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!

BOOK V

PARLIAMENTARISM

I

1789

One day, more than sixty-three years ago, the French people, who had been the property of one family for upwards of eight hundred years, who had been oppressed by the barons down to Louis XI, and since Louis XI by the parliaments, that is to say, to employ the frank remark of a great nobleman of the eighteenth century, "who had been half eaten up by wolves and finished by vermin;" who had been parcelled into provinces, into châtellanies, into bailiwicks, and into seneschalries; who had been exploited, squeezed, taxed, fleeced, peeled, shaven, shorn, clipped and abused without mercy, fined incessantly at the good pleasure of their masters; governed, led, misled, overdriven, tortured; beaten with sticks, and branded with red-hot irons for an oath; sent to the galleys for killing a rabbit upon the king's grounds; hung for a matter of five sous; contributing their millions to Versailles and their skeletons to Montfauçon; laden with prohibitions, with

ordinances, with patents, with royal letters, with edicts pecuniary and rural, with laws, with codes, with customs; ground to the earth with imposts, with fines, with quit-rents, with mortmains, import and export duties, rents, tithes, tolls, statute-labour, and bankruptcies; cudgelled with a cudgel called a sceptre; gasping, sweating, groaning, always marching, crowned, but on their knees, rather a beast of burthen than a nation,--the French people suddenly stood upright, determined to be men, and resolved to demand an account of Providence, and to liquidate those eight centuries of misery. It was a noble effort!

II

MIRABEAU

A large hall was chosen which was surrounded with benches, then they took boards, and with these boards constructed, in the middle of the hall, a kind of platform. When this platform was finished, what in those days was called the nation, that is to say, the clergy, in their red and violet robes, the nobility in spotless white, with their swords at their sides, and the bourgeoisie dressed in black, took their seats upon the benches. Scarcely were they seated when there was seen to ascend the platform and there take its stand an extraordinary figure. "Who is this monster?" said some; "Who is this giant?" said others. It was a singular being, unforeseen, unknown, emerging abruptly from the obscurity, who terrified, and who fascinated. A dreadful disease had given him a kind of tiger's head; every degree of ugliness seemed to have been imprinted upon that mask by every possible vice. Like the bourgeoisie, he was dressed in black, that is to say, in mourning. His bloodshot eye cast upon the assembly a dazzling glance; it resembled menace and reproach--all looked upon him with a degree of curiosity in which was mingled horror. He raised his hand, and there was silence.

Then were heard to issue from this hideous face sublime words. It was the voice of the new world speaking through the mouth of the old world; it was '89 that had risen, and was questioning, and accusing and

denouncing to God and man all the fatal dates of the monarchy; it was the past,--an august spectacle,--the past, bruised with chains, branded on the shoulder, ex-slave, ex-convict,--the unfortunate past, calling aloud upon the future, the emancipating future! that is what that stranger was, that is what he did on that platform! At his word, which at certain moments was as the thunder, prejudices, fictions, abuses, superstitions, fallacies, intolerance, ignorance, fiscal infamies, barbarous punishments, outworn authorities, worm-eaten magistracy, discrepit codes, rotten laws, everything that was doomed to perish, trembled, and the downfall of those things began. That formidable apparition has left a name in the memory of men; he should be called Revolution,--his name is Mirabeau!

III

THE TRIBUNE

From the moment that that man put his foot upon that platform, that platform was transformed. The French tribune was founded.

The French tribune! A volume would be necessary to tell all that that word contains. The French tribune has been, these sixty years, the open mouth of human intelligence. Of human intelligence, saying everything, combining everything, blending everything, fertilizing everything: the good, the bad, the true, the false, the just, the unjust, the high, the low, the horrible, the beautiful, dreams, facts, passion, reason, love, hate, the material, the ideal; but, in a word--for that is the essence of its sublime and eternal mission--making darkness in order to draw from it light, making chaos to draw from it life, making the revolution to draw from it the republic.

What has taken place upon that tribune, what it has seen, what it has done, what tempests have raged around it, to what events it has given birth, what men have shaken it with their clamour, what men have made it sacred with their truths--how recount this? After Mirabeau,--Vergniaud, Camille Desmoulins, Saint-Just, that stern young man, Danton, that tremendous tribune, Robespierre, that incarnation of the great and terrible year! From it were heard those ferocious

interruptions. "Aha!" cries an orator of the Convention, "do you propose to cut short my speech?" "Yes," answers a voice, "and your neck to-morrow." And those superb apostrophes. "Minister of Justice," said General Foy to an iniquitous Keeper of the Seals, "I condemn you, on leaving this room, to contemplate the statue of L'Hôpital."--There, every cause has been pleaded, as we have said before, bad causes as well as good; the good only have been finally won; there, in the presence of resistance, of denials, of obstacles, those who long for the future, like those who long for the past, have lost all patience; there, it has happened to truth to become violent, and to falsehood to rage; there, all extremes have appeared. On that tribune the guillotine had its orator, Marat; and the Inquisition its Montalembert. Terrorism in the name of public safety, terrorism in the name of Rome; gall in the mouths of both, agony in the audience. When one was speaking, you fancied you saw the gleam of the knife; when the other was speaking, you fancied you heard the crackling of the stake. There factions have fought, all with determination, a few with glory. There, the royal power violated the right of the people in the person of Manuel, become illustrious in history by this very violation; there appeared, disdaining the past, whose servants they were, two melancholy old men: Royer-Collard, disdainful probity, Chateaubriand, the satirical genius; there, Thiers, skill, wrestled with Guizot, strength; there men have mingled, have grappled, have fought, have brandished evidence like a sword. There, for more than a quarter of a century, hatred, rage, superstition, egotism, imposture, shrieking, hissing, barking, writhing, screaming always the same calumnies, shaking always the same

clenched fist, spitting, since Christ, the same saliva, have whirled like a cloud-storm about thy serene face, O Truth!

IV

THE ORATORS

All this was alive, ardent, fruitful, tumultuous, grand. And when everything had been pleaded, argued, investigated, searched, gone to the bottom of, said and gainsaid, what came forth from the chaos? always the spark! What came forth from the cloud? always light! All that the tempest could do was to agitate the ray of light, and change it into lightning. There, in that tribune, has been propounded, analyzed, clarified, and almost always determined, every question of the day: questions of finance, questions of credit, questions of labour, questions of circulation, questions of salary, questions of state, questions of the land, questions of peace, questions of war. There, for the first time, was pronounced that phrase which contained a whole new alignment of society,--the Rights of Man. There, for fifty years, has been heard the ringing of the anvil upon which supernatural smiths were forging pure ideas,--ideas, those swords of the people, those lances of justice, that armour of law. There, suddenly impregnated with sympathetic currents, like embers which redden in the wind, all those who had flame in their hearts, great advocates like Ledru-Rollin and Berryer, great historians like Guizot, great poets like Lamartine, rose at once, and naturally, into great orators.

That tribune was a place of strength and of virtue. It saw, it inspired (for it is easy to believe that these emanations sprang from it), all those acts of devotion, of abnegation, of energy, of intrepidity. As for us, we honour every display of courage, even in the ranks of those who are opposed to us. One day the tribune was surrounded with darkness; it seemed as if an abyss had opened around it; and in this darkness one heard a noise like the roaring of the sea; and suddenly, in that impenetrable night, above that ledge of marble to which clung the strong hand of Danton, one saw arise a pike bearing a bleeding head! Boissy d'Anglas saluted it.

That was a day of menace. But the people do not overthrow tribunes. The tribunes belong to the people, and the people know it. Place a tribune in the centre of the world, and in a few days, in the four corners of the earth, the Republic will arise. The tribune shines for the people, and they are not unaware of it. Sometimes the tribune irritates the people, and makes them foam with rage; sometimes they beat it with their waves, they overflow it even, as on the 15th of May, but then they retire majestically like the ocean, and leave it standing upright like a beacon. To overthrow the tribune is, on the part of the people, rank folly; it is the proper work of tyrants only.

The people were rising, full of anger, of irritation. Some generous error had seized them, some illusion was leading them astray; they had misunderstood some act, some measure, some law; they were beginning to

be wroth, they were laying aside that superb tranquillity wherein their strength consists, they were invading all the public squares with dull murmurings and formidable gestures; it was an émeute, an insurrection, civil war, a revolution, perhaps. The tribune was there. A beloved voice arose and said to the people: "Pause, look, listen, judge!" Si forte virum quem conspexere, silent. This was true at Rome, and true at Paris. The people paused. O Tribune! pedestal of men of might! from thee have sprung eloquence, law, authority, patriotism, devotion, and great thoughts,--the curb of the people, the muzzles of lions.

In sixty years, every sort of mind, every sort of intelligence, every description of genius, has successively spoken in that spot, the most resonant in the world. From the first Constituent Assembly to the last, from the first Legislative Assembly to the last, through the Convention, the Councils, and the Chambers, count the men if you can. It is a catalogue worthy of Homer. Follow the series! How many contrasting figures are there from Danton to Thiers? How many figures that resemble one another, from Barère to Baroche, from Lafayette to Cavaignac? To the names we have already mentioned,--Mirabeau, Vergniaud, Danton, Saint-Just, Robespierre, Camille Desmoulins, Manuel, Foy, Royer-Collard, Chateaubriand, Guizot, Thiers, Ledru-Rollin, Berryer, Lamartine,--add these other names, so different, sometimes hostile,--scholars, artists, men of science, men of the law, statesmen, warriors, democrats, monarchists, liberals, socialists, republicans, all famous, a few illustrious, each having the halo which befits him: Barnave, Cazalès, Maury, Mounier, Thouret, Chapelier, Pétion, Buzot,

Brissot, Sieyès, Condorcet, Chénier, Carnot, Lanjuinais, Pontécoulant, Cambacérès, Talleyrand, Fontanes, Benjamin Constant, Casimir Perier, Chauvelin, Voyer d'Argenson, Laffitte, Dupont (de l'Eure), Fitz-James, Cuvier, Villemain, Camille Jordan, Lainé, Bonald, Villèle, Martignac, the two Lameths, the two Davids (the painter in '93, the sculptor in '48), Lamarque, Mauguin, Odilon Barrot, Arago, Garnier-Pagès, Louis Blanc, Marc Dufraisse, Lamennais, Émile de Girardin, Lamoricière, Dufaure, Crémieux, Michel (de Bourges), Jules Favre. What a constellation of talents! what a variety of aptitudes! what services rendered! what a battling of all the realities against all the errors! what brains at work! what an outlay, for the benefit of progress, of learning, of philosophy, of passion, of conviction, of experience, of sympathy, of eloquence! what a fertilising heat spread abroad! what a shining firmament of light!

And we do not name them all. To make use of an expression which is sometimes borrowed from the author of this book, "Nous en passons et des meilleurs." We have not even alluded to that valiant legion of young orators who arose on the Left during these last years,--Arnauld (de l'Ariège), Bancel, Chauffour, Pascal Duprat, Esquiros, de Flotte, Farcounet, Victor Hennequin, Madier de Montjau, Morellet, Noël Parfait, Pelletier, Sain, Versigny.

Let us insist upon this point: starting from Mirabeau, there was in the world, in human society, in civilization, a culminating point, a central spot, a common altar, a summit. This summit was the tribune of

France; admirable landmark for coming generations, a glittering height in time of peace, a lighthouse in the darkness of catastrophes. From the extremities of the intelligent world, the peoples fixed their eyes upon this peak, from which has shone the human mind. When dark night suddenly enveloped them, they heard issuing from that height a mighty voice, which spoke to them in the darkness. Admonet et magna testatur voce per umbras. A voice which all at once, when the hour had come, like the cockcrow announcing the dawn, like the cry of the eagle hailing the sun, resounded like a clarion of war, or like the trumpet of judgment, and brought to their feet once more, awe-inspiring, waving their winding-sheets, seeking swords in their tombs, all those heroic dead nations,--Poland, Hungary, Italy! Then, at that voice of France, the glorious sky of the future opened; old despotisms, blinded and in fear, hid their heads in the nether darkness, and there, her feet upon the clouds, her forehead among the stars, a sword flashing in her hand, her mighty wings outspread in the azure depths, one saw Liberty appear, the archangel of the nations.

V

INFLUENCE OF ORATORY

This tribune was the terror of every tyranny and fanaticism, it was the hope of every one who was oppressed under Heaven. Whoever placed his foot upon that height, felt distinctly the pulsations of the great heart of mankind. There, providing he was a man of earnest purpose, his soul swelled within him, and shone without. A breath of universal philanthropy seized him, and filled his mind as the breeze fills the sail; so long as his feet rested upon those four planks, he was a stronger and a better man; he felt at that consecrated minute as if he were living the life of all the nations; words of charity for all men came to his lips; beyond the Assembly, grouped at his feet, and frequently in a tumult, he beheld the people, attentive, serious, with ears strained, and fingers on lips; and beyond the people, the human race, plunged in thought, seated in circles, and listening. Such was this grand tribune, from which a man addressed the world.

From this tribune, incessantly vibrating, gushed forth perpetually a sort of sonorous flood, a mighty oscillation of sentiments and ideas, which, from billow to billow, and from people to people, flowed to the utmost confines of the earth, to set in motion those intelligent waves which are called souls. Frequently one knew not why such and such a law, such and such an institution, was tottering, beyond the frontiers,

beyond the most distant seas: the Papacy beyond the Alps, the throne of the Czar at the extremity of Europe, slavery in America, the death penalty all over the world. The reason was that the tribune of France had quivered. At certain hours the quiver of that tribune was an earthquake. The tribune of France spoke, and every sentient being on this earth betook itself to reflection; the words sped into the obscurity, through space, at hazard, no matter where,--"It is only the wind, it is only a little noise," said the barren minds that live upon irony; but the next day, or three months, or a year later, something fell on the surface of the earth, or something rose. What had been the cause of that? The noise that had vanished, the wind that had passed away. This noise, this wind, was "the Word." A sacred force! From the Word of God came the creation of human beings;--from the Word of Man will spring the union of the peoples.

VI

WHAT AN ORATOR IS

Once mounted upon this tribune, the man who was there was no longer a man: he was that mysterious workman whom we see, at twilight, walking with long strides across the furrows, and flinging into space, with an imperial gesture, the germs, the seeds, the future harvests, the wealth of the approaching summer, bread, life.

He goes to and fro, he returns; his hand opens and empties itself, fills itself and empties itself again and again; the sombre plain is stirred, the deeps of nature open, the unknown abyss of creation begins its work; the waiting dews fall, the spear of wild grain quivers and reflects that the sheaf of wheat will succeed it; the sun, hidden behind the horizon, loves what that workman is doing, and knows that his rays will not be wasted. Sacred and mysterious work!

The orator is the sower. He takes from his heart his instincts, his passions, his beliefs, his sufferings, his dreams, his ideas, and throws them, by handfuls, into the midst of men. Every brain is to him an open furrow. One word dropped from the tribune always takes root somewhere, and becomes a thing. You say, "Oh! it is nothing--it is a man talking," and you shrug your shoulders. Shortsighted creatures! it is a future which is germinating, it is a new world bursting into

bloom.

VII

WHAT THE TRIBUNE ACCOMPLISHED

Two great problems hang over the world. War must disappear, and conquest must continue. These two necessities of a growing civilization seemed to exclude each other. How satisfy the one without failing the other? Who could solve the two problems at the same time? Who did solve them? The tribune! The tribune is peace, and the tribune is conquest. Conquest by the sword,--who wants it? Nobody. The peoples are fatherlands. Conquest by ideas,--who wants it? Everybody. The peoples are mankind. Now two preëminent tribunes dominated the nations--the English tribune doing business, and the French tribune creating ideas. The French tribune had elaborated after '89 all the principles which form the political philosopher's stone, and it had begun to elaborate since 1848 all the principles which form the social philosopher's stone. When once a principle had been released from confinement and brought into the light, the French tribune threw it upon the world, armed from head to foot, saying: "Go!" The victorious principle took the field, met the custom-house officers on the frontier, and passed in spite of their watch-dogs; met the sentinels at the gates of cities, and passed despite their pass-words; travelled by railway, by packet-boat, scoured continents, crossed the seas, accosted wayfarers on the highway, sat at the firesides of families, glided between friend

and friend, between brother and brother, between man and wife, between master and slave, between people and king; and to those who asked: "Who art thou?" it replied: "I am the truth;" and to those who asked: "Whence comest thou?" it replied, "I come from France." Then he who had questioned the principle offered it his hand, and it was better than the annexation of a province, it was the annexation of a human mind. Thenceforth, between Paris, the metropolis, and that man in his solitude, and that town buried in the heart of the woods or of the steppes, and that people groaning under the yoke, a current of thought and of love was established. Under the influence of these currents certain nationalities grew weak, whilst others waxed strong and rose again. The savage felt himself less savage, the Turk less Turk, the Russian less Russian, the Hungarian more Hungarian, the Italian more Italian. Slowly, and by degrees, the French spirit assimilated the other nations, for universal progress. Thanks to this admirable French language, composed by Providence, with wonderful equilibrium, of enough consonants to be pronounced by the nations of the North, and of enough vowels to be pronounced by the peoples of the South; thanks to this language, which is a power of civilization and of humanity, little by little, and by its radiation alone, this lofty central tribune of Paris conquered the nations and made them France. The material boundary of France was such as she could make it; but there were no treaties of 1815 to determine her moral frontier. The moral frontier constantly receded and broadened from day to day; and before a quarter of a century, perhaps, one would have said the French world, as one said the Roman world.

That is what the tribune was, that is what it was accomplishing for France, a prodigious engine of ideas, a gigantic factory ever elevating the level of intelligence all over the world, and infusing into the heart of humanity a vast flood of light.

And this is what M. Bonaparte has suppressed!

VIII

PARLIAMENTARISM

Yes, that tribune M. Bonaparte has overthrown. That power, created by our revolutionary parturition, he has broken, shattered, crushed, torn with his bayonets, thrown under the feet of horses. His uncle uttered an aphorism: "The throne is a board covered with velvet." He, also, has uttered his: "The tribune is a board covered with cloth, on which we read, Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité." He has thrown board and cloth, and Liberty and Equality and Fraternity, into the fire of a bivouac. A burst of laughter from the soldiers, a little smoke, and all was over.

Is it true? Is it possible? Did it happen so? Has such a thing been seen in these days? Mon Dieu, yes; it is, in fact, extremely simple. To cut off the head of Cicero and nail his two hands upon the rostrum, it sufficed to have a brute who has a knife, and another brute who has nails and a hammer.

The tribune was for France three things: a means of exterior initiative, a method of interior government, a source of glory. Louis Bonaparte has suppressed the initiative. France was the teacher of the peoples, and conquered them by love; to what end? He has suppressed the method of government,--his own is better. He has breathed upon the glory of France, and blown it out. Certain breaths have this property.

But to make an assault upon the tribune is a family crime. The first Bonaparte had already committed it, but at least what he brought into France to replace that glory, was glory, not ignominy.

Louis Bonaparte did not content himself with overthrowing the tribune; he determined to make it ridiculous. As well try that as anything else. The least one can do, when one cannot utter two words consecutively, when one harangues only with written notes in hand, when one is short both of speech and of intelligence, is to make a little fun of Mirabeau. General Ratapoil said to General Foy, "Hold your tongue, chatterbox!"--"What is it you call the tribune?" cries M. Bonaparte Louis; "it is parliamentarism!" What have you to say to "parliamentarism"? Parliamentarism pleases me. Parliamentarism is a pearl. Behold the dictionary enriched. This academician of coups d'état makes new words. In truth one is not a barbarian to refrain from dropping a barbarism now and then. He too is a sower; barbarisms fructify in the brains of idiots. The uncle had "ideologists"--the nephew has "parliamentarisms." Parliamentarism, gentlemen; parliamentarism, ladies. This is answerable for everything. You venture timidly to observe: "It is perhaps a pity so many families have been ruined, so many people transported, so many citizens proscribed, so many coffins filled, so many graves dug, so much blood spilt" "Aha!" replies a coarse voice with a Dutch accent; "so you mistrust parliamentarism, do you?" Get out of the dilemma if you can. Parliamentarism is a great find. I give my vote to M. Louis Bonaparte

for the next vacant seat at the Institute. What's that? why, we must encourage neology! This man comes from the dung-heap, this man comes from the Morgue, this man's hands steam like a butcher's, he scratches his ear, smiles, and invents words like Julie d'Angennes. He marries the wit of the Hôtel de Rambouillet to the odour of Montfauçon. We will both vote for him, won't we, M. de Montalembert?

IX

THE TRIBUNE DESTROYED

So "parliamentarism"--that is to say, protection of the citizen, freedom of discussion, liberty of the press, liberty of the subject, supervision of the taxes, inspection of the receipts and expenses, the safety-lock upon the public money-box, the right of knowing what is being done with your money, the solidity of credit, liberty of conscience, liberty of worship, protection of property, the guarantee against confiscation and spoliation, the safeguard of the individual, the counterpoise to arbitrary power, the dignity of the nation, the glory of France, the steadfast morals of free nations, movement, life,--all these exist no longer. Wiped out, annihilated, vanished! And this "deliverance" has cost France only the trifle of twenty-five millions, divided amongst twelve or fifteen saviours, and forty thousand francs in eau-de-vie, per brigade! Verily, this is not dear! these gentlemen, of the coup d'état did the thing at a discount.

Now the deed is done, it is complete. The grass is growing at the Palais-Bourbon. A virgin forest is beginning to spring up between Pont de la Concorde and Place Bourgogne. Amid the underbrush one distinguishes the box of a sentry. The Corps Législatif empties its urn among the reeds, and the water flows around the foot of the sentry-box with a gentle murmur.

Now it is all over. The great work is accomplished. And the results of the work! Do you know that Messieurs So-and-So won town houses and country houses in the Circuit Railway alone? Get all you can, gorge yourselves, grow a fat paunch; it is no longer a question of being a great people, of being a powerful people, of being a free nation, of casting a bright light; France no longer sees its way to that. And this is success! France votes for Louis-Napoleon, carries Louis-Napoleon, fattens Louis-Napoleon, contemplates Louis-Napoleon, admires Louis-Napoleon, and is stupefied. The end of civilization is attained!

Now there is no more noise, no more confusion, no more talking, no more parliament, or parliamentarism. The Corps Législatif, the Senate, the Council of State, have all had their mouths sewn up. There is no more fear of reading a fine speech when you wake up in the morning. It is all over with everything that thought, that meditated, that created, that spoke, that sparkled, that shone among this great people. Be proud, Frenchmen! Lift high your heads, Frenchmen! You are no longer anything, and this man is everything! He holds in his hand your intelligence, as a child holds a bird. Any day he pleases, he can strangle the genius of France. That will be one less source of tumult! In the meantime, let us repeat in chorus: "No more Parliamentarism, no more tribune!" In lieu of all those great voices which debated for the improvement of mankind, which were, one the idea, another the fact, another the right, another justice, another glory, another faith, another hope, another learning, another genius; which instructed, which

charmed, which comforted, which encouraged, which brought forth fruit; in lieu of all those sublime voices, what is it that one hears amid the dark night that hangs like a pall over France? The jingle of a spur, of a sword dragged along the pavement!

"Hallelujah!" says M. Sibour. "Hosannah!" replies M. Parisis.

BOOK VI

THE ABSOLUTION:--FIRST PHASE: THE 7,500,000 VOTES

I

THE ABSOLUTION

Some one says to us: "You do not consider! All these facts, which you call crimes, are henceforth 'accomplished facts,' and consequently to be respected; it is all accepted, adopted, legitimized, absolved."

"Accepted! adopted! legitimized! absolved! by what?"

"By a vote."

"What vote?"

"The seven million five hundred thousand votes."

"Oh! true. There was a plebiscite, and a vote, and seven million five hundred thousand ayes. Let us say a word of them."

II

THE DILIGENCE

A brigand stops a diligence in the woods.

He is at the head of a resolute band.

The travellers are more numerous, but they are separated, disunited, cooped up in the different compartments, half asleep, surprised in the middle of the night, seized unexpectedly and without arms.

The brigand orders them to alight, not to utter a cry, not to speak a word, and to lie down with their faces to the ground.

Some resist: he blows out their brains.

The rest obey, and lie on the road, speechless, motionless, terrified, mixed up with the dead bodies, and half dead themselves.

The brigand, while his accomplices keep their feet on the ribs of the travellers, and their pistols at their heads, rifles their pockets, forces open their trunks, and takes all the valuables they possess.

The pockets rifled, the trunks pillaged, the coup d'état completed, he says to them:--

"Now, in order to set myself right with justice, I have written down on paper a declaration, that you acknowledge that all I have taken belonged to me, and that you give it to me of your own free will. I propose that this shall be your view of the matter. Each of you will have a pen given you, and without uttering a syllable, without making the slightest movement, without quitting your present attitude" (belly on ground, and face in the mud) "you will put out your arms, and you will all sign this paper. If any one of you moves or speaks, here is the muzzle of my pistol. Otherwise, you are quite free."

The travellers put out their arms, and sign.

The brigand thereupon tosses his head, and says:--

"I have seven million five hundred thousand votes."

III

SCRUTINY OF THE VOTE.--A REMINDER OF PRINCIPLES.--FACTS

M. Louis Bonaparte is president of this diligence. Let us recall a few principles.

For a political ballot to be valid, three absolute conditions must exist: First, the vote must be free; second, the vote must be intelligent; third, the figures must be accurate. If one of these three conditions is wanting, the ballot is null. How is it when all three are wanting?

Let us apply these rules.

First. That the vote must be free.

What freedom there was in the vote of the 20th of December, we have just pointed out; we have described that freedom by a striking display of evidence. We might dispense with adding anything to it. Let each of those who voted reflect, and ask himself under what moral and physical violence he dropped his ballot in the box. We might cite a certain commune of the Yonne, where, of five hundred heads of families, four hundred and thirty were arrested, and the rest voted "aye;" or a commune of the Loiret, where, of six hundred and thirty-nine heads of

families, four hundred and ninety-seven were arrested or banished; the one hundred and forty-two who escaped voted "aye." What we say of the Loiret and the Yonne might be said of all the departments. Since the 2nd of December, each town has its swarm of spies; each village, each hamlet, its informer. To vote "no" was imprisonment, transportation, Lambessa. In the villages of one department, we were told by an eye-witness, they brought "ass-loads of 'aye' ballots." The mayors, flanked by gardes-champêtres, distributed them among the peasants. They had no choice but to vote. At Savigny, near Saint-Maur, on the morning of the vote, some enthusiastic gendarmes declared that the man who voted "no" should not sleep in his bed. The gendarmerie cast into the house of detention at Valenciennes M. Parent the younger, deputy justice of the peace of the canton of Bouchain, for having advised certain inhabitants of Avesne-le-Sec to vote "no." The nephew of Representative Aubry (du Nord), having seen the agents of the prefect distribute "aye" ballots in the great square of Lille, went into the square next morning, and distributed "no" ballots. He was arrested and confined in the citadel.

As to the vote of the army, a part of it voted in its own cause; the rest followed.

But even as to the freedom of this vote of the soldiers, let us hear the army speak for itself. This is what is written by a soldier of the 6th Regiment of the Line, commanded by Colonel Garderens de Boisse:--

"So far as our company was concerned, the vote was a roll-call. The subaltern officers, the corporals, the drummers, and the soldiers, arranged in order of rank, were named by the quartermaster in presence of the colonel, the lieutenant-colonel, the major, and the company officers; and as each man named answered, 'Here!' his name was inscribed by the sergeant-major. The colonel, rubbing his hands, was saying, 'Egad, gentlemen, this is going on wheels!' when a corporal of the company to which I belong approached the table at which the sergeant-major was seated, and requested him to let him have the pen, that he might himself inscribe his name on the 'no' register, which was intended to remain blank.

"'What!' cried the colonel; 'you, who are down for quartermaster, and who are to be appointed on the first vacancy,--you formally disobey your colonel, and that in the presence of your company! It would be bad enough if this refusal of yours were simply an act of insubordination, but know you not, wretched man, that by your vote you seek to bring about the destruction of the army, the burning of your father's house, the annihilation of all society! You hold out your hand to debauchery! What! X----, you, whom I intended to urge for promotion, you come here to-day and admit all this?'

"The poor devil, it may be imagined, allowed his name to be inscribed with the rest."

Multiply this colonel by six hundred thousand, and the product is the

pressure of the functionaries of all sorts--military, political, civil, administrative, ecclesiastical, judicial, fiscal, municipal, scholastic, commercial, and consular--throughout France, on the soldier, the citizen, and the peasant. Add, as we have above pointed out, the fictitious communist Jacquerie and the real Bonapartist terrorism, the government imposing by phantasmagoria on the weak, and by dictatorship on the refractory, and brandishing two terrors together. It would require a special volume to relate, expose, and develop the innumerable details of that immense extortion of signatures, which is called "the vote of the 20th of December."

The vote of the 20th of December prostrated the honour, the initiative, the intelligence, and the moral life of the nation. France went to that vote as sheep go to the slaughter-house.

Let us proceed.

Second. That the vote must be intelligent.

Here is an elementary proposition. Where there is no liberty of the press, there is no vote. The liberty of the press is the condition sine quâ non, of universal suffrage. Every ballot cast in the absence of liberty of the press is void ab initio. Liberty of the press involves, as necessary corollaries, liberty of meeting, liberty of publishing, liberty of distributing information, all the liberties engendered by the right--antedating all other rights--of informing

one's self before voting. To vote is to steer; to vote is to judge. Can one imagine a blind pilot at the helm? Can one imagine a judge with his ears stuffed and his eyes put out? Liberty, then,--liberty to inform one's self by every means, by inquiry, by the press, by speech, by discussion,--this is the express guarantee, the condition of being, of universal suffrage. In order that a thing may be done validly, it must be done knowingly. Where there is no torch, there is no binding act.

These are axioms: outside of these axioms, all is ipso facto null.

Now, let us see: did M. Bonaparte, in his ballot of the 20th of December, obey these axioms? Did he fulfil the conditions of free press, free meetings, free tribune, free advertising, free inquiry. The answer is an immense shout of laughter, even from the Élysée.

Thus you are yourself compelled to admit that it was thus that "universal suffrage" was exercised.

What! I know nothing of what is going on: men have been killed, slaughtered, murdered, massacred, and I am ignorant of it! Men have been arbitrarily imprisoned, tortured, banished, exiled, transported, and I scarcely glimpse the fact! My mayor and my curé tell me: "These people, who are taken away, bound with cords, are escaped convicts!" I am a peasant, cultivating a patch of land in a corner of one of the provinces: you suppress the newspaper, you stifle information, you prevent the truth from reaching me, and then you make me vote! in the

uttermost darkness of night! gropingly! What! you rush out upon me from the obscurity, sabre in hand, and you say to me: "Vote!" and you call that a ballot.

"Certainly! a 'free and spontaneous' ballot," say the organs of the coup d'état.

Every sort of machinery was set to work at this vote. One village mayor, a species of wild Escobar, growing in the fields, said to his peasants: "If you vote 'aye,' 'tis for the Republic; if you vote 'no,' 'tis against the Republic." The peasants voted "aye."

And let us illuminate another aspect of this turpitude that people call "the plebiscite of the 20th of December." How was the question put? Was any choice possible? Did he--and it was the least that a coup d'état man should have done in so strange a ballot as that wherein he put everything at stake--did he open to each party the door at which its principles could enter? were the Legitimists allowed to turn towards their exiled prince, and towards the ancient honour of the fleurs-de-lys? were the Orleanists allowed to turn towards that proscribed family, honoured by the valued services of two soldiers, M M. de Joinville and d'Aumale, and made illustrious by that exalted soul, Madame la Duchesse d'Orleans? Did he offer to the people--who are not a party, but the people, that is to say, the sovereign--did he offer to the people that true republic before which all monarchy vanishes, as night before day; that republic which is the manifest and

irresistible future of the civilized world; the republic without dictatorship; the republic of concord, of learning, and of liberty; the republic of universal suffrage, of universal peace, and of universal well-being; the republic, initiator of peoples, and liberator of nationalities; that republic which after all and whatever any one may do, "will," as the author of this book has said elsewhere,[1] "possess France to-morrow, and Europe the day after." Did he offer that? No. This is how M. Bonaparte put the matter: there were in this ballot two candidates; first candidate, M. Bonaparte; second candidate--the abyss. France had the choice. Admire the adroitness of the man, and, not a little, his humility. M. Bonaparte took for his opponent in this contest, whom? M. de Chambord? No! M. de Joinville? No! The Republic? Still less. M. Bonaparte, like those pretty Creoles who show off their beauty by juxtaposition with some frightful Hottentot, took as his competitor in this election a phantom, a vision, a socialistic monster of Nuremberg, with long teeth and talons, and a live coal in its eyes, the ogre of Tom Thumb, the vampire of Porte Saint-Martin, the hydra of Theramenes, the great sea-serpent of the Constitutionnel, which the shareholders have had the kindness to impute to it, the dragon of the Apocalypse, the Tarask, the Drée, the Gra-ouili, a scarecrow. Aided by a Ruggieri of his own, M. Bonaparte lit up this pasteboard monster with red Bengal fire, and said to the scared voter: "There is no possible choice except this or myself: choose!" He said: "Choose between beauty and the beast; the beast is communism; the beauty is my dictatorship. Choose! There is no medium! Society prostrate, your house burned, your barn pillaged, your cow stolen, your fields confiscated, your wife

outraged, your children murdered, your wine drunk by others, yourself devoured alive by the great gaping-jaws yonder, or me as your emperor! Choose! Me or Croque-mitaine!"

[1] Littérature et Philosophie Mêlées 1830.

The citizen, affrighted, and consequently a child; the peasant, ignorant, and consequently a child, preferred M. Bonaparte to Croque-mitaine. Such is his triumph!

Observe, however, that of ten millions of voters, five hundred thousand would, it seems, have preferred Croque-mitaine.

After all, M. Bonaparte only had seven million five hundred thousand votes.

Thus, then, and in this fashion,--freely as we see, knowingly as we see,--that which M. Bonaparte is good enough to call universal suffrage, voted. Voted what?

Dictatorship, autocracy, slavery, the republic a despotism, France a pachalik, chains on all wrists, a seal on every mouth, silence, degradation, fear, the spy the soul of all things! They have given to a man--to you!--omnipotence and omniscience! They have made that man the supreme, the only legislator, the alpha of the law, the omega of power! They have decreed that he is Minos, that he is Numa, that he is Solon,

that he is Lycurgus! They have incarnated in him the people, the nation, the state, the law! and for ten years! What! I, a citizen, vote, not only for my own dispossession, my own forfeiture, my own abdication, but for the abdication of universal suffrage for ten years, by the coming generations, over whom I have no right, over whom you, an usurper, force me to usurp power, which, by the way, be it said in passing, would suffice to nullify that monstrous ballot, if all conceivable nullities were not already piled, heaped and welded upon it. What! is that what you would have me do? You make me vote that all is finished, that nothing remains, that the people is a slave! What! you say to me: "Since you are sovereign, you shall give yourself a master; since you are France, you shall become Haiti!" What an abominable farce!

Such is the vote of the 20th of December,--that sanction, as M. de Morny says; that absolution, as M. Bonaparte says.

Assuredly, a short time hence,--in a year, in a month, perhaps in a week,--when all that we now see has vanished, men will be ashamed of having, if only for an instant, bestowed upon that infamous semblance of a ballot, which they call the ballot of seven million five hundred thousand votes, the honour of discussing it. Yet it is the only basis, the only support, the only rampart of this prodigious power of M. Bonaparte. This vote is the excuse of cowards, this vote is the buckler of dishonoured consciences. Generals, magistrates, bishops, all crimes, all prevarications, all degrees of complicity, seek refuge for their

ignominy behind this vote. France has spoken, say they: vox populi, vox Dei, universal suffrage has voted; everything is covered by a ballot.--That a vote! that a ballot? One spits on it, and passes by.

Third. The figures must be accurate. I admire that figure: 7,500,000! It must have had a fine effect, through the fog of the 1st of January, in letters of gold, three feet high, on the portal of Notre-Dame.

I admire that figure. Do you know why? Because I consider it humble. Seven million five hundred thousand. Why seven million five hundred thousand? It is not many. No one refused M. Bonaparte full measure. After what he had done on the 2nd of December, he was entitled to something better than that. Tell us, who played him that trick? Who prevented him from putting down eight millions, or ten millions,--a good round sum? As for myself, I was quite disappointed in my hopes. I counted on unanimity. Coup d'état, you are indeed modest!

How now! a man has done all we have recalled or related: has taken an oath and perjured himself; was the guardian of a constitution and destroyed it, was the servant of a republic and betrayed it, was the agent of a sovereign assembly and violently crushed it; used the military pass-word as a poignard to kill military honour, used the standard of France to wipe away mud and shame, put handcuffs on the generals of Africa, made the representatives of the people travel in prison-vans, filled Mazas, Vincennes, Mont Valérien, and Sainte-Pélagie

with inviolable men, shot down point-blank, on the barricade of the law, the legislator girt with that scarf which is the sacred and venerable symbol of the law; gave to a colonel, whom we could name, a hundred thousand francs to trample duty under foot, and to each soldier ten francs a day; distributed in four days forty thousand francs' worth of brandy to each brigade; covered with the gold of the Bank the card-tables of the Élysée, and said to his friends, "Help yourselves!" killed M. Adde in his own house, M. Belval in his own house, M. Debaecque in his own house, M. Labilte in his own house, M. de Couvercelle in his own house, M. Monpelas in his own house, M. Thirion de Mortauban in his own house; massacred on the boulevards and elsewhere, shot anybody anywhere, committed numerous murders, of which he modestly confesses to only one hundred and ninety-one; changed the trenches about the trees on the boulevards into pools of blood; spilt the blood of the infant with the blood of the mother, mingling with both the champagne of the gendarmes!--a man has done all these things, has taken all this trouble; and when he asks the nation: "Are you satisfied?" he obtains only seven million five hundred thousand voters!--Really, he is underpaid.

Sacrifice one's self "to save society," indeed! O, ingratitude of nations!

In truth, three millions of voices replied "No." Who was it, pray, who said that the South Sea savages call the French the "oui-ouis?"

Let us speak seriously. For irony is painful in such tragic matters.

Coup d'état men, nobody believes in your seven million five hundred thousand votes.

Come, be frank, and confess that you are more or less swindlers, that you cheat a little. In your balance-sheet of the 2nd of December you set down too many votes,--and not enough corpses.

Seven million five hundred thousand! What figure is that? Whence comes it? What do you want us to do with it?

Seven million, eight million, ten million, what does it matter? We concede you everything, and we contest everything with you.

The seven million you have, plus the five hundred thousand; the round sum, plus the odd money; you say so, prince, you affirm it, you swear it; but what proves it?

Who counted? Baroche. Who examined? Rouher. Who checked? Piétri. Who added? Maupas. Who certified? Troplong. Who made the proclamation? Yourself!

In other words, servility counted, platitude examined, trickery checked, forgery added, venality certified, and mendacity proclaimed.

Very good.

Whereupon, M. Bonaparte ascends to the Capitol, orders M. Sibour to thank Jupiter, puts a blue and gold livery on the Senate, a blue and silver livery on the Corps Législatif, and a green and gold livery on his coachman; lays his hand on his heart, declares that he is the product of "universal suffrage," and that his "legitimacy" has issued from the ballot-box. That box is a wine-cup.

IV

WHO REALLY VOTED FOR M. BONAPARTE?

We declare therefore, we declare simply this, that on the 20th of December, 1851, eighteen days after the 2nd, M. Bonaparte put his hand into every man's conscience, and robbed every man of his vote. Others filch handkerchiefs, he steals an Empire. Every day, for pranks of the same sort, a sergent-de-ville takes a man by the collar and carries him off to the police-station.

Let us be understood, however.

Do we mean to declare that nobody really voted for M. Bonaparte? That no one voluntarily said "Aye?" That no one knowingly and willingly accepted that man?

By no means.

M. Bonaparte had for him the crowd of officeholders, the one million two hundred thousand parasites of the budget, and their dependents and hangers-on; the corrupt, the compromised, the adroit; and in their train the crétins, a very considerable party.

He had for him Messieurs the Cardinals, Messieurs the Bishops, Messieurs the Canons, Messieurs the Curés, Messieurs the Vicars, Messieurs the Arch-deacons, Deacons, and Sub-deacons, Messieurs the Prebendaries, Messieurs the Churchwardens, Messieurs the Sextons, Messieurs the Beadles, Messieurs the Church-door-openers, and the "religious" men, as they say. Yes, we admit, without hesitation, M. Bonaparte had for him all those bishops who cross themselves like Veuillot and Montalembert, and all those religious men, a priceless, ancient race, but largely increased and recruited since the landholders' terrors of 1848, who pray in this wise: "O, my God! send up the Lyons shares! Dear Lord Jesus, see to it that I make a profit of twenty-five per cent, on my Rothschild-Neapolitan bonds! Holy Apostles, sell my wines for me! Blessed Martyrs, double my rents! Holy Mary, Mother of God, immaculate Virgin, Star of the Sea, Enclosed Garden, Hortus Conclusus, deign to cast a favouring eye on my little business at the

corner of Rue Tire-chape and Rue Quincampoix! Tower of Ivory, cause the shop over the way to lose trade!"

These really and incontestably voted for M. Bonaparte: first category, the office-holder; second category, the idiot; third category, the religious Voltairian--land-owner--tradesman.

The human understanding in general, and the bourgeois intellect in particular, present singular enigmas. We know, and we have no desire to conceal it, that from the shopkeeper up to the banker, from the petty trader up to the stockbroker, great numbers of the commercial and industrial men of France,--that is to say, great numbers of the men who know what well-placed confidence is, what a trust faithfully administered is, what a key placed in safe hands is,--voted after the 2nd of December for M. Bonaparte. The vote given, you might have accosted one of these men of business, the first you met by chance; and this is the dialogue that you might have exchanged with him:

'You have elected Louis Bonaparte President of the Republic?"

"Yes."

"Would you engage him as your cashier?"

"Certainly not!"

V

CONCESSION

And this is the ballot,--let us repeat it--insist on it--never be tired of uttering it; "I cry the same things a hundred times," says Isaiah, "so that they may be heard once;" this is the ballot, this is the plebiscite, this is the vote, this is the sovereign decree of "Universal Suffrage," beneath whose shadow take shelter--of which they make a patent of authority, a diploma of government--those men who now hold France, who command, who dominate, who administer, who judge, who reign: their arms in gold up to the elbows, their legs in blood up to the knees!

And now, to have done with it, let us make a concession to M. Bonaparte. No more quibbling. His ballot of the 20th of December was free; it was intelligent; all the newspapers printed whatever they pleased; he who says the contrary is a slanderer; electoral meetings were held; the walls were hidden beneath placards; the promenaders in Paris swept with their feet, on the boulevards and on the streets, a snow of ballots, white, blue, yellow, red; everybody spoke who chose, wrote who chose; the figures were accurate; it was not Baroche who counted, it was Barême; Louis Blanc, Guinard, Félix Pyat, Raspail, Caussidière, Thorné, Ledru-Rollin, Etienne Arago, Albert, Barbès, Blanqui, and Gent, were the inspectors; it was they themselves who

announced the seven million five hundred thousand votes. Be it so. We concede all that. What then? What conclusion does the coup d'état thence derive?

What conclusion? It rubs its hands, it asks nothing further; that is quite sufficient; it concludes that all is right, all complete, all finished, that nothing more is to be said, that it is "absolved."

Stop, there!

The free vote, the actual figures--these are only the physical side of the question; the moral side remains to be considered. Ah! there is a moral side, then? Undoubtedly, prince, and that is precisely the true side, the important side of this question of the 2nd of December. Let us look into it.

VI

THE MORAL SIDE OF THE QUESTION

First, M. Bonaparte, it is expedient that you should acquire a notion what the human conscience is.

There are two things in this world--learn this novelty--which men call good and evil. You must be informed that lying is not good, treachery is evil, assassination is worse. It makes no difference that it is useful, it is prohibited. "By whom?" you will add. We will explain that point to you, a little farther on; but let us proceed. Man--you must also be informed--is a thinking being, free in this world, responsible in the next. Singularly enough--and you will be surprised to hear it--he is not created merely to enjoy himself, to indulge all his fancies, to follow the hazard of his appetites, to crush whatever he finds before him in his path, blade of grass or plighted oath, to devour whatever presents itself when he is hungry. Life is not his prey. For example, to pass from nothing a year to twelve hundred thousand francs, it is not permitted to take an oath which one has no intention to keep; and, to pass from twelve hundred thousand francs to twelve millions, it is not permitted to crush the constitution and laws of one's country, to rush from an ambuscade upon a sovereign assembly, to bombard Paris, to transport ten thousand persons, and to proscribe forty thousand. I continue your initiation into this singular mystery.

Certes, it is agreeable to give one's lackeys white silk stockings; but, to arrive at this grand result, it is not permitted to suppress the glory and the thought of a people, to overthrow the central tribune of the civilized world, to shackle the progress of mankind, and to shed torrents of blood. That is forbidden. "By whom?" you repeat, who see before you no one who forbids you anything. Patience: you shall know presently.

What!--here you begin to be disgusted, and I can understand it--when one has, on the one hand, one's interest, one's ambition, one's fortune, one's pleasures, a fine palace to maintain in Faubourg Saint-Honoré; and, on the other side, the jeremiads and whining of women from whom one takes their sons, of families from whom one tears their fathers, of children from whom one takes their bread, of the people whose liberty one confiscates, of society from whom one takes its support, the laws; what! when these clamours are on one side and one's own interest on the other, is it not permitted to contemn the uproar, to let all these people "vociferate" unheeded, to trample on

all obstacles, and to go naturally where one sees one's fortune, one's pleasures, and the fine palace in Faubourg Saint-Honoré? A pretty idea, truly! What! one is to trouble one's self to remember that, some three or four years ago, one cannot now say when or where, one day in December, when it was very cold, and rained, and one felt it desirable to leave a chamber in an inn for a better lodging, one pronounced, one no longer knows in relation to what, in an indifferently lighted room,

before eight or nine hundred imbeciles who chose to believe what one said, these eight letters, "I swear it!" What! when one is meditating "a great act," one must needs waste one's time asking one's self what will be the result of the course that he is taking! must worry because one man may be eaten up by vermin in the casemates, or another rot in the hulks, or another die at Cayenne; or because another was killed with bayonets, or another crushed by paving-stones, or another idiot enough to get himself shot; because these are ruined, and those exiled; and because all these men whom one ruins, or shoots, or exiles, or massacres, who rot in the hulks, or die in the hold, or in Africa, are, forsooth, honest men who have done their duty! Is one to be stopped by such stuff as that? What! one has necessities, one has no money, one is a prince, chance places power in one's hands, one makes use of it, one authorizes lotteries, one exhibits ingots of gold in the Passage Jouffroy; everybody opens his pocket, one takes all one can out of it, one shares what one gets with one's friends, with the devoted comrades to whom one owes gratitude; and because there comes a moment when public indiscretion meddles in the matter, when that infamous liberty of the press seeks to fathom the mystery, and justice fancies that it is its business, one must needs leave the Éysée, lay down the power, and take one's seat, like an ass, between two gendarmes on the prisoners' bench in the sixth chamber! Nonsense! Isn't it much more simple to take one's seat on the throne of the emperor? Isn't it much more simple to destroy the liberty of the press? Isn't it much more simple to crush justice? Isn't it a much shorter way to trample the judges under foot? Indeed, they ask nothing better! they are quite

ready! And this is not permitted! This is forbidden!

Yes, Monseigneur, this is forbidden!

Who opposes it? Who does not permit it? Who forbids it?

Monsieur Bonaparte, you are master, you have eight millions of votes for your crimes, and twelve millions of francs for your pleasures; you have a Senate, with M. Sibour in it; you have armies, cannon, fortresses, Troplongs flat on their bellies, and Baroches on all fours; you are a despot; you are all-potent; some one lost in the obscurity, unknown, a mere passer-by, rises before you, and says to you: "Thou shalt not do this."

This some one, this voice that speaks in the darkness, not seen but heard, this passer-by, this unknown, this insolent intruder, is the human conscience.

That is what the human conscience is.

It is some one, I repeat, whom one sees not, and who is stronger than an army, more numerous than seven million five hundred thousand votes, more lofty than a senate, more religious than an archbishop, more learned in law than M. Troplong, more prompt to anticipate any sort of justice than M. Baroche, and who thee-and-thous your majesty.

VII

AN EXPLANATION FOR M. BONAPARTE'S BENEFIT

Let us go a little deeper into all these novelties.

Pray learn this also, M. Bonaparte: that which distinguishes man from brute, is the notion of good and of evil--of that good and that evil of which I was speaking to you just now.

There is the abyss.

The animal is a complete being. That which constitutes the grandeur of man is the being incomplete; it is the feeling one's self to be many degrees removed from completion; it is the perceiving something on that side of one's self, something on this side. This something is mystery; it is--to make use of those feeble human expressions which always come one by one, and never express more than one side of things--the moral world. This moral world man bathes in, as much as, more than, in the material world. He lives in what he feels, more than in what he sees. Creation may beset him, want may assail him, pleasure may tempt him, the beast within him may torment him, but all in vain; a sort of incessant aspiration toward another world impels him irresistibly beyond creation, beyond want, beyond pleasure, beyond the beast. He glimpses everywhere, at every moment, the upper world, and he fills his

soul with that vision, and regulates his actions by it. He does not feel complete in this life on earth. He bears within him, so to speak, a mysterious pattern of the anterior and ulterior world--the perfect world--with which he is incessantly, and despite himself, comparing the imperfect world, and himself, and his infirmities, and his appetites, and his passions, and his actions. When he perceives that he is approaching this ideal pattern, he is overjoyed; when he sees that he is receding from it, he is sad. He understands thoroughly that there is nothing useless or superfluous in this world, nothing which does not proceed from something, and which does not lead to something. The just, the unjust, good, evil, good works, evil deeds, fall into the abyss, but are not lost there, passing on into the infinite, for the benefit or the burden of those who have accomplished them. After death they are collected, and the sum-total cast up. To disappear, to vanish, to be annihilated, to cease to be, is no more possible for the moral atom than for the material atom. Hence, in man, that great twofold sense of his liberty and of his responsibility. It is given him to be good or to be bad. It is an account that will have to be settled. He may be guilty, and therein--a striking circumstance upon which I dwell--consists his grandeur. There is nothing similar for the brute. With the brute it is all instinct: to drink when thirsty, to eat when hungry, to procreate in due season, to sleep when the sun sets, to wake when it rises, or vice versa, if it be a beast of night. The brute has only an obscure sort of ego, illumined by no moral light. Its entire law, I repeat, is instinct: instinct, a sort of railway, along which inevitable nature impels the brute. No liberty, therefore, no

responsibility, and consequently no future life. The brute does neither evil nor good; it is wholly ignorant. Even the tiger is innocent.

If, perchance, you were innocent as the tiger!

At certain moments one is tempted to believe that, having no warning voice within, any more than the tiger, you have no more sense of responsibility.

Really, at times I pity you. Who knows? perhaps after all, you are only a miserable blind force!

Louis Bonaparte, you have not the notion of good and evil. You are, perhaps, the only man of all mankind who has not that notion. This gives you a start over the human race. Yes, you are formidable. It is that which constitutes your genius, it is said; I admit that, at all events, it is that which at this moment constitutes your power.

But do you know what results from this sort of power? Possession, yes; right, no.

Crime essays to deceive history as to its true name; it says, "I am success."--Thou art crime!

You are crowned and masked. Down with the mask! Down with the crown!

Ah! you are wasting your trouble, you are wasting your appeals to the people, your plebiscites, your ballots, your footings, your executive committees proclaiming the sum total, your red or green banners, with these figures in gold paper,--7,500,000! You will derive no advantage from this elaborate mise-en-scène. There are things about which universal sentiment is not to be gulled. The human race, taken as a whole, is an honest man.

Even by those about you you are judged. There is not one of your domestics, whether in gold lace or in embroidered coat, valet of the stable, or valet of the Senate, who does not say beneath his breath that which I say aloud. What I proclaim, they whisper; that is the only difference. You are omnipotent, they bend the knee, that is all. They salute you, their brows burning with shame.

They feel that they are base, but they know that you are infamous.

Come, since you are by way of hunting those whom you call "the rebels of December," since it is on them you are setting your hounds, since you have instituted a Maupas, and created a ministry of police specially for that purpose, I denounce to you that rebel, that recusant, that insurgent, every man's conscience.

You give money, but 'tis the hand receives it, not the conscience. Conscience! while you are about it, inscribe it on your lists of exiles. It is an obstinate opponent, pertinacious, persistent,

inflexible, making a disturbance everywhere. Drive it out of France. You will be at ease then.

Would you like to know what it calls you, even among your friends? Would you like to know in what terms an honourable chevalier of Saint-Louis, an octogenarian, a great antagonist of "demagogues," and a partisan of yours, cast his vote for you on the 20th of December? "He is a scoundrel," said he, "but a necessary scoundrel."

No! there are no necessary scoundrels. No! crime is never useful! No! crime is never a good. Society saved by treason! Blasphemy! we must leave it to the archbishops to say these things. Nothing good has evil for its basis. The just God does not impose on mankind the necessity for scoundrels. There is nothing necessary in this world but justice and truth. Had that venerable man thought less of life and more of the tomb, he would have seen this. Such a remark is surprising on the part of one advanced in years, for there is a light from God which enlightens souls approaching the tomb, and shows them the truth.

Never do crime and the right come together: on the day when they should meet, the words of the human tongue would change their meaning, all certainty would vanish, social darkness would supervene. When, by chance, as has been sometimes seen in history, it happens that, for a moment, crime has the force of law, the very foundations of humanity tremble. "Jusque datum sceleri!" exclaims Lucan, and that line traverses history, like a cry of horror.

Therefore, and by the admission of your voters, you are a scoundrel. I omit the word necessary. Make the best of this situation.

"Well, be it so," you say. "But that is precisely the case in question: one procures 'absolution' by universal suffrage."

Impossible.

What! impossible?

Yes, impossible. I will put your finger on the impossibility.

VIII

AXIOMS

You are a captain of artillery at Berne, Monsieur Louis Bonaparte; you have necessarily a smattering of algebra and geometry. Here are certain axioms of which you have, probably, some idea.

Two and two make four.

Between two given points, the straight line is the shortest way.

A part is less than the whole.

Now, cause seven million five hundred thousand voters to declare that two and two make five, that the straight line is the longest way, that the whole is less than a part; cause eight millions, ten millions, a hundred millions of voters so to declare, and you will not have advanced a single step.

Well--you will be surprised to hear it--there are axioms in probity, in honesty, in justice, as there are axioms in geometry; and moral truth is no more at the mercy of a vote than is algebraic truth.

The notion of good and evil is insoluble by universal suffrage. It is

not given to a ballot to make the false true, or injustice just. Human conscience is not to be put to the vote.

Now, do you understand?

Look at that lamp, that little obscure light, unnoticed, forgotten in a corner, lost in the darkness. Look at it, admire it. It is hardly visible; it burns in solitude. Make seven million five hundred thousand mouths breathe upon it at once, and you will not extinguish it. You will not even cause the flame to flicker. Cause a hurricane to blow; the flame will continue to ascend, straight and pure, towards Heaven.

That lamp is Conscience.

That flame is the flame which illumines, in the night of exile, the paper on which I now write.

IX

WHEREIN M. BONAPARTE HAS DECEIVED HIMSELF

Thus then, be your figures what they may, counterfeit or genuine, true

or false, extorted or not, it matters little; they who keep their eyes steadfastly on justice say, and will continue to say, that crime is crime, that perjury is perjury, that treachery is treachery, that murder is murder, that blood is blood, that slime is slime, that a scoundrel is a scoundrel, that the man who fancies he is copying Napoleon en petit, is copying Lacenaire en grand; they say that, and they will repeat it, despite your figures, seeing that seven million five hundred thousand votes weigh as nothing against the conscience of the honest man; seeing that ten millions, that a hundred millions of votes, that even the whole of mankind, voting en masse, would count as nothing against that atom, that molecule of God, the soul of the just man; seeing that universal suffrage, which has full sovereignty over political questions, has no jurisdiction over moral questions.

I put aside for the moment, as I said just now, your process of ballotting, with eyes bandaged, gag in mouth, cannon in the streets and squares, sabres drawn, spies swarming, silence and terror leading the voter to the ballot-box as a malefactor to the prison; I put these aside; I assume (I repeat) genuine universal suffrage, free, pure, real; universal suffrage controlling itself, as it ought to do; newspapers in everybody's hands, men and facts questioned and sifted, placards covering the walls, speech everywhere, enlightenment everywhere! Very good! to universal suffrage of this sort submit peace and war, the strength of the army, the public credit, the budget, the public aid, the penalty of death, the irremovability of judges, the

indissolubility of marriages, divorce, the civil and political status of women, free education, the constitution of the commune, the rights of labour, the payment of the clergy, free trade, railways, the currency, colonisation, the fiscal code,--all the problems, the solution of which does not involve its own abdication--for universal suffrage may do everything except abdicate; submit these things to it and it will solve them, not without error, perhaps, but with the grand total of certitude that appertains to human sovereignty; it will solve them masterfully. Now, put to it the question whether John or Peter did well or ill in stealing an apple from an orchard. At that, it halts; it is at fault. Why? Is it because this question is on a lower plane? No: it is because it is on a higher plane. All that constitutes the proper organization of societies, whether you consider them as territory, commune, state, as country, every political, financial, social matter, depends on universal suffrage and obeys it; the smallest atom of the smallest moral question defies it.

The ship is at the mercy of the ocean, the star is not.

It has been said of M. Leverrier and of yourself, Monsieur Bonaparte, that you were the only two men who believed in your star. You do, in fact, believe in your star; you look for it above your head. Well, that star which you seek outside of yourself, other men have within themselves. It shines beneath the vaulted roof of their brain, it enlightens and guides them, it shows them the true outlines of life; it exhibits to them, in the obscurity of human destiny, good and evil, the

just and the unjust, the real and the false, ignominy and honour, honesty and knavery, virtue and crime. This star, without which the human soul is but darkness, is moral truth.

Wanting this light, you have deceived yourself. Your ballot of the 20th of December is, in the eyes of the thinker, merely a sort of monstrous simplicity. You have applied what you call "universal suffrage" to a question to which universal suffrage did not apply. You are not a politician, you are a malefactor. The question what is to be done with you is no concern of universal suffrage.

Yes, simplicity; I insist on the term. The bandit of the Abruzzi, his hands scarcely laved of the blood which still remains under his nails, goes to seek absolution from the priest; you have sought absolution from the ballot, only you have forgotten to confess. And, in saying to the ballot, "Absolve me," you put the muzzle of your pistol to its forehead.

Ah, wretched, desperate man! To "absolve you," as you call it, is beyond the popular power, is beyond all human power.

Listen:

Nero, who had invented the Society of the Tenth-of-December, and who, like yourself, employed it in applauding his comedies, and even, like you again, his tragedies,--Nero, after he had slashed his mother's

belly a hundred times with a dagger, might, like you, have appealed to his universal suffrage, which had this further resemblance to yours, that it was no more impeded by the license of the press; Nero, Pontiff and Emperor, surrounded by judges and priests prostrate at his feet, might have placed one of his bleeding hands on the still warm corpse of the Empress, and raising the other towards Heaven, have called all Olympus to witness that he had not shed that blood, and have adjured his universal suffrage to declare in the face of gods and of men that he, Nero, had not killed that woman; his universal suffrage, working much as yours works, with the same intelligence, and the same liberty, might have affirmed by 7,500,000 votes that the divine Cæsar Nero, Pontiff and Emperor, had done no harm to that woman who lay dead; understand, monsieur, that Nero would not have been "absolved;" it would have sufficed for one voice, one single voice on earth, the humblest and most obscure, to lie raised amid that profound night of the Roman Empire, and to cry: "Nero is a parricide!" for the echo, the eternal echo of the human conscience to repeat for ever, from people to people, and from century to century: "Nero slew his mother!"

Well, that voice which protests in the darkness is mine. I exclaim to-day, and, doubt not that the universal conscience of mankind repeats with me: "Louis Bonaparte has assassinated France! Louis Bonaparte has slain his mother!"

BOOK VII

THE ABSOLUTION:--SECOND PHASE: THE OATH

I

FOR AN OATH, AN OATH AND A HALF

What is Louis Bonaparte? He is perjury personified; he is mental reservation incarnate, felony in flesh and bone; he is a false oath wearing a general's hat, and calling himself Monseigneur.

Well! what is it that he demands of France, this man-ambuscade? An oath.

An oath!

Indeed, after the 20th of December, 1848, and the 2nd of December, 1851, after the inviolate representatives of the people had been arrested and hunted down; after the confiscation of the Republic, after the coup d'état, one might have expected from this malefactor an honest cynical laugh at the oath, and that this Sbrigani would say to

France: "Oh, yes! it is true! I did pledge my word of honour. It is very funny. Let us say no more about such nonsense."

Not so: he requires an oath.

And so, mayors, gendarmes, judges, spies, prefects, generals, sergents-de-ville, gardes champêtres, commissaries of police, magistrates, office-holders, Senators, Councillors of State, legislators, clerks, it is said, it is his will, this idea has passed through his head, he will have it so, it is his good pleasure; lose no time, start off, you to the registrar, you to a confessional, you under the eye of your brigadier, you to the minister, you, Senators, to the Tuileries, to the salon of the marshals, you, spies, to the prefecture of police, you, first presidents and solicitors-general to M. Bonaparte's ante-chamber; hasten in carriages, on foot, on horseback, in gown, in scarf, in court dress, in uniform, gold-laced, bespangled, embroidered, beplumed, with cap on head, ruff at the neck, sash around the waist, and sword by the side; place yourselves, some before the plaster bust, others before the man himself; very good, there you are, all of you, none are missing; look him well in the face, reflect, search your conscience, your loyalty, your decency, your religion; take off your glove, raise your hand, and take oath to his perjury, swear fealty to his treason.

Have you done it? Yes! Ah, what a precious farce!

So Louis Bonaparte takes the oath au sérieux. True, he believes in my word, in yours, in ours, in theirs; he believes everybody's word but his own. He demands that everybody about him shall swear, and he orders them to be loyal. It pleases Messalina to be surrounded by virgins. Capital!

He requires all to be honourable; you must understand this, Saint-Arnaud, and you, Maupas, must look upon it as final.

But let us sift things to the bottom; there are oaths and oaths. The oath which freely, solemnly, before the face of God and man, having received a note of confidence from 6,000,000 of citizens, one swears before the National Assembly, to the constitution of his country, to the law, to the people, and to France, that is nothing, it is not binding, one can trifle with it, laugh at it, and some fine day trample it under foot; but the oath that one swears before the cannon's mouth, at the sword's point, under the eye of the police, in order to retain the employment that gives one food, to preserve the rank which is one's property; the oath which, to save one's daily bread and that of one's children, one swears to a villain, a rebel, the violator of the laws, the slaughterer of the Republic, a fugitive from every court, the man who himself has broken his oath--oh! that oath is sacred! Let us not jest.

The oath that we take on the 2nd of December, nephew of the 18th Brumaire, is sacrosanct!

What I admire most is its ineptitude. To receive as so much ready money and coin of good alloy, all those "I swear" of the official commons; not even to think that every scruple has been overcome, and that there cannot be in them all one single word of pure metal! He is both a prince and a traitor! To set the example from the summit of the State, and to imagine that it will not be followed! To sow lead, and expect to reap gold! Not even to perceive that, in such a case, every conscience will model itself on the conscience at the summit, and that the perjury of the prince transmutes all oaths into counterfeit coin.

II

DIFFERENCE IN PRICE

And from whom, then, are oaths required? From that prefect? he has betrayed the state. From that general? he has betrayed his colours. From that magistrate? he has betrayed the law. From all these office-holders? they have betrayed the Republic. A strange thing, and calculated to make the philosopher reflect, is this heap of traitors from which comes this heap of oaths!

Let us, then, dwell upon this charming feature of the 2nd of December:--

M. Bonaparte Louis believes in men's oaths! he believes in the oaths that one takes to him! When M. Rouher takes off his glove, and says, "I swear;" when M. Suin takes off his glove, and says, "I swear;" when M. Troplong places his hand upon his breast, on that spot where is placed the third button of a senator, and the heart of other men, and says, "I swear," M. Bonaparte feels tears in his eyes; deeply moved, he foots up all these loyalties, and contemplates all these creatures with profound emotion. He trusts! he believes! Oh, abyss of candour! Really, the innocence of rogues sometimes elicits the wonder of honest men.

One thing, however, must astonish the kindly-disposed observer and vex

him a little; that is, the capricious and disproportionate manner in which oaths are paid for, the inequality of the prices that M. Bonaparte places on this commodity. For example, M. Vidocq, if he were still chief of police, would receive six thousand francs per annum, M. Baroche receives eighty thousand. It follows, then, that the oath of M. Vidocq would bring him in but 16 francs 66 centimes per day, while the oath of M. Baroche brings him in 222 francs 22 centimes. This is evidently unjust; why such a difference? An oath is an oath; an oath consists of a glove removed and six letters. How much more is there in M. Baroche's oath than in M. Vidocq's?

You will tell me that it is owing to the difference of their functions; that M. Baroche presides in the Council of State, and that M. Vidocq would be merely the chief of police. My answer is, that it is but chance; that probably M. Baroche might excel in directing the police, and that M. Vidocq might very well be President of the Council of State. This is no reason.

Are there then several sorts of oaths? Is it the same as with masses? Are there, in this business also, masses at forty sous, and masses at ten sous, which latter, as the priest said, are but "rubbish?" Does the quality of the oath vary with the price? Are there in this commodity of the oath, superfine, extra-fine, fine, and half-fine? Are some oaths better than others? Are they more durable, less adulterated with tow and cotton, better dyed? Are there new oaths, still unused, oaths worn at the knees, patched oaths and ragged oaths? Is there any choice? Let

us know it. The thing is worth while. It is we who pay. Having made these observations in the interest of those who are contributors, I humbly beg pardon of M. Vidocq for having made use of his name. I admit that I had no right to do so. Besides, M. Vidocq might possibly have refused the oath!

III

OATHS OF SCIENTIFIC AND LITERARY MEN

Here is a priceless detail: M. Bonaparte was desirous that Arago should take the oath. Understand,--astronomy must swear fealty. In a well-regulated state, like France or China, everything is bureaucracy, even science. The mandarin of the Institute depends upon the mandarin of the police. The great parallactic telescope owes homage to M. Bonaparte. An astronomer is a sort of constable of the heavens. The observatory is like any sentry-box. It is necessary to keep an eye on the good God up yonder, who seems sometimes not to submit absolutely to the Constitution of the 14th of January. The heavens are full of unpleasant allusions, and require to be kept in order. The discovery of a new spot on the sun is evidently a case for the censorship. The prediction of a high tide may be seditious. The announcement of an eclipse of the moon may be treason. We are a bit moonstruck at the Élysée. Free astronomy is almost as dangerous as a free press. Who can tell what takes place in those nocturnal tête-à-têtes between Arago and Jupiter? If it were M. Leverrier, well and good!--but a member of the Provincial Government! Beware, M. de Maupas! the Bureau of Longitude must make oath not to conspire with the stars, and especially with those mad artisans of celestial coups d'états which are called comets.

Then, too, as we have already said, one is a fatalist when one is a Bonaparte. Napoleon the Great had his star, Napoleon the Little ought surely to have a nebula; the astronomers are certainly something of astrologers. So take the oath, gentlemen. It goes without saying that Arago refused.

One of the virtues of the oath to Louis Bonaparte is that, according as it is refused or taken, that oath gives you or takes from you merits, aptitudes, talents. You are a professor of Greek or Latin; take the oath, or you are deprived of your chair, and you no longer know Greek or Latin. You are a professor of rhetoric; take the oath, or tremble; the story of Theramenes and the dream of Athalie are interdicted; you shall wander about them for the rest of your days, and never again be permitted to enter. You are a professor of philosophy; take the oath to M. Bonaparte,--if not, you become incapable of understanding the mysteries of the human conscience, and of explaining them to young men. You are a professor of medicine; take the oath,--if not, you no longer know how to feel the pulse of a feverish patient. But if the good professors depart, will there be any more good pupils? Particularly in medicine, this is a serious matter. What is to become of the sick? The sick? as if we cared about the sick! The important thing is that medicine should take the oath to M. Bonaparte. For it comes to this: either the seven million five hundred thousand votes have no sense, or it is evident that it would be better to have your leg amputated by an ass who has taken the oath, than by a refractory Dupuytren.

Ah! one would fain jest, but all this makes the heart sad. Are you a young and generous spirit, like Deschanel; a sane and upright intellect, like Despois; a serious and powerful mind, like Jacques; an eminent writer, a popular historian, like Michelet--take the oath, or die of hunger.

They refuse! The darkness and silence, in which they stoically seek refuge, know the rest.

IV

CURIOSITIES OF THE BUSINESS

All morality is denied by such an oath, the cup of shame drained to the dregs, all decency outraged. There is no reason why one should not see unheard-of things, and one sees them. In some towns, Evreux for example, the judges who have taken the oath sit in judgment on the judges who have refused it;[1] dishonour seated on the bench places honour at the bar; the sold conscience "reproves" the upright conscience; the courtesan lashes the virgin.

[1] The President of the Tribunal of Commerce at Evreux refused to take the oath. Let us listen to the Moniteur:

> "M. Verney, late President of the Tribunal of Commerce at Evreux, was cited to appear, on Thursday last, before the correctional judges of Evreux, on account of facts that took place on the 29th of April last, within the consular auditory.
>
> "M. Verney is accused of inciting to hatred and treason against the Government."

The judges of first instance discharged M. Verney, and "reproved"

him. Appeal a minima by the "procureur of the Republic."
Sentence of the Court of Appeal of Rouen:--

"The Court,--

"Whereas the prosecution has no other object than the repression of the crime of inciting to hatred and scorn of the Government;

"Whereas that offence would result, according to the prosecution, from the last paragraph of the letter of M. Verney to the procureur of the Republic at Evreux, on the 26th of April last, which is thus worded:--

"'But it would be too serious a matter to barter any longer what we conceive to be right. The magistracy itself will owe us thanks for not exposing the ermine of the judge to succumb under the formality which your dispatch announces.'

"Whereas, however blamable the conduct of Verney has been in this affair, the Court cannot see in that portion of the letter, the offence of inciting to hatred and contempt of the Government, since the order by which force was to be employed to prevent the judges from taking their seats who had refused to take the oaths, did not emanate from the Government;

"Whereas there is no ground, therefore, for applying to him the penal code;

"For these reasons,

"Confirms the judgment without costs."

The Court of Appeal at Rouen has for its first President, M. Franck-Carré, formerly procureur-general to the Court of Peers in the prosecution at Boulogne; the same who addressed to M. Louis Bonaparte these words: "You have caused corruption to be employed and money to be distributed to buy treason."

With this oath one journeys from surprise to surprise. Nicolet was but a booby compared to M. Bonaparte. When M. Bonaparte had had the circuit made of his valets, his accomplices, and his victims, and had pocketed all their oaths, he turned good-naturedly to the valiant chiefs of the African army, and "spoke to them nearly in these words:" "By the bye, you are aware I caused you to be arrested at night, by my men, when you were in your beds; my spies broke into your domiciles, sword in hand; I have in fact decorated them for that feat of arms; I caused you to be threatened with the gag if you uttered a cry; my agents took you by the collar; I have had you placed in a felon's cell at Mazas, and in my own dungeon at Ham; your hands still bear the marks of the cords with which I bound you. Bonjour, messieurs, may God have you in his keeping; swear fealty to me." Changarnier fixed his eyes upon him, and made answer:

"No, traitor!" Bedeau replied: "No, forger!" Lamoricière replied: "No, perjurer!" Leflô answered: "No, bandit!" Charras struck him in the face.

At this moment M. Bonaparte's face is red, not from shame, but from the blow.

There is one other variety of the oath. In the fortresses, in the prisons, in the hulks, in the jails of Africa, there are thousands of prisoners. Who are those prisoners? We have said,--republicans, patriots, soldiers of the law, innocent men, martyrs. Their sufferings have already been proclaimed by generous voices, and one has a glimpse of the truth. In our special volume on the 2nd of December, it shall be our task to tear asunder the veil. Do you wish to know what is taking place?--Sometimes, when endurance is at an end and strength exhausted, bending beneath the weight of misery, without shoes, without bread, without clothing, without a shirt, consumed by fever, devoured by vermin, poor artisans torn from their workshops, poor husbandmen forcibly taken from the plough, weeping for a wife, a mother, children, a family widowed or orphaned, also without bread and perhaps without shelter, overdone, ill, dying, despairing,--some of these wretched beings succumb, and consent to "ask for pardon!" Then a letter is presented for their signature, all written and addressed: "To Monseigneur le Prince-President." We give publicity to this letter, as Sieur Quentin Bauchart avows it.

"I, the undersigned, declare upon my honour, that I accept most thankfully the pardon offered me by Prince Louis-Napoleon, and I engage never to become a member of any secret society, to respect the law, and be faithful to the Government that the country has chosen by the votes of the 20th and 21st of December, 1851."

Let not the meaning of this grave performance be misunderstood. This is not clemency granted, it is clemency implored. This formula: "Ask us for your pardon," means: "Grant us our pardon." The murderer, leaning over his victim and with his knife raised, cries: "I have waylaid you, seized you, hurled you to the earth, despoiled and robbed you, passed my knife through your body, and now you are under my feet, your blood is oozing from twenty wounds; say you repent, and I will not finish you." This repentance exacted by a criminal from an innocent man, is nothing else than the outward form which his inward remorse assumes. He fancies that he is thus safeguarded against his own criminality. Whatever expedient he may adopt to deaden his feelings, although he may be for ever ringing in his own ears the seven million five hundred thousand little bells of his plebiscite, the man of the coup d'état reflects at times; he catches vague glimpses of a tomorrow, and struggles against the inevitable future. He must have legal purgation, discharge, release from custody, quittance. He exacts it from the vanquished, and at need puts them to the torture, to obtain it. Louis Bonaparte knows that there exists, in the conscience of every prisoner, of every exile, of every man proscribed, a tribunal, and that that tribunal is beginning his prosecution; he trembles, the executioner

feels a secret dread of his victim; and, under pretext of a pardon accorded by him to that victim, he forces his judges to sign his acquittal.

Thus he hopes to deceive France, which, too, is a living conscience and a watchful tribunal; and that when the hour for passing sentence shall strike, seeing that he has been absolved by his victims, she will pardon him. He deceives himself. Let him cut a hole in the wall on another side, he will not escape through that one.

V

THE 5TH OF APRIL, 1852

On the 5th of April, 1852, this is what was witnessed at the Tuileries. About eight in the evening, the ante-chamber was filled with men in scarlet robes, grave and majestic, speaking with subdued voices, holding in their hands black velvet caps, bedecked with gold lace; most of them were white-haired. These were the presidents and councillors of the Court of Cassation, the first presidents of the Courts of Appeal, and the procureurs-general: all the superior magistracy of France. These persons were kept waiting in the ante-chamber. An aide-de-camp ushered them in and left them there. A quarter of an hour passed, half an hour, an hour; they wandered up and down the room, conversing, looking at their watches, awaiting the ringing of the bell. After more than an hour of tedious waiting they perceived that they had not even chairs to sit upon. One of them, M. Troplong, went to another room where the footmen were, and complained. A chair was brought him. At last a folding-door was thrown open; they rushed pell-mell into a salon. There a man in a black coat was standing with his back against the chimney-piece. What errand summoned these men in red robes to this man in a black coat? They came to tender him their oaths. The man was M. Bonaparte. He nodded, and, in return, they bowed to the ground, as is meet. In front of M. Bonaparte, at a short distance, stood his chancellor, M. Abbattucci, late a liberal deputy, now Minister of

Justice to the coup d'état. The ceremony began. M. Abbattucci delivered a discourse, and M. Bonaparte made a speech. The Prince drawled a few contemptuous words, looking at the carpet; he spoke of his "legitimacy;" after which the magistrates took the oath. Each in turn raised his hand. While they were swearing, M. Bonaparte, his back half turned to them, laughed and chatted with his aides-de-camp, who were grouped behind him. When it was over he quite turned his back upon them, and they departed, shaking their heads, humbled and ashamed, not for having done a base deed, but because they had had no chairs in the ante-chamber.

As they were departing, the following dialogue was overheard:--"That," said one of them, "was an oath it was necessary to take." "And," said another, "which it will be necessary to keep." "Yes," said a third, "like the master of the house."

All this is pure servility. Let us proceed.

Among these first presidents who swore fidelity to Louis Bonaparte, were a certain number of former peers of France, who, as such, had passed upon Louis Bonaparte the sentence of perpetual imprisonment. But why should we look back so far? Let us still proceed; here is something even better. Among these magistrates, there were seven individuals, by name, Hardouin, Moreau, Pataille, Cauchy, Delapalme, Grandet, and Quesnault. Prior to the 2nd of December these seven men composed the High Court of Justice; the first, Hardouin, was president,

the last two, deputy-presidents, the other four, judges. These men had received and accepted from the Constitution of 1848 a mandate thus conceived:--

"Article 68. Every measure by which the President of the Republic shall dissolve the National Assembly, prorogue it or impede the performance of its decrees, is high treason.

"The judges of the High Court shall thereupon immediately assemble, under penalty of forfeiture; they shall convoke the jurors in such place as they shall appoint, to proceed to the trial of the President and his accomplices; they shall themselves appoint magistrates to perform the functions of the national administration."

On the 2nd of December, in the face of the flagrant felony, they had begun the trial, and appointed a procureur-general, M. Renouard, who had accepted the office, to proceed against Louis Bonaparte on the charge of high treason. Let us add the name of Renouard to the seven. On the 5th of April, they were, all eight, present in the antechamber of Louis Bonaparte; we have just seen what was their business there.

Here it is impossible not to pause.

There are certain melancholy thoughts upon which one must have the strength to insist; there are sinks of ignominy we must have the courage to sound.

Cast your eyes upon that man. He was born at hazard, by misfortune, in a hovel, in a cellar, in a cave, no one knows where, no one knows of whom. He came out of the dust to fall into the mire. He had only so much father and mother as was necessary for his birth, after which all shrank from him. He has crawled on as best he could. He grew up bare-footed, bare-headed, in rags, with no idea why he was living. He can neither read nor write, nor does he know that there are laws above him; he scarcely knows there is a heaven. He has no home, no family, no creed, no book. He is a blind soul. His intellect has never opened, for intellect opens only to light as flowers open only to the day, and he dwells in the dark. However, he must eat. Society has made him a brute beast, hunger makes him a wild beast. He lies in wait for travellers on the outskirts of a wood, and robs them of their purses. He is caught, and sent to the galleys. So far, so good.

Now look at this other man; it is no longer the red cap, it is the red robe. He believes in God, reads Nicole, is a Jansenist, devout, goes to confession, takes the sacrament. He is well born, as they say, wants nothing, nor has ever wanted anything; his parents have lavished everything on his youth--trouble, instruction, advice, Greek and Latin, masters in every science. He is a grave and scrupulous personage; therefore he has been made a magistrate. Seeing this man pass his days in meditating upon all the great texts, both sacred and profane; in the study of the law, in the practice of religion, in the contemplation of the just and unjust, society placed in his keeping all that it holds

most august, most venerable--the book of the law. It made him a judge, and the punisher of treason. It said to him: "A day may come, an hour may strike, when the chief by physical force shall trample under his foot both the law and the rights of man; then you, man of justice, you will arise, and smite with your rod the man of power."--For that purpose, and in expectation of that perilous and supreme day, it lavishes wealth upon him, and clothes him in purple and ermine. That day arrives, that hour, unique, pitiless, and solemn, that supreme hour of duty; the man in the red gown begins to stutter the words of the law; suddenly he perceives that it is not the cause of justice that prevails, but that treason carries the day. Whereupon he, the man who has passed his life in imbuing himself with the pure and holy light of the law, that man who is nothing unless he be the contemner of unmerited success, that lettered, scrupulous, religious man, that judge in whose keeping the law has been placed, and, in some sort, the conscience of the state, turns towards triumphant perjury, and with the same lips, the same voice in which, if this traitor had been vanquished, he would have said:

"Criminal, I sentence you to the galleys," he says:

"Monseigneur, I swear fealty to you."

Now take a balance, place in one scale the judge, in the other the felon, and tell me which side kicks the beam.

VI

EVERYWHERE THE OATH

Such are the things we have beheld in France, on the occasion of the oath to M. Bonaparte. Men have sworn here, there, everywhere; at Paris, in the provinces, in the north, in the south, in the cast, and in the west. There was in France, during a whole month, a tableau of hands raised, of arms outstretched, and the final chorus was: "We swear," etc. The ministers placed their oaths in the hands of the President, the prefects in those of ministers, and the mob in those of the prefects. What does M. Bonaparte do with all these oaths? Is he making a collection of them? Where does he put them? It has been remarked that none but unpaid functionaries have refused the oath, the councillors-general, for instance. The fact is, that the oath has been taken to the budget. We heard on the 29th of March a senator exclaim, in a loud voice, against the omission of his name, which was, so to speak, vicarious modesty. M. Sibour, Archbishop of Paris swore;[1] M. Frank Carré, procureur-general to the Court of Peers in the affair of Boulogne, swore;[2] M. Dupin, President of the National Assembly on the 2nd of December, swore[3]--O, my God! it is enough to make one wring one's hands for shame. An oath, however, is a sacred obligation.

[1] As Senator.

[2] As First President of the Court of Appeal at Rouen.

[3] As a member of his Municipal Council.

The man who takes an oath ceases to be a man, he becomes an altar, upon which God descends. Man, that infirmity, that shadow, that atom, that grain of sand, that drop of water, that tear dropped from the eye of destiny; man, so little, so weak, so uncertain, so ignorant, so restless; man, who lives in trouble and in doubt, knowing little of yesterday, and nothing of to-morrow, seeing just enough of his road to place his foot before him, and then nothing but darkness; who trembles if he looks forward, is sad if he looks back; man, enveloped in those immensities and those obscurities, time, space, and being, and lost in them; having an abyss within him, his soul; and an abyss without, heaven; man, who at certain hours bows his head with a sacred horror, under every force of nature, under the roar of the sea, under the rustling of the trees, under the shadow of the mountain, under the twinkling of the stars; man, who can not lift his head by day, without being blinded by the light, nor by night, without being crushed by the infinite; man, who knows nothing, who sees nothing, who hears nothing, who may be swept away to-morrow, to-day, now, by the waves that pass, by the breeze that blows, by the pebble that falls, by the hour that strikes; on a certain day, man, that trembling, stumbling being, the plaything of chance and of the passing moment, rises suddenly before the riddle that is called human life, feels that there is within him something greater than this abyss,--honour! something stronger than

fatality,--virtue! something more mysterious than the unknown,--faith! and alone, feeble and naked, he says to all this formidable mystery that envelopes him: "Do with me what you will, but I will do this, and I will not do that;" and proud, tranquil, serene, creating by a word a fixed point in the sombre instability that fills the horizon, as the mariner casts his anchor in the sea, he casts his oath into the future.

O plighted oath! admirable confidence of the just man in himself! Sublime permission given by God to man, to affirm! It is all over. There are no more of them. Another of the soul's splendours that has vanished!