws, laughing the while like the dawn,--that's better than holding a candle at vespers, and chanting Turris eburnea!"

The grandfather executed a pirouette on his eighty-year-old heels, and began to talk again like a spring that has broken loose once more:

> "Ainsi, bornant les cours de tes revasseries,
> Alcippe, il est donc vrai, dans peu tu te maries."[63]

"By the way!"

"What is it, father?"

"Have not you an intimate friend?"

"Yes, Courfeyrac."

"What has become of him?"

"He is dead."

"That is good."

He seated himself near them, made Cosette sit down, and took their four hands in his aged and wrinkled hands:

"She is exquisite, this darling. She's a masterpiece, this Cosette! She is a very little girl and a very great lady. She will only be a Baroness, which is a come down for her; she was born a Marquise. What eyelashes she has! Get it well fixed in your noddles, my children, that you are in the true road. Love each other. Be foolish about it. Love is the folly of men and the wit of God. Adore each other. Only," he added, suddenly becoming gloomy, "what a misfortune! It has just occurred to me! More than half of what I possess is swallowed up in an annuity; so long as I live, it will not matter, but after my death, a score of years hence, ah! my poor children, you will not have a sou! Your beautiful white hands, Madame la Baronne, will do the devil the honor of pulling him by the tail."[64]

At this point they heard a grave and tranquil voice say:

"Mademoiselle Euphrasie Fauchelevent possesses six hundred thousand francs."

It was the voice of Jean Valjean.

So far he had not uttered a single word, no one seemed to be aware that he was there, and he had remained standing erect and motionless, behind all these happy people.

"What has Mademoiselle Euphrasie to do with the question?" inquired the startled grandfather.

"I am she," replied Cosette.

"Six hundred thousand francs?" resumed M. Gillenormand.

"Minus fourteen or fifteen thousand francs, possibly," said Jean Valjean.

And he laid on the table the package which Mademoiselle Gillenormand had mistaken for a book.

Jean Valjean himself opened the package; it was a bundle of bank-notes. They were turned over and counted. There were five hundred notes for a thousand francs each, and one hundred and sixty-eight of five hundred. In all, five hundred and eighty-four thousand francs.

"This is a fine book," said M. Gillenormand.

"Five hundred and eighty-four thousand francs!" murmured the aunt.

"This arranges things well, does it not, Mademoiselle Gillenormand senior?" said the grandfather. "That devil of a Marius has ferreted out the nest of a millionaire grisette in his tree of dreams! Just trust to the love affairs of young folks now, will you! Students find studentesses with six hundred thousand francs. Cherubino works better than Rothschild."

"Five hundred and eighty-four thousand francs!" repeated Mademoiselle Gillenormand, in a low tone. "Five hundred and eighty-four! one might as well say six hundred thousand!"

As for Marius and Cosette, they were gazing at each other while this was going on; they hardly heeded this detail.

CHAPTER V--DEPOSIT YOUR MONEY IN A FOREST RATHER THAN WITH A NOTARY

The reader has, no doubt, understood, without necessitating a lengthy explanation, that Jean Valjean, after the Champmathieu affair, had been able, thanks to his first escape of a few days' duration, to come to Paris and to withdraw in season, from the hands of Laffitte, the sum earned by him, under the name of Monsieur Madeleine, at Montreuil-sur-Mer; and that fearing that he might be recaptured,--which eventually happened--he had buried and hidden that sum in the forest of Montfermeil, in the locality known as the Blaru-bottom. The sum, six hundred and thirty thousand francs, all in bank-bills, was not very bulky, and was contained in a box; only, in order to preserve the box from dampness, he had placed it in a coffer filled with chestnut shavings. In the same coffer he had placed his other treasures, the Bishop's candlesticks. It will be remembered that he had carried off the candlesticks when he made his escape from Montreuil-sur-Mer. The man seen one evening for the first time by Boulatruelle, was Jean Valjean. Later on, every time that Jean Valjean needed money, he went to get it in the Blaru-bottom. Hence the absences which we have mentioned. He had a pickaxe somewhere in the heather, in a hiding-place known to himself alone. When he beheld Marius convalescent, feeling that the hour was at hand, when that money might prove of service, he had gone to get it; it was he again, whom Boulatruelle had seen in the woods, but on this occasion, in the morning instead of in the evening. Boulatreulle inherited his pickaxe.

The actual sum was five hundred and eighty-four thousand, five hundred francs. Jean Valjean withdrew the five hundred francs for himself.--"We shall see hereafter," he thought.

The difference between that sum and the six hundred and thirty thousand francs withdrawn from Laffitte represented his expenditure in ten years, from 1823 to 1833. The five years of his stay in the convent had cost only five thousand francs.

Jean Valjean set the two candlesticks on the chimney-piece, where they glittered to the great admiration of Toussaint.

Moreover, Jean Valjean knew that he was delivered from Javert. The story had been told in his presence, and he had verified the fact in the Moniteur, how a police inspector named Javert had been found drowned under a boat belonging to some laundresses, between the Pont au Change and the Pont-Neuf, and that a writing left by this man, otherwise irreproachable and highly esteemed by his superiors, pointed to a fit of mental aberration and a suicide.--"In fact," thought Jean Valjean, "since he left me at liberty, once having got me in his power, he must have been already mad."

CHAPTER VI--THE TWO OLD MEN DO EVERYTHING, EACH ONE AFTER HIS OWN FASHION, TO RENDER COSETTE HAPPY

Everything was made ready for the wedding. The doctor, on being consulted, declared that it might take place in February. It was then December. A few ravishing weeks of perfect happiness passed.

The grandfather was not the least happy of them all. He remained for a quarter of an hour at a time gazing at Cosette.

"The wonderful, beautiful girl!" he exclaimed. "And she has so sweet and good an air! she is, without exception, the most charming girl that I have ever seen in my life. Later on, she'll have virtues with an odor of violets. How graceful! one cannot live otherwise than nobly with such a creature. Marius, my boy, you are a Baron, you are rich, don't go to pettifogging, I beg of you."

Cosette and Marius had passed abruptly from the sepulchre to paradise. The transition had not been softened, and they would have been stunned, had they not been dazzled by it.

"Do you understand anything about it?" said Marius to Cosette.

"No," replied Cosette, "but it seems to me that the good God is caring for us."

Jean Valjean did everything, smoothed away every difficulty, arranged everything, made everything easy. He hastened towards Cosette's happiness with as much ardor, and, apparently with as much joy, as Cosette herself.

As he had been a mayor, he understood how to solve that delicate problem, with the secret of which he alone was acquainted, Cosette's civil status. If he were to announce her origin bluntly, it might prevent the marriage, who knows? He extricated Cosette from all difficulties. He concocted for her a family of dead people, a sure means of not encountering any objections. Cosette was the only scion of an extinct family; Cosette was not his own daughter, but the daughter of the other Fauchelevent. Two brothers Fauchelevent had been gardeners to the convent of the Petit-Picpus. Inquiry was made at that convent; the very best information and the most respectable references abounded; the good nuns, not very apt and but little inclined to fathom questions of paternity, and not attaching any importance to the matter, had never understood exactly of which of the two Fauchelevents Cosette was the daughter. They said what was wanted and they said it with zeal. An acte de notoriete was drawn up. Cosette became in the eyes of the law, Mademoiselle Euphrasie Fauchelevent. She was declared an orphan, both father and mother being dead. Jean Valjean so arranged it that he was appointed, under the name of Fauchelevent, as Cosette's guardian, with M. Gillenormand as supervising guardian over him.

As for the five hundred and eighty thousand francs, they constituted

a legacy bequeathed to Cosette by a dead person, who desired to remain unknown. The original legacy had consisted of five hundred and ninety-four thousand francs; but ten thousand francs had been expended on the education of Mademoiselle Euphrasie, five thousand francs of that amount having been paid to the convent. This legacy, deposited in the hands of a third party, was to be turned over to Cosette at her majority, or at the date of her marriage. This, taken as a whole, was very acceptable, as the reader will perceive, especially when the sum due was half a million. There were some peculiarities here and there, it is true, but they were not noticed; one of the interested parties had his eyes blindfolded by love, the others by the six hundred thousand francs.

Cosette learned that she was not the daughter of that old man whom she had so long called father. He was merely a kinsman; another Fauchelevent was her real father. At any other time this would have broken her heart. But at the ineffable moment which she was then passing through, it cast but a slight shadow, a faint cloud, and she was so full of joy that the cloud did not last long. She had Marius. The young man arrived, the old man was effaced; such is life.

And then, Cosette had, for long years, been habituated to seeing enigmas around her; every being who has had a mysterious childhood is always prepared for certain renunciations.

Nevertheless, she continued to call Jean Valjean: Father.

Cosette, happy as the angels, was enthusiastic over Father Gillenormand. It is true that he overwhelmed her with gallant compliments and presents. While Jean Valjean was building up for Cosette a normal situation in society and an unassailable status, M. Gillenormand was superintending the basket of wedding gifts. Nothing so amused him as being magnificent. He had given to Cosette a robe of Binche guipure which had descended to him from his own grandmother.

"These fashions come up again," said he, "ancient things are the rage, and the young women of my old age dress like the old women of my childhood."

He rifled his respectable chests of drawers in Coromandel lacquer, with swelling fronts, which had not been opened for years.--"Let us hear the confession of these dowagers," he said, "let us see what they have in their paunches." He noisily violated the pot-bellied drawers of all his wives, of all his mistresses and of all his grandmothers. Pekins, damasks, lampas, painted moires, robes of shot gros de Tours, India kerchiefs embroidered in gold that could be washed, dauphines without a right or wrong side, in the piece, Genoa and Alencon point lace, parures in antique goldsmith's work, ivory bon-bon boxes ornamented with microscopic battles, gewgaws and ribbons--he lavished everything on Cosette. Cosette, amazed, desperately in love with Marius, and wild with gratitude towards M. Gillenormand, dreamed of a happiness without limit clothed in satin and velvet. Her wedding basket seemed to her to be

upheld by seraphim. Her soul flew out into the azure depths, with wings of Mechlin lace.

The intoxication of the lovers was only equalled, as we have already said, by the ecstasy of the grandfather. A sort of flourish of trumpets went on in the Rue des Filles-du-Calvaire.

Every morning, a fresh offering of bric-a-brac from the grandfather to Cosette. All possible knickknacks glittered around her.

One day Marius, who was fond of talking gravely in the midst of his bliss, said, apropos of I know not what incident:

"The men of the revolution are so great, that they have the prestige of the ages, like Cato and like Phocion, and each one of them seems to me an antique memory."

"Moire antique!" exclaimed the old gentleman. "Thanks, Marius. That is precisely the idea of which I was in search."

And on the following day, a magnificent dress of tea-rose colored moire antique was added to Cosette's wedding presents.

From these fripperies, the grandfather extracted a bit of wisdom.

"Love is all very well; but there must be something else to go with

it. The useless must be mingled with happiness. Happiness is only the necessary. Season that enormously with the superfluous for me. A palace and her heart. Her heart and the Louvre. Her heart and the grand waterworks of Versailles. Give me my shepherdess and try to make her a duchess. Fetch me Phyllis crowned with corn-flowers, and add a hundred thousand francs income. Open for me a bucolic perspective as far as you can see, beneath a marble colonnade. I consent to the bucolic and also to the fairy spectacle of marble and gold. Dry happiness resembles dry bread. One eats, but one does not dine. I want the superfluous, the useless, the extravagant, excess, that which serves no purpose. I remember to have seen, in the Cathedral of Strasburg, a clock, as tall as a three-story house which marked the hours, which had the kindness to indicate the hour, but which had not the air of being made for that; and which, after having struck midday, or midnight,--midday, the hour of the sun, or midnight, the hour of love,--or any other hour that you like, gave you the moon and the stars, the earth and the sea, birds and fishes, Phoebus and Phoebe, and a host of things which emerged from a niche, and the twelve apostles, and the Emperor Charles the Fifth, and Eponine, and Sabinus, and a throng of little gilded goodmen, who played on the trumpet to boot. Without reckoning delicious chimes which it sprinkled through the air, on every occasion, without any one's knowing why. Is a petty bald clock-face which merely tells the hour equal to that? For my part, I am of the opinion of the big clock of Strasburg, and I prefer it to the cuckoo clock from the Black Forest."

M. Gillenormand talked nonsense in connection with the wedding, and all

the fripperies of the eighteenth century passed pell-mell through his dithyrambs.

"You are ignorant of the art of festivals. You do not know how to organize a day of enjoyment in this age," he exclaimed. "Your nineteenth century is weak. It lacks excess. It ignores the rich, it ignores the noble. In everything it is clean-shaven. Your third estate is insipid, colorless, odorless, and shapeless. The dreams of your bourgeois who set up, as they express it: a pretty boudoir freshly decorated, violet, ebony and calico. Make way! Make way! the Sieur Curmudgeon is marrying Mademoiselle Clutch-penny. Sumptuousness and splendor. A louis d'or has been stuck to a candle. There's the epoch for you. My demand is that I may flee from it beyond the Sarmatians. Ah! in 1787, I predict that all was lost, from the day when I beheld the Duc de Rohan, Prince de Leon, Duc de Chabot, Duc de Montbazon, Marquis de Sonbise, Vicomte de Thouars, peer of France, go to Longchamps in a tapecu! That has borne its fruits. In this century, men attend to business, they gamble on 'Change, they win money, they are stingy. People take care of their surfaces and varnish them; every one is dressed as though just out of a band-box, washed, soaped, scraped, shaved, combed, waked, smoothed, rubbed, brushed, cleaned on the outside, irreproachable, polished as a pebble, discreet, neat, and at the same time, death of my life, in the depths of their consciences they have dung-heaps and cesspools that are enough to make a cow-herd who blows his nose in his fingers, recoil. I grant to this age the device: 'Dirty Cleanliness.' Don't be vexed, Marius, give me permission to speak; I say no evil of the people as you see, I am

always harping on your people, but do look favorably on my dealing a bit of a slap to the bourgeoisie. I belong to it. He who loves well lashes well. Thereupon, I say plainly, that now-a-days people marry, but that they no longer know how to marry. Ah! it is true, I regret the grace of the ancient manners. I regret everything about them, their elegance, their chivalry, those courteous and delicate ways, that joyous luxury which every one possessed, music forming part of the wedding, a symphony above stairs, a beating of drums below stairs, the dances, the joyous faces round the table, the fine-spun gallant compliments, the songs, the fireworks, the frank laughter, the devil's own row, the huge knots of ribbon. I regret the bride's garter. The bride's garter is cousin to the girdle of Venus. On what does the war of Troy turn? On Helen's garter, parbleu! Why did they fight, why did Diomed the divine break over the head of Meriones that great brazen helmet of ten points? why did Achilles and Hector hew each other up with vast blows of their lances? Because Helen allowed Paris to take her garter. With Cosette's garter, Homer would construct the Iliad. He would put in his poem, a loquacious old fellow, like me, and he would call him Nestor. My friends, in bygone days, in those amiable days of yore, people married wisely; they had a good contract, and then they had a good carouse. As soon as Cujas had taken his departure, Gamacho entered. But, in sooth! the stomach is an agreeable beast which demands its due, and which wants to have its wedding also. People supped well, and had at table a beautiful neighbor without a guimpe so that her throat was only moderately concealed. Oh! the large laughing mouths, and how gay we were in those days! youth was a bouquet; every young man terminated in a branch of lilacs or a tuft

of roses; whether he was a shepherd or a warrior; and if, by chance, one was a captain of dragoons, one found means to call oneself Florian. People thought much of looking well. They embroidered and tinted themselves. A bourgeois had the air of a flower, a Marquis had the air of a precious stone. People had no straps to their boots, they had no boots. They were spruce, shining, waved, lustrous, fluttering, dainty, coquettish, which did not at all prevent their wearing swords by their sides. The humming-bird has beak and claws. That was the day of the Galland Indies. One of the sides of that century was delicate, the other was magnificent; and by the green cabbages! people amused themselves. To-day, people are serious. The bourgeois is avaricious, the bourgeoise is a prude; your century is unfortunate. People would drive away the Graces as being too low in the neck. Alas! beauty is concealed as though it were ugliness. Since the revolution, everything, including the ballet-dancers, has had its trousers; a mountebank dancer must be grave; your rigadoons are doctrinarian. It is necessary to be majestic. People would be greatly annoyed if they did not carry their chins in their cravats. The ideal of an urchin of twenty when he marries, is to resemble M. Royer-Collard. And do you know what one arrives at with that majesty? at being petty. Learn this: joy is not only joyous; it is great. But be in love gayly then, what the deuce! marry, when you marry, with fever and giddiness, and tumult, and the uproar of happiness! Be grave in church, well and good. But, as soon as the mass is finished, sarpejou! you must make a dream whirl around the bride. A marriage should be royal and chimerical; it should promenade its ceremony from the cathedral of Rheims to the pagoda of Chanteloup. I have a horror

of a paltry wedding. Ventregoulette! be in Olympus for that one day, at least. Be one of the gods. Ah! people might be sylphs. Games and Laughter, argiraspides; they are stupids. My friends, every recently made bridegroom ought to be Prince Aldobrandini. Profit by that unique minute in life to soar away to the empyrean with the swans and the eagles, even if you do have to fall back on the morrow into the bourgeoisie of the frogs. Don't economize on the nuptials, do not prune them of their splendors; don't scrimp on the day when you beam. The wedding is not the housekeeping. Oh! if I were to carry out my fancy, it would be gallant, violins would be heard under the trees. Here is my programme: sky-blue and silver. I would mingle with the festival the rural divinities, I would convoke the Dryads and the Nereids. The nuptials of Amphitrite, a rosy cloud, nymphs with well dressed locks and entirely naked, an Academician offering quatrains to the goddess, a chariot drawn by marine monsters.

"Triton trottait devant, et tirait de sa conque
Des sons si ravissants qu'il ravissait quiconque!"[65]

--there's a festive programme, there's a good one, or else I know nothing of such matters, deuce take it!"

While the grandfather, in full lyrical effusion, was listening to himself, Cosette and Marius grew intoxicated as they gazed freely at each other.

Aunt Gillenormand surveyed all this with her imperturbable placidity. Within the last five or six months she had experienced a certain amount of emotions. Marius returned, Marius brought back bleeding, Marius brought back from a barricade, Marius dead, then living, Marius reconciled, Marius betrothed, Marius wedding a poor girl, Marius wedding a millionairess. The six hundred thousand francs had been her last surprise. Then, her indifference of a girl taking her first communion returned to her. She went regularly to service, told her beads, read her euchology, mumbled Aves in one corner of the house, while I love you was being whispered in the other, and she beheld Marius and Cosette in a vague way, like two shadows. The shadow was herself.

There is a certain state of inert asceticism in which the soul, neutralized by torpor, a stranger to that which may be designated as the business of living, receives no impressions, either human, or pleasant or painful, with the exception of earthquakes and catastrophes. This devotion, as Father Gillenormand said to his daughter, corresponds to a cold in the head. You smell nothing of life. Neither any bad, nor any good odor.

Moreover, the six hundred thousand francs had settled the elderly spinster's indecision. Her father had acquired the habit of taking her so little into account, that he had not consulted her in the matter of consent to Marius' marriage. He had acted impetuously, according to his wont, having, a despot-turned slave, but a single thought,--to satisfy Marius. As for the aunt,--it had not even occurred to him that the aunt

existed, and that she could have an opinion of her own, and, sheep as she was, this had vexed her. Somewhat resentful in her inmost soul, but impassive externally, she had said to herself: "My father has settled the question of the marriage without reference to me; I shall settle the question of the inheritance without consulting him." She was rich, in fact, and her father was not. She had reserved her decision on this point. It is probable that, had the match been a poor one, she would have left him poor. "So much the worse for my nephew! he is wedding a beggar, let him be a beggar himself!" But Cosette's half-million pleased the aunt, and altered her inward situation so far as this pair of lovers were concerned. One owes some consideration to six hundred thousand francs, and it was evident that she could not do otherwise than leave her fortune to these young people, since they did not need it.

It was arranged that the couple should live with the grandfather--M. Gillenormand insisted on resigning to them his chamber, the finest in the house. "That will make me young again," he said. "It's an old plan of mine. I have always entertained the idea of having a wedding in my chamber."

He furnished this chamber with a multitude of elegant trifles. He had the ceiling and walls hung with an extraordinary stuff, which he had by him in the piece, and which he believed to have emanated from Utrecht with a buttercup-colored satin ground, covered with velvet auricula blossoms.--"It was with that stuff," said he, "that the bed of the Duchesse d'Anville at la Roche-Guyon was draped."--On the chimney-piece,

he set a little figure in Saxe porcelain, carrying a muff against her nude stomach.

M. Gillenormand's library became the lawyer's study, which Marius needed; a study, it will be remembered, being required by the council of the order.

CHAPTER VII--THE EFFECTS OF DREAMS MINGLED WITH HAPPINESS

The lovers saw each other every day. Cosette came with M. Fauchelevent.--"This is reversing things," said Mademoiselle Gillenormand, "to have the bride come to the house to do the courting like this." But Marius' convalescence had caused the habit to become established, and the arm-chairs of the Rue des Filles-du-Calvaire, better adapted to interviews than the straw chairs of the Rue de l'Homme Arme, had rooted it. Marius and M. Fauchelevent saw each other, but did not address each other. It seemed as though this had been agreed upon. Every girl needs a chaperon. Cosette could not have come without M. Fauchelevent. In Marius' eyes, M. Fauchelevent was the condition attached to Cosette. He accepted it. By dint of discussing political matters, vaguely and without precision, from the point of view of the general amelioration of the fate of all men, they came to say a little more than "yes" and "no." Once, on the subject of education, which Marius wished to have free and obligatory, multiplied under all forms lavished on every one, like the air and the sun in a word, respirable for the entire population, they were in unison, and they almost conversed. M. Fauchelevent talked well, and even with a certain loftiness of language--still he lacked something indescribable. M. Fauchelevent possessed something less and also something more, than a man of the world.

Marius, inwardly, and in the depths of his thought, surrounded with all sorts of mute questions this M. Fauchelevent, who was to him simply

benevolent and cold. There were moments when doubts as to his own recollections occurred to him. There was a void in his memory, a black spot, an abyss excavated by four months of agony.--Many things had been lost therein. He had come to the point of asking himself whether it were really a fact that he had seen M. Fauchelevent, so serious and so calm a man, in the barricade.

This was not, however, the only stupor which the apparitions and the disappearances of the past had left in his mind. It must not be supposed that he was delivered from all those obsessions of the memory which force us, even when happy, even when satisfied, to glance sadly behind us. The head which does not turn backwards towards horizons that have vanished contains neither thought nor love. At times, Marius clasped his face between his hands, and the vague and tumultuous past traversed the twilight which reigned in his brain. Again he beheld Mabeuf fall, he heard Gavroche singing amid the grape-shot, he felt beneath his lips the cold brow of Eponine; Enjolras, Courfeyrac, Jean Prouvaire, Combeferre, Bossuet, Grantaire, all his friends rose erect before him, then dispersed into thin air. Were all those dear, sorrowful, valiant, charming or tragic beings merely dreams? had they actually existed? The revolt had enveloped everything in its smoke. These great fevers create great dreams. He questioned himself; he felt himself; all these vanished realities made him dizzy. Where were they all then? was it really true that all were dead? A fall into the shadows had carried off all except himself. It all seemed to him to have disappeared as though behind the curtain of a theatre. There are curtains like this which drop in life.

God passes on to the following act.

And he himself--was he actually the same man? He, the poor man, was rich; he, the abandoned, had a family; he, the despairing, was to marry Cosette. It seemed to him that he had traversed a tomb, and that he had entered into it black and had emerged from it white, and in that tomb the others had remained. At certain moments, all these beings of the past, returned and present, formed a circle around him, and overshadowed him; then he thought of Cosette, and recovered his serenity; but nothing less than this felicity could have sufficed to efface that catastrophe.

M. Fauchelevent almost occupied a place among these vanished beings. Marius hesitated to believe that the Fauchelevent of the barricade was the same as this Fauchelevent in flesh and blood, sitting so gravely beside Cosette. The first was, probably, one of those nightmares occasioned and brought back by his hours of delirium. However, the natures of both men were rigid, no question from Marius to M. Fauchelevent was possible. Such an idea had not even occurred to him. We have already indicated this characteristic detail.

Two men who have a secret in common, and who, by a sort of tacit agreement, exchange not a word on the subject, are less rare than is commonly supposed.

Once only, did Marius make the attempt. He introduced into the conversation the Rue de la Chanvrerie, and, turning to M. Fauchelevent,

he said to him:

"Of course, you are acquainted with that street?"

"What street?"

"The Rue de la Chanvrerie."

"I have no idea of the name of that street," replied M. Fauchelevent, in the most natural manner in the world.

The response which bore upon the name of the street and not upon the street itself, appeared to Marius to be more conclusive than it really was.

"Decidedly," thought he, "I have been dreaming. I have been subject to a hallucination. It was some one who resembled him. M. Fauchelevent was not there."'

CHAPTER VIII--TWO MEN IMPOSSIBLE TO FIND

Marius' enchantment, great as it was, could not efface from his mind other pre-occupations.

While the wedding was in preparation, and while awaiting the date fixed upon, he caused difficult and scrupulous retrospective researches to be made.

He owed gratitude in various quarters; he owed it on his father's account, he owed it on his own.

There was Thenardier; there was the unknown man who had brought him, Marius, back to M. Gillenormand.

Marius endeavored to find these two men, not intending to marry, to be happy, and to forget them, and fearing that, were these debts of gratitude not discharged, they would leave a shadow on his life, which promised so brightly for the future.

It was impossible for him to leave all these arrears of suffering behind him, and he wished, before entering joyously into the future, to obtain a quittance from the past.

That Thenardier was a villain detracted nothing from the fact that he had saved Colonel Pontmercy. Thenardier was a ruffian in the eyes of all

the world except Marius.

And Marius, ignorant of the real scene in the battle field of Waterloo, was not aware of the peculiar detail, that his father, so far as Thenardier was concerned was in the strange position of being indebted to the latter for his life, without being indebted to him for any gratitude.

None of the various agents whom Marius employed succeeded in discovering any trace of Thenardier. Obliteration appeared to be complete in that quarter. Madame Thenardier had died in prison pending the trial. Thenardier and his daughter Azelma, the only two remaining of that lamentable group, had plunged back into the gloom. The gulf of the social unknown had silently closed above those beings. On the surface there was not visible so much as that quiver, that trembling, those obscure concentric circles which announce that something has fallen in, and that the plummet may be dropped.

Madame Thenardier being dead, Boulatruelle being eliminated from the case, Claquesous having disappeared, the principal persons accused having escaped from prison, the trial connected with the ambush in the Gorbeau house had come to nothing.

That affair had remained rather obscure. The bench of Assizes had been obliged to content themselves with two subordinates. Panchaud, alias Printanier, alias Bigrenaille, and Demi-Liard, alias Deux-Milliards, who

had been inconsistently condemned, after a hearing of both sides of the case, to ten years in the galleys. Hard labor for life had been the sentence pronounced against the escaped and contumacious accomplices.

Thenardier, the head and leader, had been, through contumacy, likewise condemned to death.

This sentence was the only information remaining about Thenardier, casting upon that buried name its sinister light like a candle beside a bier.

Moreover, by thrusting Thenardier back into the very remotest depths, through a fear of being re-captured, this sentence added to the density of the shadows which enveloped this man.

As for the other person, as for the unknown man who had saved Marius, the researches were at first to some extent successful, then came to an abrupt conclusion. They succeeded in finding the carriage which had brought Marius to the Rue des Filles-du-Calvaire on the evening of the 6th of June.

The coachman declared that, on the 6th of June, in obedience to the commands of a police-agent, he had stood from three o'clock in the afternoon until nightfall on the Quai des Champs-Elysees, above the outlet of the Grand Sewer; that, towards nine o'clock in the evening, the grating of the sewer, which abuts on the bank of the river, had

opened; that a man had emerged therefrom, bearing on his shoulders another man, who seemed to be dead; that the agent, who was on the watch at that point, had arrested the living man and had seized the dead man; that, at the order of the police-agent, he, the coachman, had taken "all those folks" into his carriage; that they had first driven to the Rue des Filles-du-Calvaire; that they had there deposited the dead man; that the dead man was Monsieur Marius, and that he, the coachman, recognized him perfectly, although he was alive "this time"; that afterwards, they had entered the vehicle again, that he had whipped up his horses; a few paces from the gate of the Archives, they had called to him to halt; that there, in the street, they had paid him and left him, and that the police-agent had led the other man away; that he knew nothing more; that the night had been very dark.

Marius, as we have said, recalled nothing. He only remembered that he had been seized from behind by an energetic hand at the moment when he was falling backwards into the barricade; then, everything vanished so far as he was concerned.

He had only regained consciousness at M. Gillenormand's.

He was lost in conjectures.

He could not doubt his own identity. Still, how had it come to pass that, having fallen in the Rue de la Chanvrerie, he had been picked up by the police-agent on the banks of the Seine, near the Pont des

Invalides?

Some one had carried him from the Quartier des Halles to the Champs-Elysees. And how? Through the sewer. Unheard-of devotion!

Some one? Who?

This was the man for whom Marius was searching.

Of this man, who was his savior, nothing; not a trace; not the faintest indication.

Marius, although forced to preserve great reserve, in that direction, pushed his inquiries as far as the prefecture of police. There, no more than elsewhere, did the information obtained lead to any enlightenment.

The prefecture knew less about the matter than did the hackney-coachman. They had no knowledge of any arrest having been made on the 6th of June at the mouth of the Grand Sewer.

No report of any agent had been received there upon this matter, which was regarded at the prefecture as a fable. The invention of this fable was attributed to the coachman.

A coachman who wants a gratuity is capable of anything, even of imagination. The fact was assured, nevertheless, and Marius could not

doubt it, unless he doubted his own identity, as we have just said.

Everything about this singular enigma was inexplicable.

What had become of that man, that mysterious man, whom the coachman had seen emerge from the grating of the Grand Sewer bearing upon his back the unconscious Marius, and whom the police-agent on the watch had arrested in the very act of rescuing an insurgent? What had become of the agent himself?

Why had this agent preserved silence? Had the man succeeded in making his escape? Had he bribed the agent? Why did this man give no sign of life to Marius, who owed everything to him? His disinterestedness was no less tremendous than his devotion. Why had not that man appeared again? Perhaps he was above compensation, but no one is above gratitude. Was he dead? Who was the man? What sort of a face had he? No one could tell him this.

The coachman answered: "The night was very dark." Basque and Nicolette, all in a flutter, had looked only at their young master all covered with blood.

The porter, whose candle had lighted the tragic arrival of Marius, had been the only one to take note of the man in question, and this is the description that he gave:

"That man was terrible."

Marius had the blood-stained clothing which he had worn when he had been brought back to his grandfather preserved, in the hope that it would prove of service in his researches.

On examining the coat, it was found that one skirt had been torn in a singular way. A piece was missing.

One evening, Marius was speaking in the presence of Cosette and Jean Valjean of the whole of that singular adventure, of the innumerable inquiries which he had made, and of the fruitlessness of his efforts. The cold countenance of "Monsieur Fauchelevent" angered him.

He exclaimed, with a vivacity which had something of wrath in it:

"Yes, that man, whoever he may have been, was sublime. Do you know what he did, sir? He intervened like an archangel. He must have flung himself into the midst of the battle, have stolen me away, have opened the sewer, have dragged me into it and have carried me through it! He must have traversed more than a league and a half in those frightful subterranean galleries, bent over, weighed down, in the dark, in the cess-pool,--more than a league and a half, sir, with a corpse upon his back! And with what object? With the sole object of saving the corpse. And that corpse I was. He said to himself: 'There may still be a glimpse of life there, perchance; I will risk my own existence for that

miserable spark!' And his existence he risked not once but twenty times! And every step was a danger. The proof of it is, that on emerging from the sewer, he was arrested. Do you know, sir, that that man did all this? And he had no recompense to expect. What was I? An insurgent. What was I? One of the conquered. Oh! if Cosette's six hundred thousand francs were mine . . ."

"They are yours," interrupted Jean Valjean.

"Well," resumed Marius, "I would give them all to find that man once more."

Jean Valjean remained silent.