BOOK IV

THE OTHER CRIMES

I

SINISTER QUESTIONS

What was the number of the dead?

Louis Bonaparte, conscious of the advent of history, and imagining that a Charles IX can extenuate a Saint Bartholomew, has published as a pièce justificative, a so-called "official list of the deceased persons." In this "Alphabetical List,"[1] you will meet with such items as these: "Adde, bookseller, 17 Boulevard Poissonnière, killed in his house; Boursier, a child seven years and a-half old, killed on Rue Tiquetonne; Belval, cabinetmaker, 10 Rue de la Lune, killed in his house; Coquard, house-holder at Vire (Calvados), killed on Boulevard Montmartre; Debaecque, tradesman, 45 Rue de Sentier, killed in his house; De Couvercelle, florist, 257 Rue Saint-Denis, killed in his house; Labilte, jeweller, 63 Boulevard Saint-Martin, killed in his house; Monpelas, perfumer, 181 Rue Saint-Martin, killed in his house;

Demoiselle Grellier, housekeeper, 209 Faubourg Saint-Martin, killed on Boulevard Montmartre; Femme Guillard, cashier, 77 Faubourg Saint-Denis, killed on Boulevard Saint-Denis; Femme Garnier, confidential servant, 6 Boulevard Bonne-Nouvelle, killed on Boulevard Saint-Denis; Femme Ledaust, housekeeper, 76 Passage du Caire, at the Morgue; Françoise Noël, waistcoat-maker, 20 Rue des Fossés-Montmartre, died at La Charité; Count Poninski, annuitant, 32 Rue de la Paix, killed on Boulevard Montmartre; Femme Raboisson, dressmaker, died at the National Hospital; Femme Vidal, 97 Rue de Temple, died at the Hôtel-Dieu; Femme Séguin, embroideress, 240 Rue Saint-Martin, died at the hospital Beaujon; Demoiselle Seniac, shop-woman, 196 Rue du Temple, died at the hospital Beaujon; Thirion de Montauban, house-holder, 10 Rue de Lancry, killed at his own door," etc., etc.

> [1] The functionary who drew up this list, is, we know, a learned and accurate statistician; he prepared this statement honestly, we have no doubt. He has stated what was shown to him, and what he was permitted to see, but what was concealed from him was beyond his reach. The field for conjecture is left open.

To abridge: Louis Bonaparte confesses, in this state paper, one hundred and ninety-one murders.

This document being cited for what it is worth, the question is, what is the true total? What is the exact figure of his victims? How many corpses bestrew the coup d'état of December? Who can tell? Who

knows? Who will ever know? As we have already seen, one witness deposed: "I counted in that place thirty-three bodies;" another, at a different part of the boulevard, said: "We counted eighteen bodies within a space of twenty or twenty-five yards." A third person, speaking of another spot, said: "There were upwards of sixty bodies within a distance of sixty yards." The writer so long threatened with death told ourselves: "I saw with my eyes upwards of eight hundred dead bodies lying along the boulevard."

Now think, compute how many it requires of battered brains, of breasts shattered by grape-shot, to cover with blood, "literally," half a mile of boulevards. Go you, as did the wives, the sisters, the daughters, the wailing mothers, take a torch, plunge into the dark night, feel on the ground, feel along the pavement and the walls, pick up the corpses, interrogate the phantoms, and reckon if you can.

The number of his victims! One is reduced to conjecture. This question must be solved by history. As for us, it is a question which we pledge ourselves to examine and explore hereafter.

On the first day, Louis Bonaparte made a display of his slaughter. We have told the reason why. It suited his purpose. After that, having derived from the deed all the required advantage, he concealed it. Orders were given to the Élyséan journals to be silent, to Magnan to omit, to the historiographers to know nothing. They buried the slain after midnight, without lights, without processions, without prayers,

without priests, by stealth. Families were enjoined not to weep too loud.

The massacre along the boulevards was only a part; it was followed by the summary fusillades, the secret executions.

One of the witnesses whom we have questioned asked a major in the gendarmerie mobile, who had distinguished himself in these butcheries: "Come, tell us the figure? Was it four hundred?" The man shrugged his shoulders. "Was it six hundred?" The man shook his head. "Eight hundred?"--"Say twelve hundred," said the officer, "and you will fall short."

At this present hour nobody knows exactly what the 2nd of December was, what it did, what it dared, whom it killed, whom it buried. The very morning of the crime, the newspaper offices were placed under seal, free speech was suppressed, by Louis Bonaparte, that man of silence and darkness. On the 2nd, the 3rd, the 4th, the 5th, and ever since, Truth has been taken by the throat and strangled just as she was about to speak. She could not even utter a cry. He has deepened the gloom about his ambuscade and he has succeeded in part. Let history strive as she may, the 2nd of December will, perhaps, continue involved, for a long time to come, in a sort of ghastly twilight. It is a crime made up of audacity and darkness; here it shows itself impudently in broad daylight; there it skulks away into the mist. Hideous and double-faced effrontery, which conceals no one knows what monstrosities beneath its

cloak.

But these glimpses are sufficient. There is a certain side of the 2nd of December where all is dark; but, within that darkness, graves are visible.

Beneath this great enormity a host of crimes may be vaguely distinguished. Such is the behest of Providence; there are compulsions linked to treason. You are a perjurer! You violate your oaths! You trample upon law and justice! Well! take a rope, for you will be compelled to strangle; take a dagger, for you will be compelled to stab; take a club, for you will be compelled to strike; take shadow and darkness, for you will be compelled to hide yourself. One crime brings on another; there is a logical consistency in horror. There is no halting, no middle course. Go on! do this first; good! Now do that, then this again; and so for ever! The law is like the veil of the Temple: once rent, it is rent from top to bottom.

Yes, we say it again, in what has been called "the act of the 2nd of December," one meets with crime at every depth. Perjury floats on the surface, murder lies at the bottom. Partial homicides, wholesale butcheries, shooting in open day, fusillades by night; a steam of blood rises from every part of the coup d'état.

Search in the common grave of the churchyards, search beneath the street pavement, beneath the sloping banks of the Champ-de-Mars,

beneath the trees of the public gardens, in the bed of the Seine!

But few revelations. That is easily understood. Bonaparte has the satanic art of binding to himself a crowd of miserable officials by I know not what terrible universal complicity. The stamped papers of the magistrates, the desks of the registrars, the cartridge-boxes of the soldiers, the prayers of the priests, are his accomplices. He has cast his crime about him like a network, and prefects, mayors, judges, officers, and soldiers are caught therein. Complicity descends from the general to the corporal, and ascends from the corporal to the president. The sergent-de-ville and the minister feel that they are equally implicated. The gendarme whose pistol has pressed against the ear of some unfortunate, and whose uniform has been splashed with human brains, feels as guilty as his colonel. Above, cruel men gave orders which savage men executed below. Savagery keeps the secret of cruelty. Hence this hideous silence.

There is even emulation and rivalry between this savagery and this atrocity; what escaped the one was seized upon by the other. The future will refuse to credit these prodigious excesses. A workman was crossing the Pont au Change, some gendarmes mobiles stopped him; they smelt his hands. "He smells of powder," said a gendarme. They shot the workman; his body was pierced by four balls. "Throw him into the stream," cries the sergeant. The gendarmes take him by the neck and heels and hurl him over the bridge. Shot, and then drowned, the man floats down the river. However, he was not dead; the icy river revived him; but he was unable

to move, his blood flowed into the water from four holes; but being held up by his blouse, he struck against an arch of one of the bridges. There some lightermen discovered him, picked him up, and carried him to the hospital; he recovered; he left the place. The next day he was arrested, and brought before a court-martial. Rejected by death, he was reclaimed by Louis Bonaparte. This man is now at Lambessa.

What the Champ-de-Mars secretly witnessed,--the terrible night tragedies which dismayed and dishonoured it,--history cannot yet reveal. Thanks to Louis Bonaparte, this revered field of the Federation may in future be called Aceldama. One of the unhappy soldiers whom the man of the 2nd of December transformed into executioners, relates with horror, and beneath his breath, that in a single night the number of people shot was not less than eight hundred.

Louis Bonaparte hastened to dig a grave and threw in his crime. A few shovelfuls of earth, a sprinkling of holy water by a priest, and all was said. And now, the imperial carnival dances above that grave.

Is this all? Can it be that this is the end? Does God allow and acquiesce in such burials? Believe it not. Some day, beneath the feet of Bonaparte, between the marble pavements of the Élysée or the Tuileries, this grave will suddenly re-open, and those bodies will come forth, one after another, each with its wound, the young man stricken to the heart, the old man shaking his aged head pierced by a ball, the mother put to the sword, with her infant killed in her arms,--all of

them upstanding, pallid, terrible to see, and with bleeding eyes fixed on their assassin.

Awaiting that day, and even now, history has begun to try you, Louis Bonaparte. History rejects your official list of the dead, and your pièces justificatives.

History asserts that they lie, and that you lie.

You have tied a bandage over the eyes of France and put a gag in her mouth. Wherefore?

Was it to do righteous deeds? No, but crimes. The evil-doer is afraid of the light.

You shot people by night, on the Champ-de-Mars, at the Prefecture, at the Palais de Justice, on the squares, on the quays, everywhere.

You say you did not.

I say you did.

In dealing with you we have a right to surmise, to suspect, and to accuse.

What you deny, we have a right to believe; your denial is equivalent to

affirmation.

Your 2nd of December is pointed at by the public conscience. Nobody thinks of it without inwardly shuddering. What did you do in those dark hours?

Your days are ghastly, your nights are suspicious. Ah! man of darkness that you are!

* * * *

Let us return to the butchery on the boulevard, to the words, "Let my orders be executed!" and to the day of the 4th.

Louis Bonaparte, during the evening of that day, must have compared himself to Charles X, who refused to burn Paris, and to Louis Philippe, who would not shed the people's blood, and he must have done himself the justice to admit that he is a great politician. A few days later, General T----, formerly in the service of one of the sons of King Louis Philippe, came to the Élysée. As soon as Louis Bonaparte caught sight of him, the comparison we have just pointed out suggesting itself to him, he cried out to the general, exultingly: "Well?"

Louis Bonaparte is in very truth the man who said to one of his former ministers, who was our own informant: "Had I been Charles X, and had I, during the days of July, caught Laffitte, Benjamin Constant, and

Lafayette, I would have had them shot like dogs."

On the 4th of December, Louis Bonaparte would have been dragged that very night from the Élysée, and the law would have prevailed, had he been one of those men who recoil before a massacre. Fortunately for him, he had no such scruples. What signified a few dead bodies, more or less? Nonsense! kill! kill at random! cut them down! shoot, cannonade, crush, smash! Strike terror for me into this hateful city of Paris! The coup d'état was in a bad way; this great homicide restored its spirit. Louis Bonaparte had nearly ruined himself by his felony; he saved himself by his ferocity. Had he been only a Faliero, it was all over with him; fortunately he was a Cæsar Borgia. He plunged with his crime into a river of gore; one less culpable would have sunk, he swam across. Such was his success as it is called. He is now on the other bank, striving to wipe himself dry, dripping with the blood which he mistakes for the purple, and demanding the Empire.

II

SEQUEL OF CRIMES

Such a man is this malefactor!

And shall we not applaud thee, O Truth! when, in the eyes of Europe and of the world, before the people, in the face of God, while he appealed to honour, the sanctity of an oath, faith, religion, the sacredness of human life, the law, the generosity of all hearts, wives, sisters, mothers, civilization, liberty, the republic, France; before his valets, his Senate and his Council of State; before his generals, his priests, and his police agents,--thou who representest the people (for the people is truth); thou who representest intelligence (for intelligence is enlightenment); thou who representest humanity (for humanity is reason); in the name of the enthralled people, in the name of exiled intelligence, in the name of outraged humanity, before this mass of slaves who cannot, or dare not, speak, thou dost scourge this brigand of order.

Let some one else choose milder words. I am outspoken and harsh; I have no pity for this pitiless man, and I glory in it.

Let us proceed.

To what we have just related add all the other crimes, to which we shall have occasion to return more than once, and the history of which, God granting us life, we shall relate in detail. Add the numberless incarcerations attended with circumstances of ferocity, the overgorged prisons,[1] the sequestration of property[2] of the proscribed in ten departments, notably in La Nièvre, in L'Allier, and in Les Basses-Alpes; add the confiscation of the Orleans property, with the slice allotted to the clergy. Schinderhannes never forgot to share with the curé. Add the mixed commissions, and the commission of clemency, so called;[3] the councils of war combined with the examining magistrates, and, multiplying the instances of abomination, the batches of exiles, the expulsion of a part of France out of France (the department of the Herault, alone, furnishing 3,200 persons, either banished or transported); add the appalling proscription,--comparable to the most tragic devastations in history,--which for an impulse, for an opinion, for an honest dissent from the government, for the mere word of a freeman, even when uttered before the 2nd of December, takes, seizes, apprehends, tears away the labourer from the field, the working-man from his trade, the house-holder from his house, the physician from his patients, the notary from his office, the counsellor from his clients, the judge from his court, the husband from his wife, the brother from his brother, the father from his children, the child from his parents, and marks its ill-omened cross on every head, from the highest to the lowest. Nobody escapes. A man in tatters, wearing a long beard, came into my room one morning at Brussels. "I have just arrived," said he; "I have travelled on foot, and have had nothing to eat for two days."

Some bread was given him. He ate. "Where do you come from?"--"From Limoges."--"Why are you here?"--"I don't know; they drove me away from my home."--"What are you?"--"A maker of wooden shoes."

[1] The Bulletin des Lois publishes the following decree, dated the 27th of March:--

"Considering the law of May 10, 1838, which classes the ordinary expenses of the provincial prisons with those to be included in the departmental budgets:

"Whereas this is not the nature of the expenses occasioned by the arrests resulting from the events of December;

"Whereas the facts which have caused these arrests to multiply are connected with a plot against the safety of the state, the suppression of which concerned society at large, and therefore it is just to discharge out of the public funds the excess of expenditure resulting from the extraordinary increase in the number of prisoners;

"It is decreed that:--

"An extraordinary credit of 250,000f. be opened, at the Ministry of the Interior, on the revenue of 1851, to be applied to the liquidation of the expenses resulting from the

arrests consequent on the events of December."

[2] "Digne, January 5, 1852.

"The Colonel commanding the state of siege in the department of the Basses-Alpes

"Decrees:--

"Within the course of ten days the property of the fugitives from the law will be sequestrated, and administered by the director of public lands in the Basses-Alpes, according to civil and military laws, etc. FRIRION."

Ten similar decrees, emanating from the commanders of states of siege, might be quoted. The first of the malefactors who committed this crime of confiscating property, and who set the example of arrests of this sort, is named Eynard. He is a general. On December 18, he placed under sequestration the property of a number of citizens of Moulins, "because," as he cynically observed, "the beginning of the insurrection leaves no doubt as to the part they took in the insurrection, and in the pillaging in the department of the Allier."

[3] The number of convictions actually upheld (in most cases the sentences were of transportation) was declared to be as

follows, at the date of the reports:--

By M. Canrobert	3,876
By M. Espinasse	3,625
By M. Quentin-Bauchard	1,634

	9,135

Add Africa; add Guiana; add the atrocities of Bertrand, of Canrobert, of Espinasse, of Martimprey; the ship-loads of women sent off by General Guyon; Representative Miot dragged from casemate to casemate; hovels in which there are a hundred and fifty prisoners, beneath a tropical sun, with promiscuity of sex, filth, vermin, and where all these innocent patriots, all these honest people are perishing, far from their dear ones, in fever, in misery, in horror, in despair, wringing their hands. Add all these poor wretches handed over to gendarmes, bound two by two, packed in the lower decks of the Magellan, the Canada, the Duguesclin; cast among the convicts of Lambessa and Cayenne, not knowing what there is against them, and unable to guess what they have done. One of them, Alphonse Lambert, of the Indre, torn from his death-bed; another, Patureau Francoeur, a vine-dresser, transported, because in his village they wanted to make him president of the republic; a third, Valette, a carpenter at Châteauroux, transported for having, six months previous to the 2nd of

December, on the day of an execution, refused to erect the guillotine.

Add to these the man-hunting in the villages, the battue of Viroy in the mountains of Lure, Pellion's battue in the woods of Clamecy, with fifteen hundred men; order restored at Crest--out of two thousand insurgents, three hundred slain; mobile columns everywhere. Whoever stands up for the law, sabred and shot: at Marseilles, Charles Sauvan exclaims, "Long live the Republic!" a grenadier of the 54th fires at him; the ball enters his side, and comes out of his belly; another, Vincent, of Bourges, is deputy-mayor of his commune: as a magistrate he protests against the coup d'état; they track him through the village, he flies, he is pursued, a cavalryman cuts off two of his fingers with his sword, another cleaves his head, he falls; they remove him to the fort at Ivry before dressing his wounds; he is an old man of seventy-six.

Add facts like these: in the Cher, Representative Vignier is arrested. Arrested for what? Because he is a representative, because he is inviolable, because he is consecrated by the votes of the people. Vignier is cast into prison. One day he is allowed to go out for one hour to attend to certain matters which imperatively demand his presence. Before he went out two gendarmes, Pierre Guéret and one Dubernelle, a brigadier, seized Vignier; the brigadier held his hands against each other so that the palms touched, and bound his wrists tightly with a chain; as the end of the chain hung down, the brigadier forced it between Vignier's hands, over and over, at the risk of

fracturing his wrists by the pressure. The prisoner's hands turned blue and swelled.--"You are putting me to the question," said Vignier coolly.--"Hide your hands," sneered the gendarme, "if you're ashamed."--"You hound," retorted Vignier, "you are the one of us two that this chain dishonors."--In this wise Vignier passed through the streets of Bourges where he had lived thirty years--between two gendarmes, with his hands raised, exhibiting his chains. Representative Vignier is seventy years old.

Add the summary fusillades in twenty departments; "All who resist," writes Saint-Arnaud, Minister of War, "are to be shot, in the name of society defending itself."[4] "Six days have sufficed to crush the insurrection," states General Levaillant, who commanded the state of siege in the Var. "I have made some good captures," writes Commandant Viroy from Saint-Étienne; "I have shot, without stirring, eight persons, and am now in pursuit of the leaders in the woods." At Bordeaux, General Bourjoly enjoins the leaders of the mobile columns to "have shot forthwith every person caught with arms in his hands." At Forcalquier, it was better still; the proclamation declaring the state of siege reads:--"The town of Forcalquier is in a state of siege. Those citizens who took no part in the day's events, and those who have arms in their possession, are summoned to give them up on pain of being shot." The mobile column of Pézenas arrives at Servian: a man tries to escape from a house surrounded by soldiers; he is shot at and killed. At Entrains, eighty prisoners are taken; one of them escapes by the river, he is fired at, struck by a ball, and disappears under the

water; the rest are shot. To these execrable deeds, add these infamous ones: at Brioude, in Haute-Loire, a man and woman thrown into prison for having ploughed the field of one of the proscribed; at Loriol, in the Drôme, Astier, a forest-keeper, condemned to twenty years' hard labour, for having sheltered fugitives. Add too, and my pen shakes as I write it, the punishment of death revived; the political guillotine re-erected; shocking sentences; citizens condemned to death on the scaffold by the judicial janissaries of the courts-martial: at Clamecy, Milletot, Jouannin, Guillemot, Sabatier, and Four; at Lyon, Courty, Romegal, Bressieux, Fauritz, Julien, Roustain, and Garan, deputy-mayor of Cliouscat; at Montpellier, seventeen for the affair of Bédarieux, Mercadier, Delpech, Denis, André, Barthez, Triadou, Pierre Carrière, Galzy, Galas (called Le Vacher), Gardy, Jacques Pagès, Michel Hercule, Mar, Vène, Frié, Malaterre, Beaumont, Pradal, the six last luckily being out of the jurisdiction; and at Montpellier four more, Choumac, Vidal, Cadelard and Pagès. What was the crime of these men? Their crime is yours, if you are a good subject; it is mine, who writes these lines; it is obedience to Article 110 of the Constitution; it is armed resistance to Louis Bonaparte's crime; and the court "orders that the execution shall take place in the usual way on one of the public squares of Béziers," with respect to the last four, and, in the case of the other seventeen, on one of the squares at Bédarieux. The Moniteur announces it; it is true that the Moniteur announces, at the same time, that the service of the last ball at the Tuileries was performed by three hundred maîtres d'hôtel, habited in the liveries rigorously prescribed by the ceremonial of the old imperial palace.

[4] Read the odious despatch, copied verbatim from the Moniteur:

> "The armed insurrection has been totally suppressed in Paris by vigorous measures. The same energy will produce the same effect everywhere else.
>
> "Bands of people who spread pillage, rapine, and fire, place themselves outside of the law. With them one does not argue or warn; one attacks and disperses them.
>
> "All who resist must be SHOT, in the name of society defending itself."

Unless a universal cry of horror should stop this man in time, all these heads will fall.

Whilst we are writing, this is what has just occurred at Belley:--

A native of Bugez, near Belley, a working-man, named Charlet, had warmly advocated, on the 10th of December, 1848, the election of Louis Bonaparte. He had distributed circulars, supported, propagated, and hawked them; the election was in his eyes a triumph; he hoped in Louis-Napoleon; he took seriously the socialist writings of the prisoner of Ham, and his "philanthropical" and "republican" programmes:

on the 10th of December there were many such honest dupes; they are now the most indignant. When Louis Bonaparte was in power, when they saw the man at work, these illusions vanished. Charlet, a man of intelligence, was one of those whose republican probity was outraged, and gradually, as Louis Bonaparte plunged deeper and deeper into reactionary measures, Charlet shook himself free; thus did he pass from the most confiding partisanship to the most open and zealous opposition. Such is the history of many other noble hearts.

On the 2nd of December, Charlet did not hesitate. In the face of the many crimes combined in the infamous deed of Louis Bonaparte, Charlet felt the law stirring within him; he reflected that he ought to be the more severe, because he was one of those whose trust had been most betrayed. He clearly understood that there remained but one duty for the citizen, a bounden duty, inseparable from the law,--to defend the Republic and the Constitution, and to resist by every means the man whom the Left, but still more his own crime, had outlawed. The refugees from Switzerland passed the frontier in arms, crossed the Rhône, near Anglefort, and entered the department of the Ain. Charlet joined their ranks.

At Seyssel, the little troop fell in with the custom-house officers. The latter, voluntary or misled accomplices of the coup d'état, chose to resist their passage. A conflict ensued, one of the officers was killed, and Charlet was made prisoner.

The coup d'état brought Charlet before a court-martial. He was charged with the death of the custom-house officer, which, after all, was but an incident of war. At all events, Charlet was innocent of that death; the officer was killed by a bullet, and Charlet had no weapon but a sharpened file.

Charlet would not recognize as a lawful court the body of men who pretended to sit in judgment on him. He said to them: "You are no judges; where is the law? The law is on my side." He refused to answer them.

Questioned on the subject of the officer's death, he could have cleared up the whole matter by a single word; but to descend to an explanation would, to a certain extent, have been a recognition of the tribunal. He did not choose to recognize it, so he held his peace.

These men condemned him to die, "according to the usual mode of criminal executions."

The sentence pronounced, he seemed to have been forgotten; days, weeks, months elapsed. Everybody about the prison said to Charlet, "You are safe."

On the 29th of June, at break of day, the town of Belley saw a mournful sight. The scaffold had risen from the earth during the night, and stood in the middle of the public square.

The people accosted one another, pale as death, and asked: "Have you seen what there is in the square?"--"Yes."--"Whom is it for?"

It was for Charlet.

The sentence of death had been referred to M. Bonaparte, it had slumbered a long time at the Élysée; there was other business to attend to; but one fine morning, after a lapse of seven months, all the world having forgotten the conflict at Seyssel, the slain custom-house officer, and Charlet himself, M. Bonaparte, wanting most likely to insert some event between the festival of the 10th of May and the festival of the 15th of August, signed the warrant for the execution.

On the 29th of June, therefore, only a few days ago, Charlet was removed from his prison. They told him he was about to die. He continued calm. A man who has justice on his side does not fear death, for he feels that there are two things within him: one, his body, which may be put to death, the other, justice, whose hands are not bound, nor does its head fall beneath the knife.

They wanted to make Charlet ride in a cart. "No," said he to the gendarmes, "I will go on foot, I can walk, I am not afraid."

There was a great crowd along his route. Every one in the town knew him and loved him; his friends sought his eye. Charlet, his arms fastened

behind his back, bowed his head right and left. "Adieu, Jacques! adieu, Pierre!" said he, smiling. "Adieu, Charlet!" they answered, and all of them wept. The gendarmerie and the infantry surrounded the scaffold. He ascended it with slow and steady steps. When they saw him standing on the scaffold, a shudder ran through the crowd; the women cried aloud, the men clenched their fists.

While they were strapping him to the plank, he looked up at the knife, saying: "When I reflect that I was once a Bonapartist!" Then, raising his eyes to Heaven, he exclaimed, "Vive la République!"

The next moment his head fell.

It was a day of mourning at Belley and through all the villages of the Ain. "How did he die?" people would ask.--"Bravely."--"God be praised!"

In this wise a man has been killed.

The mind succumbs and is lost in horror in presence of a deed so damnable.

This crime being added to the rest complements and sets a sinister sort of seal upon them.

It is more than the complement, it is the crowning act.

One feels that M. Bonaparte ought to be satisfied! To have shot down at night, in the dark, in solitude, on the Champ-de-Mars, under the arches of the bridges, behind a lonely wall, at random, haphazard, no matter whom, unknown persons, shadows, the very number of whom none can tell; to cause nameless persons to be slain by nameless persons; and to have all this vanish in obscurity, in oblivion, is, in very truth, far from gratifying to one's self-esteem; it looks like hiding one's self, and in truth that is what it is; it is commonplace. Scrupulous men have the right to say to you: "You know you are afraid; you would not dare to do these things publicly; you shrink from your own acts." And, to a certain extent, they seem to be right. To shoot down people by night is a violation of every law, human and divine, but it lacks audacity. One does not feel triumphant afterwards. Something better is possible.

Broad daylight, the public square, the judicial scaffold, the regular apparatus of social vengeance--to hand the innocent over to these, to put them to death in this manner, ah! that is different. I can understand that. To commit a murder at high noon, in the heart of the town, by means of one machine called court, or court-martial, and of another machine slowly erected by a carpenter, adjusted, put together, screwed and greased at pleasure; to say it shall be at such an hour; then to display two baskets, and say: "This one is for the body, that other for the head;" at the appointed time to bring the victim bound with ropes, attended by a priest; to proceed calmly to the murder, to order a clerk to prepare a report of it, to surround the murder victim with gendarmes and naked swords, so that the people there may shudder,

and no longer know what they see, and wonder whether those men in uniform are a brigade of gendarmerie or a band of robbers, and ask one another, looking at the man who lets the knife fall, whether he is the executioner or whether he is not rather an assassin! This is bold and resolute, this is a parody of legal procedure, most audacious and alluring, and worth being carried out. This is a noble and far-spreading blow on the cheek of justice. Commend us to this!

To do this seven months after the struggle, in cold blood, to no purpose, as an omission that one repairs, as a duty that one fulfills, is awe-inspiring, it is complete; one has the appearance of acting within one's rights, which perplexes the conscience and makes honest men shudder.

A terrible juxtaposition, which comprehends the whole case. Here are two men, a working-man and a prince. The prince commits a crime, he enters the Tuileries; the working-man does his duty, he ascends the scaffold. Who set up the working-man's scaffold? The prince!

Yes, this man who, had he been beaten in December, could have escaped the death penalty only by the omnipotence of progress, and by an enlargement, too liberal certainly, of the principle that human life is sacred; this man, this Louis Bonaparte, this prince who carries the practices of Poulmann and Soufflard into politics, he it is who rebuilds the scaffold! Nor does he tremble! Nor does he turn pale! Nor does he feel that it is a fatal ladder, that he is at liberty to

refrain from erecting it, but that, when once it is erected, he is not at liberty to take it down, and that he who sets it up for another, afterwards finds it for himself. It knows him again, and says to him, "Thou didst place me here, and I have awaited thee."

No, this man does not reflect, he has longings, he has whims, and they must be satisfied. They are the longings of a dictator. Unlimited power would be tasteless without this seasoning. Go to,--cut off Charlet's head, and the others. M. Bonaparte is Prince-President of the French Republic; M. Bonaparte has sixteen millions a year, forty-four thousand francs a day, twenty-four cooks in his household, and as many aides-de-camp; he has the right of fishing in the ponds of Saclay and Saint-Quentin; of hunting in the forests of Laigne, Ourscamp, Carlemont, Champagne and Barbeau; he has the Tuileries, the Louvre, the Élysée, Rambouillet, Saint-Cloud, Versailles, Compiègne; he has his imperial box at every theatre, feasting and music every day, M. Sibour's smile, and the arm of the Marchioness of Douglas on which to enter the ballroom; but all this is not enough; he must have the guillotine to boot; he must have some of those red baskets among his baskets of champagne.

Oh! hide we our faces with both our hands! This man, this hideous butcher of the law and of justice, still had his apron round his waist and his hands in the smoking bowels of the Constitution, and his feet in the blood of all the slaughtered laws, when you, judges, when you, magistrates, men of the law, men of the right...! But I pause; I shall

meet you hereafter with your black robes and your red robes, your robes of the colour of ink, and your robes of the colour of blood; and I shall find them, too, and having chastised them once, will chastise them again--those lieutenants of yours, those judicial supporters of the ambuscade, those soilers of the ermine,--Baroche, Suin, Royer, Mongis, Rouher, and Troplong, deserters from the law,--all those names which signify nothing more than the utmost contempt which man can feel.

If he did not crush his victims between two boards, like Christiern II; if he did not bury people alive, like Ludovic the Moor; if he did not build his palace walls with living men and stones, like Timour-Beg, who was born, says the legend, with his hands closed and full of blood; if he did not rip open pregnant women, like Cæsar Borgia, Duke of Valentinois; if he did not scourge women on the breasts, testibusque viros, like Ferdinand of Toledo; if he did not break on the wheel alive, burn alive, boil alive, flay alive, crucify, impale, and quarter, blame him not, the fault was not his; the age obstinately refuses to allow it. He has done all that was humanly or inhumanly possible. Given the nineteenth century, a century of gentleness,--of decadence, say the papists and friends of arbitrary power,--Louis Bonaparte has equalled in ferocity his contemporaries, Haynau, Radetzky, Filangieri, Schwartzenberg, and Ferdinand of Naples: he has even surpassed them. A rare merit, with which we must credit him as another impediment: the scene was laid in France. Let us do him this justice: in the times in which we live, Ludovic Sforza, the Valentinois, the Duke of Alva, Timour, and Christiern II, would have

done no more than Louis Bonaparte; in their time, he would have done all that they did; in our time, just as they were about to erect their gibbets, their wheels, their wooden horses, their cranes, their living towers, their crosses, and their stakes, they would have desisted like him, in spite of themselves, and unconsciously, before the secret and invincible resistance of the moral environment, of that formidable and mysterious interdiction of an entire epoch, which rises in the north, the south, the east, and the west, to confront tyrants, and says no to them.

III

WHAT 1852 WOULD HAVE BEEN

But, had it not been for this abominable 2nd of December, which its accomplices, and after them its dupes, call "necessary," what would have occurred in France? Mon Dieu! this:--

Let us go back a little, and review, in a summary way, the situation as it was before the coup d'état.

The party of the past, under the name of order, opposed the republic, or in other words, opposed the future.

Whether opposed or not, whether assented to or not, the republic, all illusions apart, is the future, proximate or remote, but inevitable, of the nations.

How is the republic to be established? There are two ways of establishing it: by strife and by progress. The democrats would arrive at it by progress; their adversaries, the men of the past, appear to desire to arrive at it by strife.

As we have just observed, the men of the past are for resisting; they persist; they apply the axe to the tree, expecting to stop the mounting

sap. They lavish their strength, their puerility, and their anger.

Let us not utter a single bitter word against our old adversaries, fallen with ourselves on the same day, and several among them with honour on their side; let us confine ourselves to noting that it was into this struggle that the majority of the Legislative Assembly of France entered at the very beginning of its career, in the month of May, 1849.

This policy of resistance is a deplorable policy. This struggle between man and his Maker is inevitably vain; but, though void of result, it is fruitful in catastrophes. That which ought to be will be; that which ought to flow will flow; that which ought to fall will fall; that which ought to spring up will spring up; that which ought to grow will grow; but, obstruct these natural laws, confusion follows, disorder begins. It is a melancholy fact that it was this disorder which was called order.

Tie up a vein, and sickness ensues; clog up a stream, and the water overflows; obstruct the future, and revolutions break out.

Persist in preserving among you, as if it were alive, the past, which is dead, and you produce an indescribable moral cholera; corruption spreads abroad, it is in the air, we breathe it; entire classes of society, the public officials, for instance, fall into decay. Keep dead bodies in your houses, the plague will break out.

This policy inevitably makes blind those who adopt it. Those men who dub themselves statesmen do not understand that they themselves have made, with their own hands and with untold labour, and with the sweat of their brows, the terrible events they deplore, and that the very catastrophes which fall upon them were by them constructed. What would be said of a peasant who should build a dam from one side of a river to the other, in front of his cottage, and who, when he saw the river turned into a torrent, overflow, sweep away his wall, and carry off his roof, should exclaim: "Wicked river!"? The statesmen of the past, those great builders of dams across streams, spend their time in exclaiming: "Wicked people!"

Take away Polignac and the July ordinances, that is to say, the dam, and Charles X would have died at the Tuileries. Reform in 1847 the electoral laws, that is to say once more, take away the dam, and Louis Philippe would have died on the throne. Do I mean thereby that the Republic would not have come? Not so. The Republic, we repeat, is the future; it would have come, but step by step, successive progress by progress, conquest by conquest, like a river that flows, and not like a deluge that overflows; it would have come at its own hour, when all was ready for it; it would have come, certainly not more enduring, for it is already indestructible, but more tranquil, free from all possibility of reaction, with no princes keeping watch, with no coup d'état behind.

The policy which obstructs the progress of mankind--let us insist on this point--excels in producing artificial floods. Thus it had managed to render the year 1852 a sort of formidable eventuality, and this again by the same contrivance, by means of a dam. Here is a railway; a train will pass in an hour; throw a beam across the rails, and when the train comes to that point it will be wrecked, as it was at Fampoux; remove the beam before the train arrives, and it will pass without even suspecting the catastrophe recently lurking there. This beam is the law of the 31st of May.

The leaders of the majority of the Legislative Assembly had thrown it across 1852, and they cried: "This is where society will be crushed!" The Left replied: "Take away your beam, and let universal suffrage pass unobstructed." This is the whole history of the law of the 31st of May.

These are things for children to understand, but which "statesmen" do not understand.

Now let us answer the question we just now proposed: Without the 2nd of December, what would have occurred in 1852?

Revoke the law of the 31st of May, take away the dam from before the people, deprive Bonaparte of his lever, his weapon, his pretext, let universal suffrage alone, take the beam off the rails, and do you know what you would have had in 1852?

Nothing.

Elections.

A sort of peaceful Sundays, when the people would have come forward to vote, labourers yesterday, today electors, to-morrow labourers, and always sovereign.

Somebody rejoins: "Oh, yes, elections! You talk very glibly about them. But what about the 'red chamber' which would have sprung from these elections."

Did they not announce that the Constitution of 1848 would prove a "red chamber?" Red chambers, red hobgoblins, all such predictions are of equal value. Those who wave such phantasmagorias on the end of a stick before the terrified populace know well what they are doing, and laugh behind the ghastly rag they wave. Beneath the long scarlet robe of the phantom, to which had been given the name of 1852, we see the stout boots of the coup d'état.

IV

THE JACQUERIE

Meanwhile, after the 2nd of December, the crime being committed, it was imperative to mislead public opinion. The coup d'état began to shriek about the Jacquerie, like the assassin who cried: "Stop thief!"

We may add, that a Jacquerie had been promised, and that M. Bonaparte could not break all his promises at once without some inconvenience. What but the Jacquerie was the red spectre? Some reality must be imparted to that spectre: one cannot suddenly burst out laughing in the face of a whole people and say: "It was nothing! I only kept you in fear of yourselves."

Consequently there was a Jacquerie. The promises of the play-bill were observed.

The imaginations of his entourage gave themselves a free rein; that old bugbear Mother Goose was resuscitated, and many a child, on reading the newspaper, might have recognized the ogre of Goodman Perrault in the disguise of a socialist; they surmised, they invented; the press being suppressed, it was quite easy; it is easy to lie when the tongue of contradiction has been torn out beforehand.

They exclaimed: "Citizens, be on your guard! without us you were lost. We shot you, but that was for your good. Behold, the Lollards were at your gates, the Anabaptists were scaling your walls, the Hussites were knocking at your window-blinds, the lean and hungry were climbing your staircases, the empty-bellied coveted your dinner. Be on your guard! Have not some of your good women been outraged?"

They gave the floor to one of the principal writers in La Patrie, one Froissard.

"I dare not write or describe the horrible and improper things they did to the ladies. But among other disorderly and villainous injuries, they killed a chevalier and put a spit through him, and turned him before the fire, and roasted him before the wife and her children. After ten or twelve had violated the woman, they tried to make her and the children eat some of the body; then killed them, put them to an evil death.

"These wicked people pillaged and burned everything; they killed, and forced, and violated all the women and maidens, without pity or mercy, as if they were mad dogs.

"Quite in the same manner did lawless people conduct themselves between Paris and Noyon, between Paris and Soissons and Ham in Vermandois, all through the land of Coucy. There were the great violators and malefactors; and, in the county of Valois, in the bishopric of Laon, of

Soissons, and of Noyon, they destroyed upwards of a hundred châteaux and goodly houses of knights and squires, and killed and robbed all they met. But God, by his grace, found a fit remedy, for which all praise be given to him."

People simply substituted for God, Monseigneur le Prince-President. They could do no less.

Now that eight months have elapsed, we know what to think of this "Jacquerie;" the facts have at length been brought to light. Where? How? Why, before the very tribunals of M. Bonaparte. The sub-prefects whose wives had been violated were single men; the curés who had been roasted alive, and whose hearts Jacques had eaten, have written to say that they are quite well; the gendarmes, round whose bodies others had danced have been heard as witnesses before the courts-martial; the public coffers, said to have been rifled, have been found intact in the hands of M. Bonaparte, who "saved" them; the famous deficit of five thousand francs, at Clamecy, has dwindled down to two hundred expended in orders for bread. An official publication had said, on the 8th of December: "The curé, the mayor, and the sub-prefect of Joigny, besides several gendarmes, have been basely massacred." Somebody replied to this in a letter, which was made public; "Not a drop of blood was shed at Joigny; nobody's life was threatened." Now, by whom was this letter written? This same mayor of Joigny who had been basely massacred, M. Henri de Lacretelle, from whom an armed band had extorted two thousand francs, at his château of Cormatin, is amazed, to this day, not at the

extortion, but at the fable. M. de Lamartine, whom another band had intended to plunder, and probably to hang on the lamp-post, and whose château of Saint-Point was burned, and who "had written to demand government assistance," knew nothing of the matter until he saw it in the papers!

The following document was produced before the court-martial in the Nièvre, presided over by ex-Colonel Martinprey:--

"ORDER OF THE COMMITTEE

"Honesty is a virtue of republicans.

"Every thief and plunderer will be shot.

"Every detainer of arms who, in the course of twelve hours, shall not have deposited them at the mayor's office, or given them up, shall be arrested and confined until further orders.

"Every drunken citizen shall be disarmed and sent to prison.

"Clamecy, December 7, 1851.

"Vive la république sociale!

"THE SOCIAL REVOLUTIONARY COMMITTEE."

This that you have just read is the proclamation of "Jacques." "Death to the pillagers! death to the thieves!" Such is the cry of these thieves and pillagers.

One of these "Jacques," named Gustave Verdun-Lagarde, a native of Lot-Garonne, died in exile at Brussels, on the 1st of May, 1852, bequeathing one hundred thousand francs to his native town, to found a school of agriculture. This partitioner did indeed make partition.

There was not, then, and the honest co-authors of the coup d'état admit it now to their intimates, with playful delight, there was not any "Jacquerie," it is true; but the trick has told.

There was in the departments, as there was in Paris, a lawful resistance, the resistance prescribed to the citizens by Article 110 of the Constitution, and superior to the Constitution by natural right; there was the legitimate defence--this time the word is properly applied--against the "preservers;" the armed struggle of right and law against the infamous insurrection of the ruling powers. The Republic, surprised by an ambuscade, wrestled with the coup d'état. That is all.

Twenty-seven departments rose in arms: the Ain, the Aude, the Cher, the Bouches du Rhône, the Côte d'Or, the Haute-Garonne, Lot-et-Garonne, the

Loiret, the Marne, the Meurthe, the Nord, the Bas-Rhin, the Rhône, Seine-et-Marne, did their duty worthily; the Allier, the Basses-Alpes, the Aveyron, the Drome, the Gard, the Gers, the Hérault, the Jura, the Nièvre, the Puy-de-Dôme, Saône-et-Loire, the Var and Vaucluse, did theirs fearlessly. They succumbed, as did Paris.

The coup d'état was as ferocious there as at Paris. We have cast a summary glance at its crimes.

So, then, it was this lawful, constitutional, virtuous resistance, this resistance in which heroism was on the side of the citizens, and atrocity on the side of the powers; it was this which the coup d'état called "Jacquerie." We repeat, a touch of red spectre was useful.

This Jacquerie had two aims; it served the policy of the Elysée in two ways; it offered a double advantage: first, to win votes for the "plebiscite;" to win these votes by the sword and in face of the spectre, to repress the intelligent, to alarm the credulous, compelling some by terror, others by fear, as we shall shortly explain; therein lies all the success and mystery of the vote of the 20th of December; secondly, it afforded a pretext for proscriptions.

The year 1852 in itself contained no actual danger. The law of the 31st of May, morally extinct, was dead before the 2nd of December. A new Assembly, a new President, the Constitution simply put in operation,

elections,--and nothing more.

But it was necessary that M. Bonaparte should go. There was the obstacle; thence the catastrophe.

Thus, then, did this man one fine morning seize by the throat the Constitution, the Republic, the Law, and France; he stabbed the future in the back; under his feet he trampled law, common sense, justice, reason, and liberty; he arrested men who were inviolable, he sequestered innocent men; in the persons of their representatives he seized the people in his grip; he raked the Paris boulevards with his shot; he made his cavalry wallow in the blood of old men and of women; he shot without warning and without trial; he filled Mazas, the Conciergerie, Saint-Pélagie, Vincennes, his fortresses, his cells, his casemates, his dungeons, with prisoners, and his cemeteries with corpses; he incarcerated, at Saint-Lazare, a wife who was carrying bread to her husband in hiding; he sent to the galleys for twenty years, a man who had harboured one of the proscribed; he tore up every code of laws, broke every enactment; he caused the deported to rot by thousands in the horrible holds of the hulks; he sent to Lambessa and Cayenne one hundred and fifty children between twelve and fifteen; he who was more absurd than Falstaff, has become more terrible than Richard III; and why has all this been done? Because there was, he said, "a plot against his power;" because the year which was closing had a treasonable understanding with the year which was beginning to overthrow him; because Article 45 perfidiously concerted with the

calendar to turn him out; because the second Sunday in May intended to "depose" him; because his oath had the audacity to plot his fall; because his plighted word conspired against him.

The day after his triumph, he was heard to say: "The second Sunday in May is dead." No! it is probity that is dead! it is honour that is dead! it is the name of Emperor that is dead!

How the man sleeping in the chapel of St. Jerome must shudder, how he must despair! Behold the gradual rise of unpopularity about his great figure; and it is this ill-omened nephew who has placed the ladder. The great recollections are beginning to fade, the bad ones are returning. People dare no longer speak of Jena, Marengo, and Wagram. Of what do they speak? Of the Duc d'Enghien, of Jaffa, of the 18th Brumaire. They forget the hero, and see only the despot. Caricature is beginning to sport with Cæsar's profile. And what a creature beside him! Some there are who confound the nephew with the uncle, to the delight of the Élysée, but to the shame of France! The parodist assumes the airs of a stage manager. Alas! a splendour so infinite could not be tarnished save by this boundless debasement! Yes! worse than Hudson Lowe! Hudson Lowe was only a jailor, Hudson Lowe was only an executioner. The man who has really assassinated Napoleon is Louis Bonaparte; Hudson Lowe killed only his life, Louis Bonaparte is killing his glory.

Ah! the villain! he takes everything, he abuses everything, he sullies everything, he dishonours everything. He selects, for his ambuscade the

month, the day, of Austerlitz. He returns from Satory as one would return from Aboukir. He conjures out of the 2nd of December I know not what bird of night, and perches it on the standard of France, and exclaims: "Soldiers, behold the eagle." He borrows the hat from Napoleon, and the plume from Murat. He has his imperial etiquette, his chamberlains, his aides-de-camp, his courtiers. Under the Emperor, they were kings, under him they are lackeys. He has his own policy, his own 13th Vendémiaire, his own 18th Brumaire. Yes, he risks comparison! At the Élysée, Napoleon the Great has disappeared: they say, "Uncle Napoleon." The man of destiny has outdone Géronte. The perfect man is not the first, but this one. It is evident that the first came only to make the second's bed. Louis Bonaparte, in the midst of his valets and concubines, to satisfy the necessities of the table and the chamber, mingles the coronation, the oath, the Legion of Honour, the camp of Boulogne, the Column Vendôme, Lodi, Arcola, Saint-Jean-d'Acre, Eylau, Friedland, Champaubert--Ah! Frenchmen! look upon this hog covered with slime strutting about in that lion's skin!