Napoleon the Little

by Victor Hugo

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THE WORKS OF VICTOR HUGO Handy Library Edition NAPOLEON THE LITTLE

Street scene with a man at the top of the stairs speaking to the crowd

THE WORKS OF VICTOR HUGO

NAPOLEON THE LITTLE

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Ornate title page

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NAPOLEON THE LITTLE

BOOK I

I

December 20, 1848

On Thursday, December 20, 1848, the Constituent Assembly, being in session,

surrounded at that moment by an imposing display of troops, heard the report of the Representative Waldeck-Rousseau, read on behalf of the committee which had been appointed to scrutinize the votes in the election of President of the Republic; a report in which general attention had marked this phrase, which embodied its whole idea: "It is the seal of its inviolable authority which the nation, by this admirable application of the fundamental law, itself affixes on the Constitution, to render it sacred and inviolable." Amid the profound silence of the nine hundred representatives, of whom almost the entire number was assembled, the President of the National Constituent Assembly, Armaud Marrast, rose and said:—

"In the name of the French people,

"Whereas Citizen Charles-Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte, born at Paris, fulfils the conditions of eligibility prescribed by Article 44 of the Constitution;

"Whereas in the ballot cast throughout the extent of the territory of the Republic, for the election of President, he has received an absolute majority of votes;

"By virtue of Articles 47 and 48 of the Constitution, the National Assembly proclaims him President of the Republic from this present day until the second Sunday in May, 1852."

There was a general movement on all the benches, and in the galleries filled with the public; the President of the Constituent Assembly added:

"According to the terms of the decree, I invite the Citizen President of the Republic to ascend the tribune, and to take the oath."

The representatives who crowded the right lobby returned to their places and left the passage free. It was about four in the afternoon, it was growing dark, and the immense hall of the Assembly having become involved in gloom, the chandeliers were lowered from the ceiling, and the messengers placed lamps on the tribune. The President made a sign, the door on the right opened, and there was seen to enter the hall, and rapidly ascend the tribune, a man still young, attired in black, having on his

breast the badge and riband of the Legion of Honour.

All eyes were turned towards this man. A pallid face, its bony emaciated angles thrown into bold relief by the shaded lamps, a nose large and long, moustaches, a curled lock of hair above a narrow forehead, eyes small and dull, and with a timid and uneasy manner, bearing no resemblance to the Emperor,—this man was Citizen Charles-Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte.

During the murmurs which greeted his entrance, he remained for some instants, his right hand in the breast of his buttoned coat, erect and motionless on the tribune, the pediment of which bore these dates: February 22, 23, 24; and above which were inscribed these three words: Liberty, Equality, Fraternity.

Before being elected President of the Republic, Charles-Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte had been a representative of the people for several months, and though he had rarely attended a whole sitting, he had been frequently seen in the seat he had selected, on the upper benches of the Left, in the fifth row in the zone commonly called the Mountain, behind his old preceptor, Representative Vieillard. This man, then, was no new figure in the Assembly, yet his entrance on this occasion produced a profound sensation. It was to all, to his friends as to his foes, the future that entered, an unknown future. Amid the immense murmur, produced by the whispered words of all present, his name passed from mouth to mouth, coupled with most diverse opinions. His antagonists detailed his adventures, his coups-de-main, Strasburg, Boulogne, the tame eagle, and the piece of meat in the little hat. His friends dwelt upon his exile, his proscription, his imprisonment, an excellent work of his on the artillery, his writings at Ham, which were marked, to a certain degree, with the liberal, democratic, and socialistic spirit, the maturity of the more sober age at which he had now arrived; and to those who recalled his follies, they recalled his misfortunes.

General Cavaignac, who, not having been elected President, had just resigned his

power into the hands of the Assembly, with that tranquil laconism which befits republics, was seated in his customary place at the head of the ministerial bench, on the left of the tribune, and observed in silence, with folded arms, this installation of the new man.

At length silence was restored, the President of the Assembly struck the table before him several times with his wooden knife, and then, the last murmurs having subsided, said:

"I will now read the form of the oath."

There was something almost religious about that moment. The Assembly was no longer an Assembly, it was a temple. The immense significance of the oath was rendered still more impressive by the circumstance that it was the only oath taken throughout the whole territory of the Republic. February had, and rightly, abolished the political oath, and the Constitution had, as rightly, retained only the oath of the President. This oath possessed the double character of necessity and of grandeur. It was an oath taken by the executive, the subordinate power, to the legislative, the superior power; it was even more than this—in contrast to the monarchical fiction by which the people take the oath to the man invested with power, it was the man invested with power who took the oath to the people. The President, functionary and servant, swore fidelity to the sovereign people. Bending before the national majesty, manifest in the omnipotent Assembly, he received from the Assembly the Constitution, and swore obedience to it. The representatives were inviolable, and he was not. We repeat it: a citizen responsible to all the citizens, he was, of the whole nation, the only man so bound. Hence, in this oath, sole and supreme, there was a solemnity which went to the heart. He who writes these lines was present in his place in the Assembly, on the day this oath was taken; he is one of those who, in the face of the civilized world called to bear witness, received this oath in the name of the people, and who have it still in their hands. Thus it runs:—

"In presence of God, and before the French people, represented by the National Assembly, I swear to remain faithful to the democratic republic, one and indivisible, and to fulfil all the duties imposed upon me by the Constitution."

The President of the Assembly, standing, read this majestic formula; then, before the whole Assembly, breathlessly silent and attentive, intensely expectant, Citizen Charles-Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte, raising his right hand, said, in a firm, loud voice:

"I swear it!"

Representative Boulay (de la Meurthe), since Vice-President of the Republic, who had known Charles-Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte from his childhood, exclaimed: "He is an honest man, he will keep his oath."

The President of the Assembly, still standing, proceeded thus (I quote verbatim the words recorded in the Moniteur): "We call God and man to witness the oath which has just been sworn. The National Assembly receives that oath, orders it to be transcribed upon its records, printed in the Moniteur, and published in the same manner as legislative acts."

It seemed that the ceremony was now at an end, and we imagined that Citizen Charles-Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte, thenceforth, until the second Sunday in May, 1852, President of the Republic, would descend from the tribune. But he did not; he felt a magnanimous impulse to bind himself still more rigorously, if possible; to add something to the oath which the Constitution demanded from him, in order to show how largely the oath was free and spontaneous. He asked permission to address the Assembly. "You have the floor," said the President of the Assembly.

There was more profound silence, and closer attention than before.

Citizen Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte unfolded a paper and read a speech. In this speech, having announced and installed the ministry appointed by him, he said:—

"I desire, in common with yourselves, citizen representatives, to consolidate society

upon its true basis, to establish democratic institutions, and earnestly to seek every means calculated to relieve the sufferings of the generous and intelligent people who have just bestowed on me so signal a proof of their confidence."[1]

He then thanked his predecessor in the executive power, the same man who, later, was able to say these noble words: "I did not fall from power, I descended from it;" and he glorified him in these terms:—

"The new administration, in entering upon its duties, is bound to thank that which preceded it for the efforts it has made to transmit the executive power intact, and to maintain public tranquillity.[2]

"The conduct of the Honourable General Cavaignac has been worthy of the manliness of his character, and of that sentiment of duty which is the first quality requisite in the chief of the State."[3]

The Assembly cheered these words, but that which especially struck every mind, which was profoundly graven in every memory, which found its echo in every honest heart, was the declaration, the wholly spontaneous declaration, we repeat, with which he began his address.

"The suffrages of the nation, and the oath I have just taken, command my future conduct. My duty is clearly marked. I will fulfil it as a man of honour.

"I shall regard as the enemies of the country all who seek to change, by illegal means, that which all France has established."

When he had done speaking, the Constituent Assembly rose, and uttered as with a single voice, the exclamation: "Long live the Republic!"

Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte descended from the tribune, went up to General Cavaignac, and offered him his hand. The general, for a few instants, hesitated to accept the grasp. All who had just heard the words of Louis Bonaparte, pronounced in a tone so instinct with good faith, blamed the general for his hesitation.

The Constitution to which Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte took oath on December 20, 1848, "in the face of God and man," contained, among other articles, these:—

"Article 36. The representatives of the people are inviolable.

"Article 37. They may not be arrested on a criminal charge unless taken in the fact, or prosecuted without the permission of the Assembly first obtained.

"Article 68. Every act by which the President of the Republic dissolves the National Assembly, prorogues it, or impedes the execution of its decrees, is high treason.

"By such act, of itself, the President forfeits his office, the citizens are bound to refuse him obedience, and the executive power passes, of absolute right, to the National Assembly. The judges of the Supreme 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; and they shall themselves appoint magistrates who shall proceed to execute the functions of the ministry."

In less than three years after this memorable day, on the 2nd of December, 1851, at daybreak, there might be read on all the street corners in Paris, this placard:—

"In the name of the French people, the President of the Republic:

"Decrees—

"Article 1. The National Assembly is dissolved.

"Article 2. Universal suffrage is re-established. The law of the 31st of May is repealed.

"Article 3. The French people are convoked in their comitia.

"Article 4. A state of siege is decreed throughout the first military division.

"Article 5. The Council of State is dissolved.

"Article 6. The Minister of the Interior is charged with the execution of this decree.

"Done at the Palace of the Élysée, December 2, 1851.

"Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte."

At the same time Paris learned that fifteen of the inviolable representatives of the people had been arrested in their homes, during the night, by order of Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte.

1 (Return) "Hear! Hear!"—Moniteur.

2 (Return) "Murmurs of assent."—Moniteur.

3 (Return) "Renewed murmurs of assent."—Moniteur.

II

MISSION OF THE REPRESENTATIVES

Those who, as representatives of the people, received, in trust for the people, the oath of the 20th of December, 1848, those, especially who, being twice invested with the confidence of the nation, had as representatives heard that oath sworn, and as legislators had seen it violated, had assumed, with their writ of summons, two duties. The first of these was, on the day when that oath should be violated, to rise in their places, to present their breasts to the enemy, without calculating either his numbers or his strength, to shelter with their bodies the sovereignty of the people and as a means to combat and cast down the usurper, to grasp every sort of weapon, from the law found in the code, to the paving stone that one picks up in the street. The second duty was, after having accepted the combat and all its chances to accept proscription and all its miseries, to stand eternally erect before the traitor, his oath in their hands, to forget their personal sufferings, their private sorrows, their families dispersed and maltreated, their fortunes destroyed, their affections crushed, their bleeding hearts; to forget themselves, and to feel thenceforth but a single wound—the wound of France to cry aloud for justice; never to suffer themselves to be appeased, never to relent, but to be implacable; to seize the despicable perjurer, crowned though he were, if not with the hand of the law, at least with the pincers of truth, and to heat red-hot in the fire of history all the letters of his oath, and brand

them on his face.

He who writes these lines is one of those who did not shrink, on the 2nd of December, from the utmost effort to accomplish the first of these two great duties; in publishing this book he performs the second.

III

NOTICE OF EXPIRATION OF TERM

It is time that the human conscience should awaken.

Ever since the 2nd of December, 1851, a successful ambush, a crime, odious, repulsive, infamous, unprecedented, considering the age in which it was committed, has triumphed and held sway, erecting itself into a theory, pluming itself in the sunlight, making laws, issuing decrees, taking society, religion, and the family under its protection, holding out its hand to the kings of Europe, who accept it, and calling them, "my brother," or "my cousin." This crime no one disputes, not even those who profit by it and live by it; they say simply that it was necessary; not even he who committed it, who says merely that he, the criminal, has been "absolved." This crime contains within itself all crimes, treachery in the conception, perjury in the execution, murder and assassination in the struggle, spoliation, swindling, and robbery in the triumph; this crime draws after it as integral parts of itself, suppression of the laws, violation of constitutional inviolabilities, arbitrary sequestration, confiscation of property, midnight massacres, secret military executions, commissions superseding tribunals, ten thousand citizens banished, forty thousand citizens proscribed, sixty thousand families ruined and despairing. These things are patent. Even so! it is painful to say it, but there is silence concerning this crime; it is there, men see it, touch it, and pass on to their business; shops are opened, the stock jobbers job, Commerce, seated on her packages, rubs her hands, and the moment is close at hand when everybody will regard all that has taken place as a matter of course. He who measures cloth does not hear the yard-stick in his

hand speak to him and say: "'Tis a false measure that governs." He who weighs out a commodity does not hear his scales raise their voice and say: "'Tis a false weight that reigns." A strange order of things surely, that has for its base supreme disorder, the negation of all law! equilibrium resting on iniquity!

Let us add,—what, for that matter is self-evident,—that the author of this crime is a malefactor of the most cynical and lowest description.

At this moment, let all who wear a robe, a scarf, or a uniform; let all those who serve this man, know, if they think themselves the agents of a power, that they deceive themselves; they are the shipmates of a pirate. Ever since the 2nd of December there have been no office-holders in France, there have been only accomplices. The moment has come when every one must take careful account of what he has done, of what he is continuing to do. The gendarmes who arrested those whom the man of Strasburg and Boulogne called "insurgents," arrested the guardians of the Constitution. The judge who tried the combatants of Paris or the provinces, placed in the dock the mainstays of the law. The officer who confined in the hulks the "condemned men," confined the defenders of the Republic and of the State. The general in Africa who imprisoned at Lambassa the transported men bending beneath the sun's fierce heat, shivering with fever, digging in the sun-baked soil a furrow destined to be their grave, that general sequestrated, tortured, assassinated the men of the law. All, generals, officers, gendarmes, judges, are absolutely under forfeiture. They have before them more than innocent men,—heroes! more than victims,—martyrs!

Let them know this, therefore, and let them hasten to act upon the knowledge; let them, at least, break the fetters, draw the bolts, empty the hulks, throw open the jails, since they have not still the courage to grasp the sword. Up, consciences, awake, it is full time!

If law, right, duty, reason, common sense, equity, justice, suffice not, let them think

of the future! If remorse is mute, let responsibility speak!

And let all those who, being landed proprietors, shake the magistrate by the hand; who, being bankers, fête a general; who, being peasants, salute a gendarme; let all those who do not shun the hôtel in which dwells the minister, the house in which dwells the prefect, as he would shun a lazaretto; let all those who, being simple citizens, not functionaries, go to the balls and the banquets of Louis Bonaparte and see not that the black flag waves over the Élysée,—let all these in like manner know that this sort of shame is contagious; if they avoid material complicity, they will not avoid moral complicity.

The crime of the 2nd of December bespatters them.

The present situation, that seems so calm to the unthinking, is most threatening, be sure of that. When public morality is under eclipse, an appalling shadow settles down upon social order.

All guarantees take wing, all supports vanish.

Thenceforth there is not in France a tribunal, nor a court, nor a judge, to render justice and pronounce a sentence, on any subject, against any one, in the name of any one.

Bring before the assizes a malefactor of any sort: the thief will say to the judges: "The chief of the State robbed the Bank of twenty-five millions;" the false witness will say to the judges: "The chief of the State took an oath in the face of God and of man, and that oath he has violated;" the sequestrator will say: "The chief of the State has arrested, and detained against all law, the representatives of the sovereign people;" the swindler will say: "The chief of the State got his election, got power, got the Tuileries, all by swindling;" the forger will say: "The chief of the State forged votes;" the footpad will say: "The chief of the State stole their purses from the Princes of Orleans;" the murderer will say: "The chief of the State shot, sabred, bayonetted, massacred passengers in the streets;" and all together, swindler, forger,

false witness, footpad, robber, assassin, will add: "And you judges, you have been to salute this man, to praise him for having perjured himself, to compliment him for committing forgery, to praise him for stealing and swindling, to thank him for murdering! what do you want of us?"

Assuredly, this is a very serious state of things! to sleep in such a situation, is additional ignominy.

It is time, we repeat, that this monstrous slumber of men's consciences should end. It must not be, after that fearful scandal, the triumph of crime, that a scandal still more fearful should be presented to mankind: the indifference of the civilized world.

If that were to be, history would appear one day as an avenger; and from this very hour, as the wounded lion takes refuge in the solitudes, the just man, veiling his face in presence of this universal degradation, would take refuge in the immensity of public contempt.

IV

MEN WILL AWAKEN

But it is not to be; men will awaken.

The present book has for its sole aim to arouse the sleepers. France must not even adhere to this government with the assent of lethargy; at certain hours, in certain places, under certain shadows, to sleep is to die.

Let us add that at this moment, France—strange to say, but none the less true—knows not what took place on the 2nd of December and subsequently, or knows it imperfectly; and this is her excuse. However, thanks to several generous and courageous publications, the facts are beginning to creep out. This book is intended to bring some of those facts forward, and, if it please God, to present them in their true light. It is important that people should know who and what this M. Bonaparte is. At the present moment, thanks to the suppression of the platform, thanks to the suppression of the press, thanks to the suppression of speech, of

liberty, and of truth,—a suppression which has had for one result the permitting M. Bonaparte to do everything, but which has had at the same time the effect of nullifying all his measures without exception, including the indescribable ballot of the 20th of December,—thanks, we say, to this stifling of all complaints and of all light, no man, no fact wears its true aspect or bears its true name. M. Bonaparte's crime is not a crime, it is called a necessity; M. Bonaparte's ambuscade is not an ambuscade, it is called a defence of public order; M. Bonaparte's robberies are not robberies, they are called measures of state; M. Bonaparte's murders are not murders, they are called public safety; M. Bonaparte's accomplices are not malefactors, they are called magistrates, senators, and councillors of state; M. Bonaparte's adversaries are not the soldiers of the law and of right, they are called Jacquerie, demagogues, communists. In the eyes of France, in the eyes of Europe, the 2nd of December is still masked. This book is a hand issuing from the darkness, and tearing that mask away.

Now, we propose to scrutinize this triumph of order, to depict this government so vigorous, so firm, so well-based, so strong, having on its side a crowd of paltry youths, who have more ambition than boots, dandies and beggars; sustained on the Bourse by Fould the Jew, and in the Church by Montalembert the Catholic; esteemed by women who would fain pass for maids, by men who want to be prefects; resting on a coalition of prostitutions; giving fêtes; making cardinals; wearing white neck-cloths and yellow kid gloves, like Morny, newly varnished like Maupas, freshly brushed like Persigny,—rich, elegant, clean, gilded, joyous, and born in a pool of blood!

Yes, men will awaken!

Yes, men will arouse from that torpor which, to such a people, is shame; and when France does awaken, when she does open her eyes, when she does distinguish, when she does see that which is before her and beside her, she will recoil with a terrible

shudder from the monstrous crime which dared to espouse her in the darkness, and of which she has shared the bed.

Then will the supreme hour strike!

The sceptics smile and insist; they say:

"Hope for nothing. This government, you say, is the shame of France. Be it so, but this same shame is quoted on the Bourse. Hope for nothing. You are poets and dreamers if you hope. Why, look about you: the tribune, the press, intelligence, speech, thought, all that was liberty, has vanished. Yesterday, these things were in motion, alive; to-day, they are petrified. Well, people are satisfied with this petrification, they accommodate themselves to it, make the most of it, conduct business on it, and live as usual. Society goes on, and plenty of worthy folk are well pleased with this state of things. Why do you want to change it, to put an end to it? Don't deceive yourselves, it is all solid, all firm; it is the present and the future."

We are in Russia. The Neva is frozen over. Houses are built on the ice, and heavy chariots roll over it. It is no longer water, but rock. The people go to and fro upon this marble which was once a river. A town is run up, streets are marked out, shops opened; people buy, sell, eat, drink, sleep, light fires on what once was water. You can do whatever you please there. Fear nothing. Laugh, dance; it is more solid than terra firma. Why, it rings beneath the foot, like granite. Long live winter! Long live the ice! This will last till doomsday! And look at the sky: is it day? is it night? what is it? A pale, misty light steals over the snow; one would say that the sun is dying!

No, thou art not dying, O liberty! One of these days, at the moment when thou art least expected, at the very hour when they shall have most utterly forgotten thee, thou wilt rise!—O dazzling vision! the star-like face will suddenly be seen issuing from the earth, resplendent on the horizon! Over all that snow, over all that ice, over that hard, white plain, over that water become rock, over all that wretched winter, thou wilt cast thy arrow of gold, thy ardent and effulgent ray! light, heat, life! And

then, listen! hear you that dull sound? hear you that crashing noise, all-pervading and formidable? 'Tis the breaking up of the ice! 'tis the melting of the Neva! 'tis the river resuming its course! 'tis the water, living, joyous, and terrible, heaving up the hideous, dead ice, and crushing it.—'Twas granite, said you; see, it splinters like glass! 'tis the breaking up of the ice, I tell you: 'tis the truth returning, 'tis progress recommencing, 'tis mankind resuming its march, and uprooting, carrying off, mingling, crushing and drowning in its waves, like the wretched furniture of a submerged hovel, not only the brand-new empire of Louis Bonaparte, but all the structures and all the work of the eternal antique despotism! Look on these things as they are passing. They are vanishing for ever. You will never behold them again. That book, half submerged, is the old code of iniquity; that sinking framework is the throne; that other framework, floating off, is the scaffold!

And for this immense engulfment, this supreme victory of life over death, what was needed? One glance from thee, O sun! one of thy rays, O liberty!

V

BIOGRAPHY

Charles-Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte, born at Paris, on April 20, 1808, is the son of Hortense de Beauharnais, who was married by the Emperor to Louis-Napoleon, King of Holland. In 1831, taking part in the insurrections in Italy, where his elder brother was killed, Louis Bonaparte attempted to overthrow the Papacy. On the 30th of October, 1836, he attempted to overthrow Louis Philippe. He failed at Strasburg, and, being pardoned by the King, he embarked for America, leaving his accomplices behind him to be tried. On the 11th of November he wrote: "The King, in his clemency, has ordered me taken to America;" he declared himself "keenly affected by the King's generosity," adding: "Certainly, we were all culpable towards the government in taking up arms against it, but the greatest culprit was myself;" and he concluded thus: "I was guilty towards the government, and the government has been

generous to me."[1] He returned from America, and went to Switzerland, got himself appointed captain of artillery at Berne, and a citizen of Salenstein, in Thurgovia; equally avoiding, amid the diplomatic complications occasioned by his presence, to call himself a Frenchman, or to avow himself a Swiss, and contenting himself, in order to satisfy the French government, with stating in a letter, dated the 20th of August, 1838, that he lived "almost alone," in the house "where his mother died," and that it was "his firm determination to remain quiet."

On the 6th of August, 1840 he disembarked at Boulogne, parodying the disembarkation at Cannes, with the petit chapeau on his head,[2] carrying a gilt eagle on the end of a flag-staff, and a live eagle in a cage, proclamations galore, and sixty valets, cooks, and grooms, disguised as French soldiers with uniforms bought at the Temple, and buttons of the 42nd Regiment of the Line, made in London. He scatters money among the passers-by in the streets of Boulogne, sticks his hat on the point of his sword, and himself cries, "Vive l'Empereur!" fires a pistol shot at an officer,[3] which hits a soldier and knocks out three of his teeth, and finally runs away. He is taken into custody; there are found on his person 500,000 francs, in gold and bank-notes;[4] the procureur-general, Franck-Carrè, says to him in the Court of Peers: "You have been tampering with the soldiers, and distributing money to purchase treason." The peers sentenced him to perpetual imprisonment. He was confined at Ham. There his mind seemed to take refuge within itself and to mature: he wrote and published some books, instinct, notwithstanding a certain ignorance of France and of the age, with democracy and with progress: "The Extinction of Pauperism," "An Analysis of the Sugar Question," "Napoleonic Ideas," in which he made the Emperor a "humanitarian." In a treatise entitled "Historical Fragments," he wrote thus: "I am a citizen before I am a Bonaparte." Already in 1852, in his book "Political Reveries," he had declared himself a republican. After five years of captivity, he escaped from the prison of Ham, disguised as a mason, and took refuge in England.

February arrived; he hailed the Republic, took his seat as a representative of the people in the Constituent Assembly, mounted the tribune on the 21st of September, 1848, and said: "All my life shall be devoted to strengthening the Republic;" published a manifesto which may be summed up in two lines: liberty, progress, democracy, amnesty, abolition of the decrees of proscription and banishment; was elected President by 5,500,000 votes, solemnly swore allegiance to the Constitution on the 20th of December, 1848, and on the 2nd of December, 1851, shattered that Constitution. In the interval he had destroyed the Roman republic, and had restored in 1849 that Papacy which in 1831 he had essayed to overthrow. He had, besides, taken nobody knows how great a share in the obscure affair of the lottery of the gold ingots. A few weeks previous to the coup d'état, this bag of gold became transparent, and there was visible within it a hand greatly resembling his. On December 2, and the following days, he, the executive power, assailed the legislative power, arrested the representatives, drove out the assembly, dissolved the Council of State, expelled the high court of justice, suppressed the laws, took 25,000,000 francs from the bank, gorged the army with gold, swept the streets of Paris with grape-shot, and terrorized France. Since then, he has proscribed eighty-four representatives of the people; stolen from the Princes of Orleans the property of their father, Louis Philippe, to whom he owed his life; decreed despotism in fifty-eight articles, under the name of Constitution; throttled the Republic; made the sword of France a gag in the mouth of liberty; pawned the railways; picked the pockets of the people; regulated the budget by ukase; transported to Africa and Cayenne ten thousand democrats; banished to Belgium, Spain, Piedmont, Switzerland, and England forty thousand republicans, brought grief to every heart and the blush of shame to every brow.

Louis Bonaparte thinks that he is mounting the steps of a throne; he does not perceive that he is mounting those of a scaffold.

1 (Return) A letter read at the Court of Assize by the advocate Parquin, who, after reading it, exclaimed: "Among the numerous faults of Louis-Napoleon, we may not,

at least, include ingratitude."

2 (Return) Court of Peers. Attempt of the 6th August, 1840, page 140, evidence of Geoffroy, grenadier.

3 (Return) Captain Col. Puygellier, who had said to him: "You are a conspirator and a traitor."

4 (Return) Court of Peers. Evidence of the witness Adam, Mayor of Boulogne.

VI

PORTRAIT

Louis Bonaparte is a man of middle height, cold, pale, slow in his movements, having the air of a person not quite awake. He has published, as we have mentioned before, a moderately esteemed treatise on artillery, and is thought to be acquainted with the handling of cannon. He is a good horseman. He speaks drawlingly, with a slight German accent. His histrionic abilities were displayed at the Eglinton tournament. He has a heavy moustache, covering his smile, like that of the Duke of Alva, and a lifeless eye like that of Charles IX.

Judging him apart from what he calls his "necessary acts," or his "great deeds," he is a vulgar, commonplace personage, puerile, theatrical, and vain. Those persons who are invited to St. Cloud, in the summer, receive with the invitation an order to bring a morning toilette and an evening toilette. He loves finery, display, feathers, embroidery, tinsel and spangles, big words, and grand titles,—everything that makes a noise and glitter, all the glassware of power. In his capacity of cousin to the battle of Austerlitz, he dresses as a general. He cares little about being despised; he contents himself with the appearance of respect.

This man would tarnish the background of history; he absolutely sullies its foreground. Europe smiled when, glancing at Haiti, she saw this white Soulouque appear. But there is now in Europe, in every intelligent mind, abroad as at home, a profound stupor, a feeling, as it were, of personal insult; for the European continent,

whether it will or no, is responsible for France, and whatever abases France humiliates Europe.

Before the 2nd of December, the leaders of the Right used freely to say of Louis Bonaparte: "He is an idiot." They were mistaken. To be sure that brain of his is awry, and has gaps in it, but one can discern here and there thoughts consecutive and concatenate. It is a book whence pages have been torn. Louis Napoleon has a fixed idea; but a fixed idea is not idiocy; he knows what he wants, and he goes straight to it; through justice, through law, through reason, through honour, through humanity, it may be, but straight on none the less.

He is not an idiot. He is a man of another age than our own. He seems absurd and mad, because he is out of his place and time. Transport him to Spain in the 16th century, and Philip II would recognise him; to England, and Henry VIII would smile on him; to Italy, and Cæsar Borgia would jump on his neck. Or even, confine yourself to setting him outside the pale of European civilization,—place him, in 1817, at Janina, and Ali-Tepeleni would grasp him by the hand.

There is in him something of the Middle Ages, and of the Lower Empire. That which he does would have seemed perfectly simple and natural to Michael Ducas, to Romanus Diogenes, to Nicephorus Botoniates, to the Eunuch Narses, to the Vandal Stilico, to Mahomet II, to Alexander VI, to Ezzelino of Padua, as it seems perfectly simple and natural to himself. But he forgets, or knows not, that in the age wherein we live, his actions will have to traverse the great streams of human morality, set free by three centuries of literature and by the French Revolution; and that in this medium, his actions will wear their true aspect, and appear what they really are—hideous.

His partisans—he has some—complacently compare him with his uncle, the first Bonaparte. They say: "The one accomplished the 18th Brumaire, the other the 2nd of December: they are two ambitious men." The first Bonaparte aimed to reconstruct

the Empire of the West, to make Europe his vassal, to dominate the continent by his power, and to dazzle it by his grandeur; to take an arm-chair himself, and give footstools to the kings; to cause history to say: "Nimrod, Cyrus, Alexander, Hannibal, Cæsar, Charlemagne, Napoleon;" to be a master of the world. And so he was. It was for that that he accomplished the 18th Brumaire. This fellow would fain have horses and women, be called Monseigneur, and live luxuriously. It was for this that he accomplished the 2nd of December. Yes: they are both ambitious; the comparison is just.

Let us add, that, like the first Bonaparte, the second also aims to be emperor. But that which somewhat impairs the force of the comparison is, that there is perhaps, a slight difference between conquering an empire and pilfering it.

However this may be, that which is certain and which cannot be veiled, even by the dazzling curtain of glory and of misfortune on which are inscribed: Arcola, Lodi, the Pyramids, Eylau, Friedland, St. Helena—that which is certain, we repeat, is that the 18th Brumaire was a crime, of which the 2nd of December has aggravated the stain on the memory of Napoleon.

M. Louis Bonaparte does not object to have it whispered that he is a socialist. He feels that this gives him a sort of vague field which ambition may exploit. As we have already said, when he was in prison, he passed his time in acquiring a quasi-reputation as a democrat. One fact will describe him. When, being at Ham, he published his book "On the Extinction of Pauperism," a book having apparently for its sole and exclusive aim, to probe the wound of the poverty of the common people, and to suggest the remedy, he sent the book to one of his friends with this note, which we have ourselves seen: "Read this book on pauperism, and tell me if you think it is calculated to do me good."

The great talent of M. Louis Bonaparte is silence. Before the 2nd of December, he had a council of ministers who, being responsible, imagined that they were of some

consequence. The President presided. Never, or scarcely ever, did he take part in their discussions. While MM. Odillon Barrot, Passy, Tocqueville, Dufaure, or Faucher were speaking, he occupied himself, says one of these ministers, in constructing, with intense earnestness, paper dolls, or in drawing men's heads on the documents before him.

To feign death, that is his art. He remains mute and motionless, looking in the opposite direction from his object, until the hour for action comes; then he turns his head, and leaps upon his prey. His policy appears to you abruptly, at some unexpected turning, pistol in hand, like a thief. Up to that point, there is the least possible movement. For one moment, in the course of the three years that have just passed, he was seen face to face with Changarnier, who also, on his part, had a scheme in view. "Ibant obscuri," as Virgil says. France observed, with a certain anxiety, these two men. What was in their minds? Did not the one dream of Cromwell, the other of Monk? Men asked one another these questions as they looked on the two men. In both of them, there was the same attitude of mystery, the same policy of immobility. Bonaparte said not a word, Changarnier made not a gesture; this one did not stir, that one did not breathe; they seemed to be playing the game of which should be the most statuesque.

This silence of his, Louis Bonaparte sometimes breaks; but then he does not speak, he lies. This man lies as other men breathe. He announces an honest intention; be on your guard: he makes an assertion, distrust him: he takes an oath, tremble.

Machiavel made small men; Louis Bonaparte is one of them.

To announce an enormity against which the world protests, to disavow it with indignation, to swear by all the gods, to declare himself an honest man,—and then, at the moment when people are reassured, and laugh at the enormity in question, to execute it. This was his course with respect to the coup d'état, with respect to the decrees of proscription, with respect to the spoliation of the Princes of

Orleans;—and so it will be with the invasion of Belgium, and of Switzerland, and with everything else. It is his way; you may think what you please of it; he employs it; he finds it effective; it is his affair. He will have to settle the matter with history.

You are of his familiar circle; he hints at a project, which seems to you, not immoral,—one does not scrutinize so closely,—but insane and dangerous, and dangerous to himself; you raise objections; he listens, makes no reply, sometimes gives way for a day or two, then resumes his project, and carries out his will.

There is in his table, in his office at the Élysée, a drawer, frequently half open. He takes thence a paper; reads it to a minister; it is a decree. The minister assents or dissents. If he dissents, Louis Bonaparte throws the paper back into the drawer, where there are many other papers, the dreams of an omnipotent man, shuts the drawer, takes out the key, and leaves the room without saying a word. The minister bows and retires, delighted with the deference which has been paid to his opinion. Next morning the decree is in the Moniteur.

Sometimes with the minister's signature.

Thanks to this modus operandi, he has always in his service the unforeseen, a mighty weapon, and encountering in himself no internal obstacle in that which is known to other men as conscience, he pursues his design, through no matter what, no matter how, and attains his goal.

He draws back sometimes, not before the moral effect of his acts, but before their material effect. The decrees of expulsion of eighty-four representatives of the people, published on January 6 in the Moniteur, revolted public sentiment. Fast bound as France was, the shudder was perceptible. The 2nd of December was not long past; there was danger in popular excitement. Louis Bonaparte understood this. Next day a second decree of expulsion was to have appeared, containing eight hundred names. Louis Bonaparte had the proof brought to him from the Moniteur; the list occupied fourteen columns of the official journal. He crumpled the proof,

threw it into the fire, and the decree did not appear. The proscriptions proceeded without a decree.

In his enterprises, he needs aids and collaborators; he needs what he calls "men." Diogenes sought them with a lantern, he seeks them with a banknote in his hand. And finds them. There are certain sides of human nature which produce a particular species of persons, of whom he is the centre, and who group around him ex necessitate, in obedience to that mysterious law of gravitation which regulates the moral being no less than the cosmic atom. To undertake "the act of the 2nd of December,"—to execute it, and to complete it, he needed these men, and he had them. Now he is surrounded by them; these men form his retinue, his court, mingling their radiance with his. At certain epochs of history, there are pleiades of great men; at other epochs, there are pleiades of vagabonds.

But do not confound the epoch, the moment of Louis Bonaparte, with the 19th century: the toadstool sprouts at the foot of the oak, but it is not the oak.

M. Louis Bonaparte has succeeded. He has with him henceforth money, speculation, the Bourse, the Bank, the counting-room, the strong-box, and all those men who pass so readily from one side to the other, when all they have to straddle is shame. He made of M. Changarnier a dupe, of M. Thiers a stop-gap, of M. de Montalembert an accomplice, of power a cavern, of the budget his farm. They are coining at the Mint a medal, called the medal of the 2nd of December, in honour of the manner in which he keeps his oaths. The frigate La Constitution has been debaptized, and is now called L'Élysée. He can, when he chooses, be crowned by M. Sibour,[1] and exchange the couch of the Élysée for the state bed of the Tuileries. Meanwhile, for the last seven months, he has been displaying himself; he has harangued, triumphed, presided at banquets, given balls, danced, reigned, turned himself about in all directions; he has paraded himself, in all his ugliness, in a box at the Opéra; he has had himself dubbed Prince-President; he has distributed standards to the army, and

crosses of honour to the commissioners of police. When there was occasion to select a symbol, he effaced himself and chose the eagle; modesty of a sparrow-hawk!

1 (Return) The Archbishop of Paris.

VII

IN CONTINUATION OF THE PANEGYRICS

He has succeeded. The result is that he has plenty of apotheoses. Of panegyrists he has more than Trajan. One thing, however, has struck me, which is, that among all the qualities that have been discovered in him since the 2nd of December, among all the eulogies that have been addressed to him, there is not one word outside of this circle: adroitness, coolness, daring, address, an affair admirably prepared and conducted, moment well chosen, secret well kept, measures well taken. False keys well made—that's the whole story. When these things have been said, all has been said, except a phrase or two about "clemency;" and yet no one extols the magnanimity of Mandrin, who, sometimes, did not take all the traveller's money, and of Jean l'Ecorcheur, who, sometimes, did not kill all travellers.

In endowing M. Bonaparte with twelve millions of francs, and four millions more for keeping up the châteaux, the Senate—endowed by M. Bonaparte with a million—felicitated M. Bonaparte upon "having saved society," much as a character in a comedy congratulates another on having "saved the money-box."

For myself, I am still seeking in the glorification of M. Bonaparte by his most ardent apologists, any praise that would not exactly befit Cartouche or Poulailler, after a good stroke of business; and I blush sometimes for the French language, and for the name of Napoleon, at the terms, really over-raw, and too thinly veiled, and too appropriate to the facts, in which the magistracy and clergy felicitate this man on having stolen the power of the State by burglarising the Constitution, and on having, by night, evaded his oath.

When all the burglaries and all the robberies which constitute the success of his

policy had been accomplished, he resumed his true name; every one then saw that this man was a Monseigneur. It was M. Fortoul,[1] —to his honour be it said—who first made this discovery.

When one measures the man and finds him so small, and then measures his success, and finds it so enormous, it is impossible that the mind should not experience some surprise. One asks oneself: "How did he do it?" One dissects the adventure and the adventurer, and laying aside the advantage he derives from his name, and certain external facts, of which he made use in his escalade, one finds, as the basis of the man and his exploit, but two things,—cunning and cash.

As to cunning: we have already characterised this important quality of Louis Bonaparte; but it is desirable to dwell on the point.

On November 27, 1848, he said to his fellow-citizens in his manifesto: "I feel it incumbent on me to make known to you my sentiments and my principles. There must be no equivocation between you and me. I am not ambitious.... Brought up in free countries, in the school of misfortune, I shall ever remain faithful to the duties that shall be imposed on me by your suffrages, and the will of the Assembly. I shall make it a point of honour to leave, at the end of the four years, to my successor, power consolidated, liberty intact, and real progress accomplished."

On December 31, 1849, in his first message to the Assembly, he wrote: "It is my aspiration to be worthy of the confidence of the nation, by maintaining the Constitution which I have sworn to execute." On November 12, 1850, in his second annual message to the Assembly, he said: "If the Constitution contains defects and dangers, you are free to make them known to the country; I alone, bound by my oath, confine myself within the strict limits which that Constitution has traced." On September 4, in the same year, at Caen, he said: "When, in all directions, prosperity seems reviving, he were, indeed, a guilty man who should seek to check its progress by changing that which now exists." Some time before, on July 25, 1849, at the

inauguration of the St. Quentin railway, he went to Ham, smote his breast at the recollection of Boulogne, and uttered these solemn words:

"Now that, elected by universal France, I am become the legitimate head of this great nation, I cannot pride myself on a captivity which was occasioned by an attack upon a regular government.

"When one has observed the enormous evils which even the most righteous revolutions bring in their train, one can scarcely comprehend one's audacity in having chosen to take upon one's self the terrible responsibility of a change; I do not, therefore, complain of having expiated here, by an imprisonment of six years, my rash defiance of the laws of my country, and it is with joy that, in the very scene of my sufferings, I propose to you a toast in honour of those who, notwithstanding their convictions, are resolute to respect the institutions of their country."

All the while he was saying this, he retained in the depths of his heart, as he has since proved, after his fashion, that thought which he had written in that same prison of Ham: "Great enterprises seldom succeed at the first attempt."[2]

Towards the middle of November, 1851, Representative F——, a frequenter of the Élysée, was dining with M. Bonaparte.

"What do they say in Paris, and in the Assembly?" asked the President of the representative.

"Oh, prince!"

"Well?"

"They are still talking."

"About what?"

"About the coup d'état."

"And the Assembly believes in it?"

"A little, prince."

"And you?"

"I—oh, not at all."

Louis Bonaparte earnestly grasped M. F——'s hands, and said to him with feeling:

"I thank you, M. F——, you, at least, do not think me a scoundrel."

This happened a fortnight before December 2. At that time, and indeed, at that very moment, according to the admission of Maupas the confederate, Mazas was being made ready.

Cash: that is M. Bonaparte's other source of strength.

Let us take the facts, judicially proved by the trials at Strasburg and Boulogne.

At Strasburg, on October 30, 1836, Colonel Vaudrey, an accomplice of M. Bonaparte, commissioned the quartermasters of the 4th Regiment of artillery, "to distribute among the cannoneers of each battery, two pieces of gold."

On the 5th of August, 1840, in the steamboat he had freighted, the Ville d'Edimbourg, while at sea, M. Bonaparte called about him the sixty poor devils, his domestics, whom he had deceived into accompanying him by telling them he was going to Hamburg on a pleasure excursion, harangued them from the roof of one of his carriages fastened on the deck, declared his project, tossed them their disguise as soldiers, gave each of them a hundred francs, and then set them drinking. A little drunkenness does not damage great enterprises. "I saw," said the witness Hobbs, the under-steward, before the Court of Peers,[3] "I saw in the cabin a great quantity of money. The passengers appeared to me to be reading printed papers; they passed all the night drinking and eating. I did nothing else but uncork bottles, and serve food." Next came the captain. The magistrate asked Captain Crow: "Did you see the passengers drink?"—Crow: "To excess; I never saw anything like it."[4]

They landed, and were met by the custom-house officers of Vimereux. M. Louis Bonaparte began proceedings, by offering the lieutenant of the guard a pension of

1,200 francs. The magistrate: "Did you not offer the commandant of the station a sum of money if he would march with you?"—The Prince: "I caused it to be offered him, but he refused it."[5]

They arrived at Boulogne. His aides-de-camp—he had some already—wore, hanging from their necks, tin cases full of gold pieces. Others came next with bags of small coins in their hands.[6] Then they threw money to the fishermen and the peasants, inviting them to cry: "Long live the Emperor!"—"Three hundred loud-mouthed knaves will do the thing," had written one of the conspirators.[7] Louis Bonaparte approached the 42nd, quartered at Boulogne.

He said to the voltigeur Georges Koehly: "I am Napoleon; you shall have promotion, decorations." He said to the voltigeur Antoine Gendre: "I am the son of Napoleon; we are going to the Hôtel du Nord to order a dinner for you and me." He said to the voltigeur Jean Meyer: "You shall be well paid." He said to the voltigeur Joseph Mény: "You must come to Paris; you shall be well paid."[8]

An officer at his side held in his hand his hat full of five-franc pieces, which he distributed among the lookers-on, saying: "Shout, Long live the Emperor!"

The grenadier Geoffroy, in his evidence, characterises in these words the attempt made on his mess by an officer and a sergeant who were in the plot: "The sergeant had a bottle in his hand, and the officer a sabre." In these few words is the whole 2nd of December.

Let us proceed:—

"Next day, June 17, the commandant, Mésonan, who I thought had gone, entered my room, announced by my aide-de-camp. I said to him, 'Commandant, I thought you were gone!'—'No, general, I am not gone. I have a letter to give you.'—'A letter? And from whom?'—'Read it, general.'

"I asked him to take a seat; I took the letter, but as I was opening it, I saw that the address was—à M. le Commandant Mésonan. I said to him: 'But, my dear

Commandant, this is for you, not for me.'—'Read it, General!'—I opened the letter and read thus:—

"'My dear Commandant, it is most essential that you should immediately see the general in question; you know he is a man of resolution, on whom one may rely. You know also that he is a man whom I have put down to be one day a marshal of France. You will offer him, from me, 100,000 francs; and you will ask him into what banker's or notary's hands I shall pay 300,000 francs for him, in the event of his losing his command.'

"I stopped here, overcome with indignation; I turned over the leaf, and I saw that the letter was signed, 'Louis Napoleon.'

"I handed the letter back to the commandant, saying that it was a ridiculous and abortive affair."

Who speaks thus? General Magnan. Where? In the open Court of Peers. Before whom? Who is the man seated on the prisoners' bench, the man whom Magnan covers with "scorn," the man towards whom Magnan turns his "indignant" face? Louis Bonaparte.

Money, and with money gross debauchery: such were his means of action in his three enterprises at Strasburg, at Boulogne, at Paris. Two failures and a success. Magnan, who refused at Boulogne, sold himself at Paris. If Louis Bonaparte had been defeated on the 2nd of December, just as there were found on him, at Boulogne, the 500,000 francs he had brought from London, so there would have been found at the Élysée, the twenty-five millions taken from the Bank.

There has, then, been in France,—one must needs speak of these things coolly,—in France, that land of the sword, that land of cavaliers, the land of Hoche, of Drouot, and of Bayard—there has been a day, when a man, surrounded by five or six political sharpers, experts in ambuscades, and grooms of coups d'état, lolling in a gilded office, his feet on the fire-dogs, a cigar in his mouth, placed a price upon

military honour, weighed it in the scales like a commodity, a thing buyable and sellable, put down the general at a million, the private at a louis, and said of the conscience of the French army: "That is worth so much."

And this man is the nephew of the Emperor.

By the bye, this nephew is not proud: he accommodates himself, with great facility, to the necessities of his adventures; adapts himself readily and without reluctance, to every freak of destiny. Place him in London, and let it be his interest to please the English government, he would not hesitate, and with the very hand which now seeks to seize the sceptre of Charlemagne, he would grasp the truncheon of a policeman. If I were not Napoleon, I would be Vidocq.

And here thought pauses!

And such is the man by whom France is governed! governed, do I say? possessed rather in full sovereignty!

And every day, and every moment, by his decrees, by his messages, by his harangues, by all these unprecedented imbecilities which he parades in the Moniteur, this émigré, so ignorant of France, gives lessons to France! and this knave tells France that he has saved her! From whom? from herself. Before he came, Providence did nothing but absurdities; God waited for him to put everything in order; and at length he came. For the last thirty-six years poor France had been afflicted with all sorts of pernicious things: that "sonority," the tribune; that hubbub, the press; that insolence, thought; that crying abuse, liberty: he came, and for the tribune, he substituted the Senate; for the press, the censorship; for thought, imbecility; for liberty, the sabre; and by the sabre, the censorship, imbecility, and the Senate, France is saved! Saved! bravo! and from whom, I ask again? from herself. For what was France before, if you please? a horde of pillagers, robbers, Jacquerie, assassins, demagogues! It was necessary to put fetters on this abominable villain, this France, and it was M. Bonaparte Louis who applied the fetters. Now France is in

prison, on bread and water, punished, humiliated, throttled and well guarded; be tranquil, everybody; Sieur Bonaparte, gendarme at the Élysée, answers for her to Europe; this miserable France is in her strait waistcoat, and if she stirs!—

Ah! what spectacle is this? What dream is this? What nightmare is this? On the one hand, a nation, first among nations, and on the other, a man, last among men—and see what that man does to that nation! God save the mark! He tramples her under foot, he laughs at her to her face, he flouts her, he denies her, he insults her, he scoffs at her! How now! He says, there is none but I! What! in this land of France where no man's ears may be boxed with impunity, one may box the ears of the whole people! Oh! abominable shame! Each time that M. Bonaparte spits, every one must needs wipe his face! And this can last! And you tell me that it will last! No! No! No! By all the blood we have in our veins, no! this shall not last. Were it to last, it must be that there is no God in heaven, or no longer a France on earth!

1 (Return) The first report addressed to M. Bonaparte, and in which M. Bonaparte is called Monseigneur is signed Fortoul.

2 (Return) Historical Fragments.

3 (Return) Court of Peers, Depositions of witnesses, p. 94.

4 (Return) Court of Peers, Depositions of witnesses, pp. 71, 81, 88, 94.

5 (Return) Court of Peers, Cross examination of the accused, p. 13.

6 (Return) Court of Peers, Depositions of witnesses, pp. 103, 185, etc.

7 (Return) The President: Prisoner Querelles, these children that cried out, are not they the three hundred loud-mouthed knaves that you asked for in your letter?—(Trial at Strasburg.)

8 (Return) Court of Peers, Depositions of witnesses, pp. 142, 143, 155, 156, 158.

BOOK II

I

THE CONSTITUTION

A roll of the drums; clowns, attention!

The President of the Republic,

"Considering that—all the restrictive laws on the liberty of the press having been repealed, all the laws against hand-bills and posting-bills having been abolished, the right of public assemblage having been fully re-established, all the unconstitutional laws, including martial law, having been suppressed, every citizen being empowered to say what he likes through every medium of publicity, whether newspaper, placard, or electoral meeting, all solemn engagements, especially the oath of the 20th of December, 1848, having been scrupulously kept, all facts having been investigated, all questions propounded and discussed, all candidacies publicly defeated, without the possibility of alleging that the slightest violence had been exercised against the meanest citizen,—in one word, in the fullest enjoyment of liberty. "The sovereign people being interrogated on this question:—

"'Do the French people mean to place themselves, tied neck and heels, at the discretion of M. Louis Bonaparte?'

"Have replied YES by 7,500,000 votes. (Interruption by the author:—We shall have more to say of these 7,500,000 votes.)

"PROMULGATES

"THE CONSTITUTION IN MANNER FOLLOWING, THAT IS TO SAY:

"Article 1. The Constitution recognises, confirms, and guarantees the great principles proclaimed in 1789, which are the foundation of the public law of the French people.

"Article 2 and following. The platform and the press, which impeded the march of progress, are superseded by the police and the censorship, and by the secret deliberations of the Senate, the Corps Législatif and the Council of State.

"Article last. The thing commonly called human intelligence is suppressed.

"Done at the Palace of the Tuileries January 14, 1852.

"Louis Napoleon.

"Witnessed and sealed with the great seal.

"E. Rouher. "Keeper of the Seals and Minister of Justice."

This Constitution, which loudly proclaims and confirms the Revolution of 1789 in its principles and its consequences, and which merely abolishes liberty, was evidently and happily inspired in M. Bonaparte, by an old provincial play-bill which it is well to recall at this time:

This Day, The Grand Representation of LA DAME BLANCHE, an opera in three acts.

Note. The music, which would embarrass the progress of the plot, will be replaced by lively and piquant dialogue.

II

THE SENATE

This lively and piquant dialogue is carried on by the Council of State, the Corps Législatif and the Senate.

Is there a Senate then? Certainly. This "great body," this "balancing power," this "supreme moderator," is in truth the principal glory of the Constitution. Let us consider it for a moment.

The Senate! It is a senate. But of what Senate are you speaking? Is it the Senate whose duty it was to deliberate on the description of sauce with which the Emperor should eat his turbot? Is it the Senate of which Napoleon thus spoke on April 5, 1814: "A sign was an order for the Senate, and it always did more than was required of it?" Is it the Senate of which Napoleon said in 1805: "The poltroons were afraid of displeasing me?"[1] Is it the Senate which drew from Tiberius almost the same

exclamation: "The base wretches! greater slaves than we require them to be!" Is it the Senate which caused Charles XII to say: "Send my boot to Stockholm."—"For what purpose, Sire?" demanded his minister.—"To preside over the Senate," was the reply.

But let us not trifle. This year they are eighty; they will be one hundred and fifty next year. They monopolise to themselves, in full plenitude, fourteen articles of the Constitution, from Article 19 to Article 33. They are "guardians of the public liberties;" their functions are gratuitous by Article 22; consequently, they have from fifteen to thirty thousand francs per annum. They have the peculiar privilege of receiving their salary, and the prerogative of "not opposing" the promulgation of the laws. They are all illustrious personages."[2] This is not an "abortive Senate,"[3] like that of Napoleon the uncle; this is a genuine Senate; the marshals are members, and the cardinals and M. Lebœuf.

"What is your position in the country?" some one asks the Senate. "We are charged with the preservation of public liberty."—"What is your business in this city?" Pierrot demands of Harlequin.—"My business," replies Harlequin, "is to curry-comb the bronze horse."

"We know what is meant by esprit-de-corps: this spirit will urge the Senate by every possible means to augment its power. It will destroy the Corps Législatif, if it can; and if occasion offers it will compound with the Bourbons."

Who said this? The First Consul. Where? At the Tuileries, in April, 1804.

"Without title or authority, and in violation of every principle, it has surrendered the country and consummated its ruin. It has been the plaything of eminent intriguers; I know of no body which ought to appear in history with greater ignominy than the Senate."

Who said this? The Emperor. Where? At St. Helena.

There is actually then a senate in the "Constitution of January 14." But, candidly

speaking, this is a mistake; for now that public hygiene has made some progress, we are accustomed to see the public highway better kept. After the Senate of the Empire, we thought that no more senates would be mixed up with Constitutions.

1 (Return) Thibaudeau. History of the Consulate and the Empire.

2 (Return) "All the illustrious persons of the country." Louis Bonaparte's Appeal to the people. December 2, 1851.

3 (Return) "The Senate was an abortion; and in France no one likes to see people well paid merely for making some bad selections." Words of Napoleon, Memorial from St. Helena.

III

THE COUNCIL OF STATE AND THE CORPS LÉGISLATIF

There is also a Council of State and a Corps Législatif: the former joyous, well paid, plump, rosy, fat, and fresh, with a sharp eye, a red ear, a voluble tongue, a sword by its side, a belly, and embroidered in gold; the Corps Législatif, pale, meagre, sad, and embroidered in silver. The Council of State comes and goes, enters and exits, returns, rules, disposes, decides, settles, and decrees, and sees Louis Napoleon face to face. The Corps Législatif, on the contrary, walks on tiptoe, fumbles with its hat, puts its finger to its lips, smiles humbly, sits on the corner of its chair, and speaks only when questioned. Its words being naturally obscene, the public journals are forbidden to make the slightest allusion to them. The Corps Législatif passes laws and votes taxes by Article 39; and when, fancying it has occasion for some instruction, some detail, some figures, or some explanation, it presents itself, hat in hand, at the door of the departments to consult the ministers, the usher receives it in the antechamber, and with a roar of laughter, gives it a fillip on the nose. Such are the duties of the Corps Législatif.

Let us state, however, that this melancholy position began, in June, 1852, to extort some sighs from the sorrowful personages who form a portion of the concern. The

report of the commission on the budget will remain in the memory of men, as one of the most heart-rending masterpieces of the plaintive style. Let us repeat those gentle accents:—

"Formerly, as you know, the necessary communications in such cases were carried on directly between the commissioners and the ministers. It was to the latter that they addressed themselves to obtain the documents indispensable to the discussion of affairs; and the ministers even came personally, with the heads of their several departments, to give verbal explanations, frequently sufficient to preclude the necessity of further discussion; and the resolutions formed by the commission on the budget after they had heard them, were submitted direct to the Chamber.

"But now we can have no communication with the government except through the medium of the Council of State, which, being the confidant and the organ of its own ideas, has alone the right of transmitting to the Corps Législatif the documents which, in its turn, it receives from the ministers.

"In a word, for written reports, as well as for verbal communications, the government commissioners have superseded the ministers, with whom, however, they must have a preliminary understanding.

"With respect to the modifications which the commission might wish to propose, whether by the adoption of amendments presented by the deputies, or from its own examination of the budget, they must, before you are called upon to consider them, be sent to the Council of State, there to undergo discussion.

"There (it is impossible not to notice it) those modifications have no interpreters, no official defenders.

"This mode of procedure appears to be derived from the Constitution itself; and if we speak of the matter now, it is solely to prove to you that it must occasion delays in accomplishing the task imposed upon the commission on the budget."[1]

Reproach was never so mildly uttered; it is impossible to receive more chastely and

more gracefully, what M. Bonaparte, in his autocratic style, calls "guarantees of calmness,"[2] but what Molière, with the license of a great writer, denominates "kicks."[3]

Thus, in the shop where laws and budgets are manufactured, there is a master of the house, the Council of State, and a servant, the Corps Législatif. According to the terms of the "Constitution," who is it that appoints the master of the house? M. Bonaparte. Who appoints the servant? The nation. That is as it should be.

1 (Return) Report of the commission on the budget of the Corps Législatif, June, 1852.

2 (Return) Preamble of the Constitution.

3 (Return) See Les Fourberies de Scapin.

IV

THE FINANCES

Let it be observed that, under the shadow of these "wise institutions," and thanks to the coup d'état, which, as is well known, has re-established order, the finances, the public safety, and public prosperity, the budget, by the admission of M. Gouin, shows a deficit of 123,000,000 francs.

As for commercial activity since the coup d'état, as for the prosperity of trade, as for the revival of business, in order to appreciate them it is enough to reject words and have recourse to figures. On this point, the following statement is official and decisive: the discounts of the Bank of France produced during the first half of 1852, only 589,502fr. 62c. at the central bank; while the profits of the branch establishments have risen only to 651,108fr. 7c. This appears from the half-yearly report of the Bank itself.

M. Bonaparte, however, does not trouble himself with taxation. Some fine morning he wakes and yawns, rubs his eyes, takes his pen and decrees—what? The budget.

Achmet III. was once desirous of levying taxes according to his own fancy.—"Invincible lord," said his Vizier to him, "your subjects cannot be taxed beyond what is prescribed by the law and the prophet."

This identical M. Bonaparte, when at Ham, wrote as follows:—

"If the sums levied each year on the inhabitants generally are employed for unproductive purposes, such as creating useless places, raising sterile monuments, and maintaining in the midst of profound peace a more expensive army than that which conquered at Austerlitz, taxation becomes in such case an overwhelming burden; it exhausts the country, it takes without any return."[1]

With reference to this word budget an observation occurs to us. In this present year 1852, the bishops and the judges of the Cour de Cassation,[2] have 50 francs per diem; the archbishops, the councillors of state, the first presidents, and the procureurs-general, have each 69 francs per diem; the senators, the prefects, and the generals of division receive 83 francs each per diem; the presidents of sections of the Council of State 222 francs per diem; the ministers 252 francs per diem; Monseigneur the Prince-President, comprising of course, in his salary, the sum for maintenance of the royal residences, receives per diem 44,444 francs, 44 centimes. The revolution of the 2nd of December was made against the Twenty-five Francs!

1 (Return) Extinction of Pauperism, page 10.

2 (Return) Court of Appeal.

V

THE LIBERTY OF THE PRESS

We have now seen what the legislature is, what the administration, and what the budget.

And the courts! What was formerly called the Cour de Cassation is no longer anything more than a record office of councils of war. A soldier steps out of the

guard-house and writes in the margin of the book of the law, I will, or I will not. In all directions the corporal gives the order, and the magistrate countersigns it. Come! tuck up your gowns and begone, or else—Hence these abominable trials, sentences, and condemnations. What a sorry spectacle is that troop of judges, with hanging heads and bent backs, driven with the butt end of the musket into baseness and iniquity!

And the liberty of the press! What shall we say of it? Is it not a mockery merely to pronounce the words? That free press, the honour of French intellect, a light thrown from all points at once upon all questions, the perpetual sentinel of the nation—where is it? What has M. Bonaparte done with it? It is where the public platform is. Twenty newspapers extinguished in Paris, eighty in the departments,—one hundred newspapers suppressed: that is to say, looking only to the material side of the question, innumerable families deprived of bread; that is to say, understand it, citizens, one hundred houses confiscated, one hundred farms taken from their proprietors, one hundred interest coupons stolen from the public funds. Marvellous identity of principles: freedom suppressed is property destroyed. Let the selfish idiots who applaud the coup d'état reflect upon this.

Instead of a law concerning the press a decree has been laid upon it; a fetfa, a firman, dated from the imperial stirrup: the régime of admonition. This régime is well known. Its working is witnessed daily. Such men were requisite to invent such a thing. Despotism has never shown itself more grossly insolent and stupid than in this species of censorship of the morrow, which precedes and announces the suppression, and which administers the bastinado to a paper before killing it entirely. The folly of such a government corrects and tempers its atrocity. The whole of the decree concerning the press may be summed up in one line: "I permit you to speak, but I require you to be silent." Who reigns, in God's name? Is it Tiberius? Is it Schahabaham? Three-fourths of the republican journalists transported or proscribed, the remainder hunted down by mixed commissions, dispersed, wandering, in hiding.

Here and there, in four or five of the surviving journals, in four or five which are independent but closely watched, over whose heads is suspended the club of Maupas,[1] some fifteen or twenty writers, courageous, serious, pure, honest, and noble-hearted, who write, as it were, with a chain round their necks, and a ball on their feet; talent between two sentinels, independence gagged, honesty under surveillance, and Veuillot exclaiming: "I am free!"

1 (Return) The Prefect of Police.

VI

NOVELTIES IN RESPECT TO WHAT IS LAWFUL

The press enjoys the privilege of being censored, of being admonished, of being suspended, of being suppressed; it has even the privilege of being tried. Tried! By whom? By the courts. What courts? The police courts. And what about that excellent trial by jury? Progress: it is outstripped. The jury is far behind us, and we return to the government judges. "Repression is more rapid and more efficacious," as Maître Rouher says. And then 'tis so much better. Call the causes: correctional police, sixth chamber; first cause, one Roumage, swindler; second cause, one Lamennais, writer. This has a good effect, and accustoms the citizens to talk without distinction of writers and swindlers. That, certainly, is an advantage; but in a practical point of view, with reference to "repression," is the government quite sure of what it has done on that head? Is it quite sure that the sixth chamber will answer better than the excellent assize court of Paris, for instance, which had for president such abject creatures as Partarrieu-Lafosse, and for advocates at its bar, such base wretches as Suin, and such dull orators as Mongis? Can it reasonably expect that the police judges will be still more base and more contemptible than they? Will those judges, salaried as they are, work better than that jury-squad, who had the department prosecutor for corporal, and who pronounced their judgments and gesticulated their verdicts with the precision of a charge in double quick time, so

that the prefect of police, Carlier, good-humouredly observed to a celebrated advocate, M. Desm——: "The jury! what a stupid institution! When not forced to it they never condemn, but when forced they never acquit." Let us weep for that worthy jury which was made by Carlier and unmade by Rouher.

This government feels that it is hideous. It wants no portrait; above all it wants no mirror. Like the osprey it takes refuge in darkness, and it would die if once seen. Now it wishes to endure. It does not propose to be talked about; it does not propose to be described. It has imposed silence on the press of France; we have seen in what manner. But to silence the press in France was only half-success. It must also be silenced in foreign countries. Two prosecutions were attempted in Belgium, against the Bulletin Français and against La Nation. They were acquitted by an honest Belgian jury. This was annoying. What was to be done? The Belgian journals were attacked through their pockets. "You have subscribers in France," they were told; "but if you 'discuss' us, you shall be kept out. If you wish to come in, make yourselves agreeable." An attempt was made to frighten the English journals. "If you 'discuss' us"—decidedly they do not wish to be discussed—"we shall drive your correspondents out of France." The English press roared with laughter. But this is not all. There are French writers outside of France: they are proscribed, that is to say they are free. Suppose those fellows should speak? Suppose those demagogues should write? They are very capable of doing both; and we must prevent them. But how are we to do it? To gag people at a distance is not so easy a matter: M. Bonaparte's arm is not long enough for that. Let us try, however; we will prosecute them in the countries where they have taken refuge. Very good: the juries of free countries will understand that these exiles represent justice, and that the Bonapartist government personifies iniquity. These juries will follow the example of the Belgian jury and acquit. The friendly governments will then be solicited to expel these refugees, to banish these exiles. Very good: the exiles will go elsewhere; they will always find some corner of the earth open to them where they can speak. How then

are they to be got at? Rouher and Baroche clubbed their wits together, and between them they hit upon this expedient: to patch up a law dealing with crimes committed by Frenchmen in foreign countries, and to slip into it "crimes of the press." The Council of State sanctioned this, and the Corps Législatif did not oppose it, and it is now the law of the land. If we speak outside of France, we shall be condemned for the offence in France; imprisonment (in future, if caught), fines and confiscations. Again, very good. The book I am now writing will, therefore, be tried in France, and its author duly convicted; this I expect, and I confine myself to apprising all those quidams calling themselves magistrates, who, in black and red gown, shall concoct the thing that, sentence to any fine whatever being well and duly pronounced against me, nothing will equal my disdain for the judgment, but my contempt for the judges. This is my defence.

VII

THE ADHERENTS

Who are they that flock round the establishment? As we have said, the gorge rises at thought of them.

Ah! these rulers of the day,—we who are now proscribed remember them when they were representatives of the people, only twelve months ago, running hither and thither in the lobbies of the Assembly, their heads high, and with a show of independence, and the air and manner of men who belonged to themselves. What magnificence! and how proud they were! How they placed their hands on their hearts while they shouted "Vive la Republique!" And if some "Terrorist," some "Montagnard," or some "red republican," happened to allude from the tribune to the planned coup d'état and the projected Empire, how they vociferated at him: "You are a calumniator!" How they shrugged their shoulders at the word "Senate!"—"The Empire to-day" cried one, "would be blood and slime; you slander us, we shall never be implicated in such a matter." Another affirmed that he consented to be one of the

President's ministers solely to devote himself to the defence of the Constitution and the laws; a third glorified the tribune as the palladium of the country; a fourth recalled the oath of Louis Bonaparte, exclaiming: "Do you doubt that he is an honest man?" These last—there were two of them—went the length of voting for and signing his deposition, on the 2nd of December, at the mayoralty of the Tenth Arrondissement; another sent a note on the 4th of December to the writer of these lines, to "felicitate him on having dictated the proclamation of the Left, by which Louis Bonaparte was outlawed." And now, behold them, Senators, Councillors of State, ministers, belaced, betagged, bedizened with gold! Base wretches! Before you embroider your sleeves, wash your hands!

M. Q.-B. paid a visit to M. O.-B. and said to him: "Can you conceive the assurance of this Bonaparte? he has had the presumption to offer me the place of Master of Requests!"—"You refused it?"—"Certainly."—The next day, being offered the place of Councillor of State, salary twenty-five thousand francs, our indignant Master of Requests becomes a grateful Councillor of State. M. Q.-B. accepts.

One class of men rallied en masse: the fools! They comprise the sound part of the Corps Législatif. It was to them that the head of the State addressed this little flattery:—"The first test of the Constitution, entirely of French origin, must have convinced you that we possess the qualities of a strong and a free government. We are in earnest, discussion is free, and the vote of taxation decisive. France possesses a government animated by faith and by love of the right, which is based upon the people, the source of all power; upon the army, the source of all strength; and upon religion, the source of all justice. Accept the assurance of my regard." These worthy dupes, we know them also; we have seen a goodly number of them on the benches of the majority in the Legislative Assembly. Their chiefs, skilful manipulators, had succeeded in terrifying them,—a certain method of leading them wherever they thought proper. These chiefs, unable any longer to employ usefully those old bugbears, the terms "Jacobin" and "sans-culotte," decidedly too hackneyed, had

furbished up the word "demagogue." These ringleaders, trained to all sorts of schemes and manœuvres, exploited successfully the word "Mountain," and agitated to good purpose that startling and glorious souvenir. With these few letters of the alphabet formed into syllables and suitably accented,—Demagogues, Montagnards, Partitioners, Communists, Red Republicans,—they made wildfires dance before the eyes of the simple. They had found the method of perverting the brains of their colleagues, who were so ingenuous as to swallow them whole, so to speak, with a sort of dictionary, wherein every expression made use of by the democratic writers and orators was readily translated. For humanity read ferocity; for universal good read subversion; for Republic read Terrorism; for Socialism read Pillage; for Fraternity, read Massacre; for the Gospel, read Death to the Rich. So that, when an orator of the Left exclaimed, for instance: "We rush for the suppression of war, and the abolition of the death penalty," a crowd of poor souls on the Right distinctly understood: "We wish to put everything to fire and sword;" and in a fury shook their fists at the orator. After such speeches, in which there had been a question only of liberty, of universal peace, of prosperity arising from labour, of concord, and of progress, the representatives of that category which we have designated at the head of this paragraph, were seen to rise, pale as death; they were not sure that they were not already guillotined, and went to look for their hats to see whether they still had heads.

These poor frightened creatures did not haggle over their adhesion to the 2nd of December. The expression, "Louis Napoleon has saved society," was invented especially for them.

And those eternal prefects, those eternal mayors, those eternal magistrates, those eternal sheriffs, those eternal complimenters of the rising sun, or of the lighted lamp, who, on the day after success, flock to the conqueror, to the triumpher, to the master, to his Majesty Napoleon the Great, to his Majesty Louis XVIII, to his Majesty Alexander I, to his Majesty Charles X, to his Majesty Louis Philippe, to Citizen

Lamartine, to Citizen Cavaignac, to Monseigneur the Prince-President, kneeling, smiling, expansive, bearing upon salvers the keys of their towns, and on their faces the keys of their consciences!

But imbeciles ('tis an old story) have always made a part of all institutions, and are almost an institution of themselves; and as for the prefects and magistrates, as for these adorers of every new régime, insolent with, fortune and rapidity, they abound at all times. Let us do justice to the régime of December; it can boast not only of such partisans as these, but it has creatures and adherents peculiar to itself; it has produced an altogether new race of notabilities.

Nations are never conscious of all the riches they possess in the matter of knaves. Overturnings and subversions of this description are necessary to bring them to light. Then the nations wonder at what issues from the dust. It is splendid to contemplate. One whose shoes and clothes and reputation were of a sort to attract all the dogs of Europe in full cry, comes forth an ambassador. Another, who had a glimpse of Bicêtre and La Roquette,[1] awakes a general, and Grand Eagle of the Legion of Honour. Every adventurer assumes an official costume, furnishes himself with a good pillow stuffed with bank-notes, takes a sheet of white paper, and writes thereon: "End of my adventures."—"You know So-and-So?"—"Yes, is he at the galleys?"—"No, he's a minister."

1 (Return) State prisons in Paris and Languedoc.

VIII

MENS AGITAT MOLEM

In the centre is the man—the man we have described; the man of Punic faith, the fatal man, attacking the civilisation to arrive at power; seeking, elsewhere than amongst the true people, one knows not what ferocious popularity; cultivating the still uncivilized qualities of the peasant and the soldier, endeavouring to succeed by appealing to gross selfishness, to brutal passions, to newly awakened desires, to

excited appetites; something like a Prince Marat, with nearly the same object, which in Marat was grand, and in Louis Bonaparte is little; the man who kills, who transports, who banishes, who expels, who proscribes, who despoils; this man with harassed gesture and glassy eye, who walks with distracted air amid the horrible things he does, like a sort of sinister somnambulist.

It has been said of Louis Bonaparte, whether with friendly intent or otherwise,—for these strange beings have strange flatterers,—"He is a dictator, he is a despot, nothing more."—He is that in our opinion, and he is also something else.

The dictator was a magistrate. Livy[1] and Cicero[2] call him praetor maximus; Seneca[3] calls him magister populi; what he decreed was looked upon as a fiat from above. Livy[4] says: pro numine observatum. In those times of incomplete civilisation, the rigidity of the ancient laws not having foreseen all cases, his function was to provide for the safety of the people; he was the product of this text: salus populi suprema lex esto. He caused to be carried before him the twenty-four axes, the emblems of his power of life and death. He was outside the law, and above the law, but he could not touch the law. The dictatorship was a veil, behind which the law remained intact. The law was before the dictator and after him; and it resumed its power over him on the cessation of his office. He was appointed for a very short period—six months only: semestris dictatura, says Livy.[5] But as if this enormous power, even when freely conferred by the people, ultimately weighed heavily upon him, like remorse, the dictator generally resigned before the end of his term. Cincinnatus gave it up at the end of eight days. The dictator was forbidden to dispose of the public funds without the authority of the Senate, or to go out of Italy. He could not even ride on horseback without the permission of the people. He might be a plebeian; Marcius Rutilus, and Publius Philo were dictators. That magistracy was created for very different objects: to organize fêtes for saints' days; to drive a sacred nail into the wall of the Temple of Jupiter; on one occasion to appoint the Senate. Republican Rome had eighty-eight dictators. This intermittent institution

continued for one hundred and fifty-three years, from the year of Rome 552, to the year 711. It began with Servilius Geminus, and reached Cæsar, passing over Sylla. It expired with Cæsar. The dictatorship was fitted to be repudiated by Cincinnatus, and to be espoused by Cæsar. Cæsar was five times dictator in the course of five years, from 706 to 711. This was a dangerous magistracy, and it ended by devouring liberty.

Is M. Bonaparte a dictator? We see no impropriety in answering yes. Praetor maximus,—general-in-chief? the colours salute him. Magister populi,—the master of the people? ask the cannons levelled on the public squares. Pro numine observatum,—regarded as God? ask M. Troplong. He has appointed the Senate, he has instituted holidays, he has provided for the "safety of society," he has driven a sacred nail into the wall of the Pantheon, and he has hung upon this nail his coup d'état. The only discrepancy is, that he makes and unmakes the law according to his own fancy, he rides horseback without permission, and as to the six months, he takes a little more time. Cæsar took five years, he takes double; that is but fair. Julius Cæsar five, M. Louis Bonaparte ten—the proportion is well observed.

From the dictator, let us pass to the despot. This is the other qualification almost accepted by M. Bonaparte. Let us speak for a while the language of the Lower Empire. It befits the subject.

The Despotes came after the Basileus. Among other attributes, he was general of the infantry and of the cavalry—magister utriusque exercitus. It was the Emperor Alexis, surnamed the Angel, who created the dignity of despotes. This officer was below the Emperor, and above the Sebastocrator, or Augustus, and above the Cæsar.

It will be seen that this is somewhat the case with us. M. Bonaparte is despotes, if we admit, which is not difficult, that Magnan is Cæsar, and that Maupas is Augustus.

Despot and dictator, that is admitted. But all this great éclat, all this triumphant

power, does not prevent little incidents from happening in Paris, like the following, which honest badauds, witnesses of the fact, will tell you, musingly. Two men were walking in the street, talking of their business or their private affairs. One of them, referring to some knave or other, of whom he thought he had reason to complain, exclaimed: "He is a wretch, a swindler, a rascal!" A police agent who heard these last words, cried out: "Monsieur, you are speaking of the President; I arrest you."

And now, will M. Bonaparte be Emperor, or will he not?

A pretty question! He is master,—he is Cadi, Mufti, Bey, Dey, Sultan, Grand Khan, Grand Lama, Great Mogul, Great Dragon, Cousin to the Sun, Commander of the Faithful, Shah, Czar, Sofi, and Caliph. Paris is no longer Paris, but Bagdad; with a Giaffar who is called Persigny, and a Scheherazade who is in danger of having her head chopped off every morning, and who is called Le Constitutionnel. M. Bonaparte may do whatever he likes with property, families, and persons. If French citizens wish to fathom the depth of the "government" into which they have fallen, they have only to ask themselves a few questions. Let us see: magistrate, he tears off your gown, and sends you to prison. What of it? Let us see: Senate, Council of State, Corps Législatif, he seizes a shovel, and flings you all in a heap in a corner. What of it? Landed proprietor, he confiscates your country house and your town house, with courtyards, stables, gardens, and appurtenances. What of it? Father, he takes your daughter; brother, he takes your sister; citizen, he takes your wife, by right of might. What of it? Wayfarer, your looks displease him, and he blows your brains out with a pistol, and goes home. What of it?

All these things being done, what would be the result? Nothing. "Monseigneur the Prince-President took his customary drive yesterday in the Champs Élysées, in a calèche à la Daumont, drawn by four horses, accompanied by a single aide-de-camp." This is what the newspapers will say.

He has effaced from the walls Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity; and he is right.

Frenchmen, alas! you are no longer either free,—the strait-waistcoat is upon you; or equal,—the soldier is everything; or brothers,—for civil war is brewing under this melancholy peace of a state of siege.

Emperor? Why not? He has a Maury who is called Sibour; he has a Fontanes, or, if you prefer it, a Faciuntasinos, who is called Fortoul; he has a Laplace who answers to the name of Leverrier, although he did not produce the "Mécanique Céleste." He will easily find Esménards and Luce de Lancivals. His Pius VII is at Rome, in the cassock of Pius IX. His green uniform has been seen at Strasburg; his eagle has been seen at Boulogne; his grey riding-coat, did he not wear it at Ham? Cassock or riding-coat, 'tis all one. Madame de Staël comes out, of his house. She wrote "Lelia." He smiles on her pending the day when he will exile her. Do you insist on an archduchess? wait awhile and he will get one. Tu, felix Austria, nube. His Murat is called Saint-Arnaud; his Talleyrand is called Morny; his Duc d'Enghien is called Law.

What does he lack then? Nothing; a mere trifle; merely Austerlitz and Marengo.

Make the best of it; he is Emperor in petto; one of these mornings he will be so in the sun; nothing more is wanting than a trivial formality, the mere consecration and crowning of his false oath at Notre-Dame. After that we shall have fine doings. Expect an imperial spectacle. Expect caprices, surprises, stupefying, bewildering things, the most unexpected combinations of words, the most fearless cacophony? Expect Prince Troplong, Duc Maupas, Duc Mimerel, Marquis Leboeuf, Baron Baroche. Form in line, courtiers; hats off, senators; the stable-door opens, monseigneur the horse is consul. Gild the oats of his highness Incitatus.

Everything will be swallowed; the public hiatus will be prodigious. All the enormities will pass away. The old fly-catchers will disappear and make room for the swallowers of whales.

To our minds the Empire exists from this moment, and without waiting for the

interlude of the senatus consultum and the comedy of the plebiscite, we despatch this bulletin to Europe:—

"The treason of the 2nd of December is delivered of the Empire.

"The mother and child are indisposed."

1 (Return) Lib. vii., cap. 31.

2 (Return) De Republica. Lib. i, cap. 40.

3 (Return) Ep. 108.

4 (Return) Lib. iii., cap. 5.

5 (Return) Lib. vi., cap. 1.

IX

OMNIPOTENCE

Let us forget this man's origin and his 2nd of December, and look to his political capacity. Shall we judge him by the eight months he has reigned? On the one hand look at his power, and on the other at his acts. What can he do? Everything. What has he done? Nothing. With his unlimited power a man of genius, in eight months, would have changed the whole face of France, of Europe, perhaps. He would not, certainly, have effaced the crime of his starting-point, but he might have covered it. By dint of material improvements he might have succeeded, perhaps, in masking from the nation his moral abasement. Indeed, we must admit that for a dictator of genius the thing was not difficult. A certain number of social problems, elaborated during these last few years by several powerful minds, seemed to be ripe, and might receive immediate, practical solution, to the great profit and satisfaction of the nation. Of this, Louis Bonaparte does not appear to have had any idea. He has not approached, he has not had a glimpse of one of them. He has not even found at the Élysée any old remains of the socialist meditations of Ham. He has added several new crimes to his first one, and in this he has been logical. With the exception of

these crimes he has produced nothing. Absolute power, no initiative! He has taken France and does not know what to do with it. In truth, we are tempted to pity this eunuch struggling with omnipotence.

It is true, however, that this dictator keeps in motion; let us do him this justice; he does not remain quiet for an instant; he sees with affright the gloom and solitude around him; people sing who are afraid in the dark, but he keeps moving. He makes a fuss, he goes at everything, he runs after projects; being unable to create, he decrees; he endeavours to mask his nullity; he is perpetual motion; but, alas! the wheel turns in empty space. Conversion of rentes? Of what profit has it been to this day? Saving of eighteen millions! Very good: the annuitants lose them, but the President and the Senate, with their two endowments, pocket them; the benefit to France is zero. Credit Foncier? no capital forthcoming. Railways? they are decreed, and then laid aside. It is the same with all these things as with the working-men's cities. Louis Bonaparte subscribes, but does not pay. As for the budget, the budget controlled by the blind men in the Council of State, and voted by the dumb men in the Corps Législatif, there is an abyss beneath it. There was no possible or efficacious budget but a great reduction in the army: two hundred thousand soldiers left at home, two hundred millions saved. Just try to touch the army! the soldier, who would regain his freedom, would applaud, but what would the officer say? And in reality, it is not the soldier but the officer who is caressed. Then Paris and Lyons must be guarded, and all the other cities; and afterwards, when we are Emperor, a little European war must be got up. Behold the gulf!

If from financial questions we pass to political institutions, oh! there the neo-Bonapartists flourish abundantly, there are the creations! Good heavens, what creations! A Constitution in the style of Ravrio,—we have been examining it,—ornamented with palm-leaves and swans' necks, borne to the Élysée with old easy-chairs in the carriages of the garde-meuble; the Conservative Senate restitched and regilded, the Council of State of 1806 refurbished and new-bordered with fresh

lace; the old Corps Législatif patched up, with new nails and fresh paint, minus Lainé and plus Morny! In lieu of liberty of the press, the bureau of public spirit; in place of individual liberty, the ministry of police. All these "institutions," which we have passed in review, are nothing more than the old salon furniture of the Empire. Beat it, dust it, sweep away the cobwebs, splash it over with stains of French blood, and you have the establishment of 1852. This bric-à-brac governs France. These are the creations!

Where is common sense? where is reason? where is truth? Not a sound side of contemporary intelligence that has not received a shock, not a just conquest of the age that has not been thrown down and broken. All sorts of extravagance become possible. All that we have seen since the 2nd of December is a gallop, through all that is absurd, of a commonplace man broken loose.

These individuals, the malefactor and his accomplices, are in possession of immense, incomparable, absolute, unlimited power, sufficient, we repeat, to change the whole face of Europe. They make use of it only for amusement. To enjoy and to enrich themselves, such is their "socialism." They have stopped the budget on the public highway; the coffers are open; they fill their money-bags: they have money,—do you want some, here you are! All the salaries are doubled or trebled; we have given the figures above. Three ministers, Turgot (for there is a Turgot in this affair), Persigny and Maupas, have a million each of secret funds; the Senate a million, the Council of State half a million, the officers of the 2nd of December have a Napoleon-month, that is to say, millions; the soldiers of the 2nd of December have medals, that is to say, millions; M. Murat wants millions and will have them; a minister gets married,—quick, half a million; M. Bonaparte, quia nominor Poleo, has twelve millions, plus four millions,—sixteen millions. Millions, millions! This regime is called Million. M. Bonaparte has three hundred horses for private use, the fruit and vegetables of the national domains, and parks and gardens formerly royal; he is stuffed to repletion; he said the other day: "all my carriages," as Charles V said:

"all my Spains," and as Peter the Great said: "all my Russias." The marriage of Gamache is celebrated at the Élysée; the spits are turning day and night before the fireworks; according to the bulletins published on the subject, the bulletins of the new Empire, they consume there six hundred and fifty pounds of meat every day; the Élysée will soon have one hundred and forty-nine kitchens, like the Castle of Schônbrunn; they drink, they eat, they laugh, they feast; banquet at all the ministers', banquet at the École Militaire, banquet at the Hotel de Ville, banquet at the Tuileries, a monster fête on the 10th of May, a still more monster fête on the 15th of August; they swim in all sorts of abundance and intoxication. And the man of the people, the poor day-labourer who is out of work, the pauper in rags, with bare feet, to whom summer brings no bread, and winter no wood, whose old mother lies in agony upon a rotten mattress, whose daughter walks the streets for a livelihood, whose little children are shivering with hunger, fever and cold, in the hovels of Faubourg Saint-Marceau, in the cock-lofts of Rouen, and in the cellars of Lille, does any one think of him? What is to become of him? What is done for him? Let him die like a dog!

X

THE TWO PROFILES OF M. BONAPARTE

The curious part of it is that they are desirous of being respected; a general is venerable, a minister is sacred. The Countess d'Andl——, a young woman of Brussels, was at Paris in March, 1852, and was one day in a salon in Faubourg Saint-Honoré when M. de P. entered. Madame d'Andl——, as she went out, passed before him, and it happened that, thinking probably of something else, she shrugged her shoulders. M. de P. noticed it; the following day Madame d'Andl—— was apprised, that henceforward, under pain of being expelled from France like a representative of the people, she must abstain from every mark of approbation or disapprobation when she happened to meet a minister.

Under this corporal-government, and under this countersign-constitution, everything proceeds in military form. The French people consult the order of the day to know how they must get up, how they must go to bed, how they must dress, in what toilette they may go to the sitting of the court, or to the soirée of the prefect; they are forbidden to make mediocre verses; to wear beards; the frill and the white cravat are laws of state. Rule, discipline, passive obedience, eyes cast down, silence in the ranks; such is the yoke under which bows at this moment the nation of initiative and of liberty, the great revolutionary France. The reformer will not stop until France shall be enough of a barrack for the generals to exclaim: "Good!" and enough of a seminary for the bishops to say: "That will do!"

Do you like soldiers? they are to be found everywhere. The Municipal Council of Toulouse gives in its resignation; the Prefect Chapuis-Montlaville replaces the mayor by a colonel, the first deputy by a colonel, and the second deputy by a colonel.[1] Military men take the inside of the sidewalk. "The soldiers," says Mably, "considering themselves in the place of the citizens who formerly made the consuls, the dictators, the censors, and the tribunes, associated with the government of the emperors a species of military democracy." Have you a shako on your head? then do what you please. A young man returning from a ball, passed through Rue de Richelieu before the gate of the National Library; the sentinel took aim at him and killed him; the journals of the following morning said: "The young man is dead," and there it ended. Timour Bey granted to his companions-in-arms, and to their descendants to the seventh generation, impunity for all crimes whatsoever, provided the delinquent had not committed a crime nine times. The sentinel of Rue Richelieu has, therefore, eight citizens more to kill before he can be brought before a court-martial. It is a good thing to be a soldier, but not so good to be a citizen. At the same time, however, this unfortunate army is dishonoured. On the 3rd of December, they decorated the police officers who arrested its representatives and its generals; though it is equally true that the soldiers themselves received two louis per man. Oh,

shame on every side! money to the soldiers, and the cross to the police spies!

Jesuitism and corporalism, this is the sum total of the regime. The whole political theory of M. Bonaparte is composed of two hypocrisies—a military hypocrisy towards the army, a catholic hypocrisy towards the clergy. When it is not Fracasse it is Basile. Sometimes it is both together. In this manner he succeeded wonderfully in duping at the same time Montalembert, who does not believe in France, and Saint-Arnaud who does not believe in God.

Does the Dictator smell of incense? Does he smell of tobacco? Smell and see. He smells of both tobacco and incense. Oh, France! what a government is this! The spurs pass by beneath the cassock. The coup d'état goes to mass, thrashes the civilians, reads its breviary, embraces Catin, tells its beads, empties the wine pots, and takes the sacrament. The coup d'état asserts, what is doubtful, that we have gone back to the time of the Jacqueries; but this much is certain, that it takes us back to the time of the Crusades. Cæsar goes crusading for the Pope. Diex el volt. The Élysée has the faith, and the thirst also, of the Templar.

To enjoy and to live well, we repeat, and to consume the budget; to believe nothing, to make the most of everything; to compromise at once two sacred things, military honour and religious faith; to stain the altar with blood and the standard with holy water; to make the soldier ridiculous, and the priest a little ferocious; to mix up with that great political fraud which he calls his power, the Church and the nation, the conscience of the Catholic and the conscience of the patriot. This is the system of Bonaparte the Little.

All his acts, from the most monstrous to the most puerile, from that which is hideous to that which is laughable, are stamped with this twofold scheme. For instance, national solemnities bore him. The 24th of February and the 4th of May: these are disagreeable or dangerous reminders, which obstinately return at fixed periods. An anniversary is an intruder; let us suppress anniversaries. So be it. We will keep but

one birthday, our own. Excellent. But with one fête only how are two parties to be satisfied—the soldier party and the priest party? The soldier party is Voltairian. Where Canrobert smiles, Riancey makes a wry face. What's to be done? You shall see. Your great jugglers are not embarrassed by such a trifle. The Moniteur one fine morning declares that there will be henceforth but one national fête, the 15th of August. Hereupon a semi-official commentary: the two masks of the Dictator begin to speak. "The 15th of August," says the Ratapoil mouth, "Saint Napoleon's day!" "The 15th of August," says the Tartuffe mouth, "the fête of the Holy Virgin!" On one side the Second-of-December puffs out its cheeks, magnifies its voice, draws its long sabre and exclaims: "Sacre-bleu, grumblers! Let us celebrate the birthday of Napoleon the Great!" On the other, it casts down its eyes, makes the sign of the cross, and mumbles: "My very dear brethren, let us adore the sacred heart of Mary!"

The present government is a hand stained with blood, which dips a finger in the holy water.

1 (Return) These three colonels are MM. Cailhassou, Dubarry and Policarpe.

XI

RECAPITULATION

But we are asked: "Are you going a little too far? are you not unjust? Grant him something. Has he not to a certain extent 'made Socialism?'" and the Credit Foncier, the railroads, and the lowering of the interest are brought upon the carpet.

We have already estimated these measures at their proper value; but, while we admit that this is "Socialism," you would be simpletons to ascribe the credit to M. Bonaparte. It is not he who has made socialism, but time.

A man is swimming against a rapid current; he struggles with unheard-of efforts, he buffets the waves with hand and head, and shoulder, and knee. You say: "He will succeed in going up." A moment after, you look, and he has gone farther down. He is much farther down the river than he was when he started. Without knowing, or

even suspecting it, he loses ground at every effort he makes; he fancies that he is ascending the stream, and he is constantly descending it. He thinks he is advancing, but he is falling hack. Falling credit, as you say, lowering of interest, as you say; M. Bonaparte has already made several of those decrees which you choose to qualify as socialistic, and he will make more. M. Changarnier, had he triumphed instead of M. Bonaparte, would have done as much. Henry V, should he return to-morrow, would do the same. The Emperor of Austria does it in Galicia, and the Emperor Nicholas in Lithuania. But after all, what does this prove? that the torrent which is called Revolution is stronger than the swimmer who is called Despotism.

But even this socialism of M. Bonaparte, what is it? This, socialism? I deny it. Hatred of the middle class it may be, but not socialism. Look at the socialist department par excellence, the Department of Agriculture and of Commerce,—he has abolished it. What has he given you as compensation? the Ministry of Police! The other socialist department is the Department of Public Instruction, and that is in danger: one of these days it will be suppressed. The starting-point of socialism is education, gratuitous and obligatory teaching, knowledge. To take the children and make men of them, to take the men and make citizens of them—intelligent, honest, useful, and happy citizens. Intellectual and moral progress first, and material progress after. The two first, irresistibly and of themselves, bring on the last. What does M. Bonaparte do? He persecutes and stifles instruction everywhere. There is one pariah in our France of the present day, and that is the schoolmaster.

Have you ever reflected on what a schoolmaster really is—on that magistracy in which the tyrants of old took shelter, like criminals in the temple, a certain refuge? Have you ever thought of what that man is who teaches children? You enter the workshop of a wheelwright; he is making wheels and shafts; you say, "this is a useful man;" you enter a weaver's, who is making cloth; you say, "this is a valuable man;" you enter the blacksmith's shop; he is making pick-axes, hammers, and ploughshares; you say, "this is a necessary man;" you salute these men, these skilful

labourers. You enter the house of a schoolmaster,—salute him more profoundly; do you know what he is doing? he is manufacturing minds.

He is the wheelwright, the weaver, and the blacksmith of the work, in which he is aiding God,—the future.

Well! to-day, thanks to the reigning clerical party, as the schoolmaster must not be allowed to work for this future, as this future is to consist of darkness and degradation, not of intelligence and light,—do you wish to know in what manner this humble and great magistrate, the schoolmaster, is made to do his work? The schoolmaster serves mass, sings in the choir, rings the vesper bell, arranges the seats, renews the flowers before the sacred heart, furbishes the altar candlesticks, dusts the tabernacle, folds the copes and the chasubles, counts and keeps in order the linen of the sacristy, puts oil in the lamps, beats the cushion of the confessional, sweeps out the church, and sometimes the rectory; the remainder of his time, on condition that he does not pronounce either of those three words of the devil, Country, Republic, Liberty, he may employ, if he thinks proper, in teaching little children to say their A, B, C.

M. Bonaparte strikes at instruction at the same moment above and below: below, to please the priests, above, to please the bishops. At the same time that he is trying to close the village school, he mutilates the Collège de France. He overturns with one blow the professors' chairs of Quinet and of Michelet. One fine morning, he declares, by decree, Greek and Latin to be under suspicion, and, so far as he can, forbids all intercourse with the ancient poets and historians of Athens and of Rome, scenting in Æschylus and in Tacitus a vague odour of demagogy. With a stroke of the pen, for instance, he exempts all medical men from literary qualification, which causes Doctor Serres to say: "We are dispensed, by decree, from knowing how to read and write."

New taxes, sumptuary taxes, vestiary taxes; nemo audeat comedere praeter duo

fercula cum potagio; tax on the living, tax on the dead, tax on successions, tax on carriages, tax on paper. "Bravo!" shouts the beadle party, "fewer books; tax upon dogs, the collars will pay; tax upon senators, the armorial bearings will pay."—"All this will make me popular!" says M. Bonaparte, rubbing his hands. "He is the socialist Emperor," vociferate the trusty partisans of the faubourgs. "He is the Catholic Emperor," murmur the devout in the sacristies. How happy he would be if he could pass in the latter for Constantine, and in the former for Babeuf! Watchwords are repeated, adhesion is declared, enthusiasm spreads from one to another, the École Militaire draws his cypher with bayonets and pistol-barrels, Abbé Gaume and Cardinal Gousset applaud, his bust is crowned with flowers in the market, Nanterre dedicates rosebushes to him, social order is certainly saved, property, family, and religion breathe again, and the police erect a statue to him.

Of bronze?

Fie! that may do for the uncle.

Of marble! Tu es Pietri et super hanc pietram aedificabo effigiem meam.[1]

That which he attacks, that which he persecutes, that which they all persecute with him, upon which they pounce, which they wish to crush, to burn, to suppress, to destroy, to annihilate, is it this poor obscure man who is called primary instructor? Is it this sheet of paper that is called a journal? Is it this bundle of sheets which is called a book? Is it this machine of wood and iron which is called a press? No, it is thou, thought, it is thou, human reason, it is thou, nineteenth century, it is thou, Providence, it is thou, God!

We who combat them are "the eternal enemies of order." We are—for they can as yet find nothing but this worn-out word—we are demagogues.

In the language of the Duke of Alva, to believe in the sacredness of the human conscience, to resist the Inquisition, to brave the state for one's faith, to draw the sword for one's country, to defend one's worship, one's city, one's home, one's house,

one's family, and one's God, was called vagabondism; in the language of Louis Bonaparte, to struggle for freedom, for justice, for the right, to fight in the cause of progress, of civilisation, of France, of mankind, to wish for the abolition of war, and of the penalty of death, to take au sérieux the fraternity of men, to believe in a plighted oath, to take up arms for the constitution of one's country, to defend the laws,—this is called demagogy.

The man is a demagogue in the nineteenth century, who in the sixteenth would have been a vagabond.

This much being granted, that the dictionary of the Academy no longer exists, that it is night at noonday, that a cat is no longer called cat, and that Baroche is no longer called a knave; that justice is a chimera, that history is a dream, that the Prince of Orange was a vagabond, and the Duke of Alva a just man; that Louis Bonaparte is identical with Napoleon the Great, that they who have violated the Constitution are saviours, and that they who defended it are brigands,—in a word that human probity is dead: very good! in that case I admire this government It works well. It is a model of its species. It compresses, it represses, it oppresses, it imprisons, it exiles, it shoots down with grape-shot, it exterminates, and it even "pardons!" It exercises authority with cannon-balls, and clemency with the flat of the sabre.

"At your pleasure," repeat some worthy incorrigibles of the former party of order, "be indignant, rail, stigmatize, disavow,—'tis all the same to us; long live stability! All these things put together constitute, after all, a stable government."

Stable! We have already expressed ourselves on the subject of this stability.

Stability! I admire such stability. If it rained newspapers in France for two days only, on the morning of the third nobody would know what had become of M. Louis Bonaparte.

No matter; this man is a burden upon the whole age, he disfigures the nineteenth century, and there will be in this century, perhaps, two or three years upon which it

will be recognised, by some shameful mark or other, that Louis Bonaparte sat down upon them.

This person, we grieve to say it, is now the question that occupies all mankind.

At certain epochs in history, the whole human race, from all points of the earth, fix their eyes upon some mysterious spot whence it seems that universal destiny is about to issue. There have been hours when the world has looked towards the Vatican: Gregory VII and Leo X occupied the pontifical throne; other hours, when it has contemplated the Louvre; Philip Augustus, Louis IX, François I, and Henri IV were there; the Escorial, Saint-Just: Charles V dreamed there; Windsor: Elizabeth the Great reigned there; Versailles: Louis XIV shone there surrounded by stars; the Kremlin: one caught a glimpse there of Peter the Great; Potsdam: Frederick II was closeted there with Voltaire. At present, history, bow thy head, the whole universe is looking at the Élysée!

That species of bastard door, guarded by two sentry-boxes painted on canvas, at the extremity of Faubourg Saint-Honoré, that is the spot towards which the eyes of the civilized world are now turned with a sort of profound anxiety! Ah! what sort of place is that, whence no idea has issued that has not been a plot, no action that has not been a crime? What sort of place is that wherein reside all kinds of cynicism and all kinds of hypocrisy? What sort of place is that where bishops elbow Jeanne Poisson on the staircase, and, as a hundred years ago, bow to the ground before her; where Samuel Bernard laughs in a corner with Laubardemont; which Escobar enters, arm-in-arm with Guzman d'Alfarache; where (frightful rumour), in a thicket in the garden, they despatch, it is said, with the bayonet men whom they dare not bring to trial; where one hears a man say to a woman who is weeping and interceding: "I overlook your love-affairs, you must overlook my hatreds!" What sort of place is that where the orgies of 1852 intrude upon and dishonour the mourning of 1815! where Cæsarion, with his arms crossed, or his hands behind his back, walks under

those very trees, and in those very avenues still haunted by the indignant phantom of Cæsar?

That place is the blot upon Paris; that place is the pollution of the age; that door, whence issue all sorts of joyous sounds, flourishes of trumpets, music, laughter, and the jingling of glasses; that door, saluted during the day by the passing battalions; illuminated at night; thrown wide open with insolent confidence,—is a sort of public insult always present. There is the centre of the world's shame.

Alas! of what is France thinking? Of a surety, we must awake this slumbering nation, we must take it by the arm, we must shake it, we must speak to it; we must scour the fields, enter the villages, go into the barracks, speak to the soldier who no longer knows what he is doing, speak to the labourer who has in his cabin an engraving of the Emperor, and who, for that reason, votes for everything they ask; we must remove the radiant phantom that dazzles their eyes; this whole situation is nothing but a huge and deadly joke. We must expose this joke, probe it to the bottom, disabuse the people,—the country people above all,—excite them, agitate them, stir them up, show them the empty houses, the yawning graves, and make them touch with their finger the horror of this régime. The people are good and honest; they will comprehend. Yes, peasant, there are two, the great and the little, the illustrious and the infamous,—Napoleon and Naboleon!

Let us sum up this government! Who is at the Élysée and the Tuileries? Crime. Who is established at the Luxembourg? Baseness. Who at the Palais Bourbon? Imbecility. Who at the Palais d'Orsay? Corruption. Who at the Palais de Justice? Prevarication. And who are in the prisons, in the fortresses, in the dungeons, in the casemates, in the hulks, at Lambessa, at Cayenne, in exile? Law, honour, intelligence, liberty, and the right.

Oh! ye proscribed, of what do you complain? You have the better part.

1 (Return) We read in the Bonapartist correspondence:—"The committee appointed

by the clerks of the prefecture of police, considers that bronze is not worthy to represent the image of the Prince; it will therefore be executed in marble; and it will be placed on a marble pedestal. The following inscription will be cut in the costly and superb stone: 'Souvenir of the oath of fidelity to the Prince-President, taken by the clerks of the prefecture of police, the 29th of May, 1862, before M. Pietri, Prefect of Police.'

"The subscriptions of the clerks, whose zeal it was necessary to moderate, will be apportioned as follows:—Chief of division 10fr., chief of a bureau 6fr., clerks at a salary of 1,800fr., 3fr.; at 1,500fr., 2fr. 50c.; and finally, at 1,200fr., 2fr. It is calculated that this subscription will amount to upwards of 6,000 francs."

BOOK III

THE CRIME

But this government, this horrible, hypocritical, and stupid government,—this government which causes us to hesitate between a laugh and a sob, this gibbet-constitution on which all our liberties are hung, this great universal suffrage and this little universal suffrage, the first naming the President, and the other the legislators; the little one saying to the great one: "Monseigneur, accept these millions," and the great one saying to the little one: "Be assured of my consideration;" this Senate,—this Council of State—whence do they all come? Great Heaven! have we already reached the point that it is necessary to remind the reader of their source?

Whence comes this government? Look! It is still flowing, it is still smoking,—it is blood!

The dead are far away, the dead are dead.

Ah! it is horrible to think and to say, but is it possible that we no longer think of it?

Is it possible that, because we still eat and drink, because the coachmakers' trade is

flourishing, because you, labourer, have work in the Bois de Boulogne, because you, mason, earn forty sous a day at the Louvre, because you, banker, have made money in the mining shares of Vienna, or in the obligations of Hope and Co., because the titles of nobility are restored, because one can now be called Monsieur le Comte or Madame la Duchesse, because religious processions traverse the streets on the Fête-Dieu, because people enjoy themselves, because they laugh, because the walls of Paris are covered with bills of fêtes and theatres,—is it possible that, because these things are so, men forgot that there are corpses lying beneath?

Is it possible, that, because one has been to the ball at the École Militaire, because one has returned home with dazzled eyes, aching head, torn dress and faded bouquet, because one has thrown one's self on one's couch, and fallen asleep, thinking of some handsome officer,—is it possible that one no longer remembers that under the turf, in an obscure grave, in a deep pit, in the inexorable gloom of death, there lies a motionless, ice-cold, terrible multitude,—a multitude of human beings already become a shapeless mass, devoured by worms, consumed by corruption, and beginning to blend with the earth around them—who existed, worked, thought, and loved, who had the right to live, and who were murdered?

Ah! if men recollect this no longer, let us recall it to the minds of those who forget! Awake, you who sleep! The dead are about to pass before your eyes.

EXTRACT FROM AN UNPUBLISHED BOOK ENTITLED THE CRIME OF THE SECOND OF DECEMBER[1]

"THE DAY OF THE 4th OF DECEMBER "THE COUP D'ÉTAT AT BAY

I

"The resistance had assumed unexpected proportions.

"The combat had become menacing; it was no longer a combat, but a battle, which was engaged on all sides. At the Élysée and the different departments, people began

to turn pale; they had wished for barricades, and they had got them.

"All the centre of Paris was becoming covered with improvised redoubts; the quarters thus barricaded formed a sort of immense trapezium, between the Halles and Rue Rambuteau on one side, and the boulevards on the other; bounded on the east by Rue du Temple, and on the west by Rue Montmartre. This vast network of streets, cut in all directions by redoubts and entrenchments, assumed every hour a more terrible aspect, and was becoming a kind of fortress. The combatants at the barricades pushed their advance guards as far as the quays. Outside the trapezium, which we have described, the barricades extended, as we have said, as far as Faubourg Saint-Martin, and to the neighbourhood of the canal. The quarter of the schools, whither the Committee of Resistance had despatched Representative de Flotte, had risen even more generally than on the evening before; the suburbs were taking fire; the drums were beating to arms at the Batignolles; Madier de Montjau was arousing Belleville; three enormous barricades were in course of construction at the Chapelle-Saint-Denis. In the business streets the citizens were delivering up their muskets, and the women were making lint. 'All is going well! Paris is up!' exclaimed B——, to us, as he entered the Committee of Resistance with a face radiant with joy.[2] Fresh intelligence reached us every instant; all the permanent committees of the different quarters placed themselves in communication with us. The members of the committee deliberated and issued orders and instructions for the combat in every direction. Victory seemed certain. There was a moment of enthusiasm and joy when all these men, still standing between life and death, embraced one another.—'Now,' exclaimed Jules Favre, 'let but a regiment come over, or a legion, and Louis Bonaparte is lost!'—'To-morrow, the Republic will be at the Hotel de Ville!' said Michel de Bourges. All was ferment, all was excitement; in the most peaceful quarters the proclamations were torn down, and the ordinances defaced. On Rue Beaubourg, the women cried from the windows to the men employed in erecting a barricade: 'Courage!' The agitation reached even to Faubourg Saint-Germain. At the

headquarters on Rue de Jerusalem, which is the centre of the great cobweb that the police spreads over Paris, everyone trembled; their anxiety was immense, for they saw the possibility that the Republic would triumph. In the courtyards, in the bureaus, and in the passages, the clerks and sergents-de-ville began to talk with affectionate regret of Caussidiere.

"If one can believe what has oozed out from this den, the prefect, Maupas, who had been so warm in the cause the evening before, and was put forward so odiously, began to back out and lose courage. It seemed as if he were listening with terror to the noise, as of a rising flood, made by the insurrection—by the holy and legitimate insurrection of the right. He stammered and hesitated while the word of command died away upon his tongue. 'That poor young man has the colic,' said the former prefect, Carlier, on leaving him. In this state of consternation, Maupas clung to Morny. The electric telegraph maintained a perpetual dialogue from the Prefecture of Police to the Department of the Interior, and from the Department of the Interior to the Prefecture of Police. All the most alarming news, all the signs of panic and confusion were passed on, one after another, from the prefect to the minister. Morny, who was less frightened, and who is, at least, a man of spirit, received all these shocks in his cabinet It is reported that at the first communication he said: 'Maupas is ill;' and to the question: 'What is to be done,' replied by the telegraph: 'Go to bed!' To the second question he still replied: 'Go to bed!' and, as the third, losing all patience he answered: 'Go to bed and be d——d!'

"The zeal of the government agents was fast giving way and beginning to change sides. A courageous man, who had been despatched by the Committee of Resistance to rouse Faubourg Saint-Marceau, was arrested on Rue des Fossés-Saint-Victor, with his pockets filled with the proclamations and decrees of the Left. He was immediately marched off in the direction of the Prefecture of Police. He expected to be shot. As the escort which was conducting him passed the Morgue on Quai-Saint-Michel, musket-shots were heard in the Cité. The sergent-de-ville at the

head of the escort said to the soldiers: 'Go back to your guard-house; I will take care of the prisoner,' As soon as the soldiers were gone, he cut the cords with which the prisoner's hands were fastened, and said to him: 'Go, I spare your life; don't forget that it was I who set you at liberty. Look at me well, so that you may know me again.'

"The principal military accomplices held a council. The question was discussed whether it was not necessary for Louis Bonaparte to quit Faubourg Saint-Honoré immediately, and remove either to the Invalides or to the Palais du Luxembourg, two strategic points more easy to defend against a coup de main than the Élysée. Some preferred the Invalides, others the Luxembourg; the subject gave rise to an altercation between two generals.

"It was at this moment that the ex-King of Westphalia, Jérôme Bonaparte, seeing that the coup d'état was tottering to its fall, and having some care for the morrow, wrote his nephew the following significant letter:—

"My dear Nephew,—The blood of Frenchmen has been spilt; stop its effusion by a serious appeal to the people. Your sentiments are not rightly understood. Your second proclamation, in which you speak of the plebiscitum, is ill received by the people, who do not look upon it as re-establishing the right of suffrage. Liberty possesses no guarantee if there is not an Assembly to contribute to the constitution of the Republic. The army has the upper hand. Now is the moment to complete the material victory by a moral victory, and that which a government cannot do when beaten, it ought to do when victorious. After destroying the old parties, bring about the restoration of the people; proclaim that universal suffrage, sincere, and acting in harmony with the greatest liberty, shall name the President and the Constituent Assembly to save and restore the Republic.

"It is in the name of my brother's memory, and sharing his horror for civil war, that I now write to you; trust my long experience, and remember that France, Europe, and

posterity will be called on to judge your conduct.

"Your affectionate uncle,

"Jérôme Bonaparte.

"On Place de la Madeleine, the two representatives, Fabvier and Crestin, met and accosted each other. General Fabvier directed his colleague's attention to four pieces of cannon which, turning in an opposite direction to that they had before been pursuing, left the Boulevard and galloped off towards the Élysée. 'Can it be that the Élysée is already on the defensive?' said the general. Crestin, pointing to the façade of the palate of the Assembly, on the other side of Place de la Révolution, replied: 'General, to-morrow we shall be there.'—From, some garrets that look on the stables of the Élysée, three travelling carriages were observed from an early hour in the morning, loaded, with the horses put to, and the postilions in their saddles ready to start.

"The impulsion was really given, the movement of rage and hatred was becoming universal, and the coup d'état seemed to be lost; one shock more and Louis Bonaparte would fall. Let the day but end as it had begun, and all was over. The coup d'état was approaching a state of despair. The hour for supreme resolutions was come. What did he intend doing? It was necessary that he should strike a great blow, an unexpected blow, a terrible blow. He was reduced to this alternative: to perish, or to save himself by a frightful expedient.

"Louis Bonaparte had not quitted the Élysée. He was in a cabinet on the ground floor, near the splendid gilt saloon, where, as a child, in 1815, he had been present at the second abdication of Napoleon. He was there alone; orders had been given that no one should be allowed to have access to him. From time to time the door was opened a little way, and the grey head of General Roguet, his aide-de-camp, appeared. The general was the only person who was allowed to open this door and enter the room. The general brought news, more and more alarming, and frequently

terminated what he had to say with the words: 'The thing doesn't work;' or 'Things are going badly.' When he had finished, Louis Bonaparte, who was seated with his elbows on a table and his feet on the fire-dogs, before a roaring fire, turned his head half round on the back of his chair, and, in a most phlegmatic tone, and without apparent emotion, invariably answered in the following words: 'Let them execute my orders.' The last time that General Roguet entered the room in this manner with bad news, it was nearly one o'clock—he himself has related these details, to the honour of his master's calmness. He told the Prince that the barricades in the centre of the town still held out, and were increasing in number; that on the boulevards the cries of 'Down with the dictator' (he did not dare say 'Down with Soulouque'), and hisses everywhere hailed the troops as they passed; that before Galerie Jouffroy a major had been pursued by the crowd, and that at the corner of the Café Cardinal a captain of the staff had been torn from his horse. Louis Bonaparte half rose from his chair, and gazing fixedly at the general, calmly said to him: 'Very well! let Saint-Arnaud be told to execute my orders.'

"What were these orders?

"We shall see.

"Here we pause to reflect, and the narrator lays down his pen with a species of hesitation and distress of mind. We are approaching the abominable crisis of that mournful day, the 4th; we are approaching that monstrous deed from which emerged the success of the coup d'état, dripping with blood. We are about to unveil the most horrible of the premeditated acts of Louis Bonaparte; we are about to reveal, to narrate, to describe what all the historiographers of the 2nd of December have concealed; what General Magnan carefully omitted in his report; what, even at Paris, where these things were seen, men scarcely dare to whisper to each other. We are about to enter upon the ghastly.

"The 2nd of December is a crime covered with darkness, a coffin closed and silent,

from the cracks in which streams of blood gush forth.

"We are about to raise the coffin-lid."

1 (Return) By Victor Hugo. This book will shortly be published. It will be a complete narrative of the infamous performance of 1851. A large part of it is already written; the author is at this moment collecting materials for the rest.

He deems it apropos to enter somewhat at length into the details of this work, which he has imposed upon himself as a duty.

The author does himself the justice to believe that in writing this narrative,—the serious occupation of his exile,—he has had constantly present to his mind the exalted responsibility of the historian.

When it shall appear, this narrative will surely arouse numerous and violent outcries; the author expects no less; one does not with impunity cut to the quick of a contemporaneous crime, at the moment when that crime is omnipotent. However that may be, and however violent the outcries, more or less interested, and to the end that we may judge beforehand of its merit, the author feels called upon to explain in what way and with what scrupulous devotion to the truth this narrative will have been written, or, to speak more accurately, this report of the crime will have been drawn. This history of the 2nd of December will contain, in addition to the general facts, which everybody knows, a very large number of unknown facts which are brought to light for the first time therein. Several of these facts the author himself saw and touched and passed through; of them he can say: Quœque ipse vidi et quorum pars fui. The members of the Republican Left, whose conduct was so fearless, saw these facts as he did, and he will not lack their testimony. For all the rest, the author has resorted to a veritable judicial investigation; he has constituted himself, so to speak, the examining magistrate of the performance; every actor in the drama, every combatant, every victim, every witness has deposed before him; for all the doubtful facts, he has brought the opposing declarations, and at need the

witnesses, face to face. As a general rule historians deal with dead facts; they touch them in the tomb with their judicial wands, cause them to rise and question them. He has dealt with living facts.

All the details of the 2nd of December have in this wise passed before his eyes; he has recorded them all, weighed them all—not one has escaped him. History will be able to complete this narration, but not to weaken it. The magistrates were recreant to their trust, he has performed their functions. When direct, spoken testimony has failed him, he has sent to the spot what one might call genuine investigating commissions. He might cite many a fact for which he has prepared genuine interrogatories to which detailed replies were made. He repeats that he has subjected the 2nd of December to a long and severe examination. He has carried the torch so far as he was able. Thanks to this investigation he has in his possession nearly two hundred reports from which the book in question will emerge. There is not a single fact beneath which, when the book is published, the author will not be able to put a name. It will be readily understood that he will abstain from doing so, that he will even substitute sometimes for the real names, yes and for accurate indications of places, designations as obscure as possible, in view of the pending proscriptions. He has no desire to furnish M. Bonaparte with a supplemental list.

It is undoubtedly true that in this narrative of the 2nd of December, the author is not, any more than in this present book, "impartial," as people are accustomed to say of a history when they wish to praise the historian. Impartiality—a strange virtue, which Tacitus does not possess. Woe to him who should remain impartial in face of the bleeding wounds of liberty! In presence of the deed of December 2nd, 1851, the author feels that all human nature rises to arms within his breast; he does not conceal it from himself, and every one should perceive it when reading him. But in him the passion for truth equals the passion for right. The wrathful man does not lie. This history of the 2nd of December, therefore,—he declares as he is about to quote a few pages of it,—will have been written, we have just seen by what method, under

conditions of the most absolute reality.

We deem it profitable to detach from it and to publish in this place a chapter which, we think, will make an impression on men's minds, in that it casts a new light on the "success" of M. Bonaparte. Thanks to the judicious reticences of the official historiographers of the 2nd of December, people are not sufficiently apprised how near the coup d'état came to being abortive, and they are altogether ignorant as to the means by which it was saved. We proceed to place this special detail before the reader's eyes.

[The author has concluded to reserve for this book alone the chapter in question which now forms an integral part thereof. He has therefore rewritten for the History of a Crime, the narrative of the events of December 4, with new facts, and from another point of view.]

2 (Return) A Committee of Resistance, charged with the task of centralizing the action and directing the combat, had been named on the evening of the 2nd of December, by the members of the Left assembled at the house of Representative Lafon, Quai Jemmappes, No. 2. This committee, which was obliged to change its retreat twenty-seven times in four days, and which, so to say, sat night and day, and did not cease to act for a single instant during the various crises of the coup d'état, was composed of Representatives Carnot, de Flotte, Jules Favre, Madier de Montjau, Michel de Bourges, Schœlcher, and Victor Hugo.

II

"From an early hour in the morning,—for here (we insist upon this point) premeditation is unquestionable,—from an early hour in the morning, strange placards had been posted up at all the street-corners; we have transcribed these placards, and our readers will remember them. During sixty years that the cannon of revolution have, on certain days, boomed through Paris, and that the government, when menaced, has had recourse to desperate measures, nothing has ever been seen

like these placards. They informed the inhabitants that all assemblages, no matter of what kind, would be dispersed by armed force, without previous warning. In Paris, the metropolis of civilization, people do not easily believe that a man will push his crime to the last extremity; and, therefore, these notices had been looked upon as a means of intimidation that was hideous and barbarous, but almost ridiculous.

"The public were wrong. These placards contained in germ Louis Bonaparte's whole plan. They were seriously meant.

"One word as to the spot which is about to be the theatre of the unheard-of drama, prepared and perpetrated by the man of December.

"From the Madeleine to Faubourg Poissonnière, the boulevard was unobstructed; from the Gymnase Theatre to the Theatre of the Porte Saint-Martin it was barricaded, as were Rue de Bondy, Rue Neslay, Rue de la Lune, and all the streets which bound, or debouch at, Porte Saint-Denis and Porte Saint-Martin. Beyond Porte Saint-Martin the boulevard was again free as far as the Bastile, with the exception of a single barricade, which had been begun opposite the Château d'Eau. Between Porte Saint-Denis and Porte Saint-Martin, seven or eight redoubts crossed the street at intervals. A square of four barricades shut in Porte Saint-Denis. Of these four barricades, that one which looked towards the Madeleine, and which was destined to receive the first impact of the troops, had been constructed at the culminating point of the boulevard, with its left resting on the corners of Rue de la Lune, and its right on Rue Mazagran. Four omnibuses, five furniture-moving vans, the office of the inspector of hackney coaches, which had been thrown down, the vespasian columns, which had been broken up, the public seats on the boulevards, the flag-stones of the steps on Rue de la Lune, the entire iron railing of the sidewalk, which had been wrenched from its place at a single effort by the powerful hand of the crowd—such was the composition of this fortification, which was hardly sufficient to block the boulevard, which, at this point, is very broad. There were no

paving-stones, as the roadway is macadamized. The barricade did not even extend from one side of the boulevard to the other, but left a large open space on the side toward Rue Mazagran, where there was a house in course of erection. Observing this gap, a well-dressed young man got upon the scaffolding, and, quite unaided, without the least hurry, without even taking the cigar from his mouth, cut all the ropes of the scaffolding. The people at the neighbouring windows laughed and applauded him. An instant afterwards the scaffolding fell all at once, and with a loud noise; this completed the barricade.

"While this redoubt was being completed, a score or more of men entered the Gymnase Theatre by the stage-door, and came out a few seconds later with some muskets and a drum which they had found in the wardrobe, and which were a part of what, in theatrical language, are termed 'the properties,' One of the men took the drum and began beating to arms. The others, with the overturned vespasian columns, carriages thrown on their sides, blinds and shutters torn from their hinges, and old scenery, constructed, opposite the guard-house of Boulevard Bonne-Nouvelle, a small barricade as a sort of advanced post, or rather a lunette, which commanded Boulevards Poissonnière and Montmartre as well as Rue Hauteville. The troops had evacuated the guard-house in the morning. They took the flag belonging to it and planted it on the barricade. It was this same flag which was afterwards declared by the newspapers of the coup d'état to have been a 'red flag.'

"Some fifteen men took up their position at this advanced post. They had muskets, but no cartridges, or, at most, very few. Behind them, the large barricade, which covered Porte Saint-Denis, was held by about a hundred combatants, in the midst of whom were observed two women and an old man with white hair, supporting himself on a cane with his left hand, and, in his right, holding a musket. One of the two women wore a sabre suspended over her shoulder; while helping to tear up the railing of the sidewalk, she had cut three fingers of her right hand with the sharp edge of an iron bar. She showed the wound to the crowd, crying: 'Vive la

République!' The other woman had ascended to the top of the barricade, where, leaning on the flag-staff, and escorted by two men in blouses, who were armed with muskets and presented arms, she read aloud the call to arms issued by the Representatives of the Left. The crowd clapped their hands.

"All this occurred between noon and one o'clock. On this side of the barricades an immense number of people covered the pavement on both sides of the boulevard; in some places, silent; in others, crying: 'Down with Soulouque! Down with the traitor!'

"From time to time, mournful processions traversed the multitude; they consisted of files of closed litters borne by hospital attendants and soldiers. At their head marched men holding long poles, from which hung blue placards, on which was inscribed, in huge letters: Service of the Military Hospitals. On the curtains of the litters: Wounded, Ambulance. The weather was dull and rainy.

"At this time there was a great crowd at the Bourse. On all the walls bill-stickers were posting despatches announcing the adhesion of the departments to the coup d'état. Even the stockbrokers, while trying to bull the market, laughed and shrugged their shoulders at these placards. Suddenly, a well-known speculator, who had for two days been a great admirer of the coup d'état, made his appearance, pale and breathless, like a fugitive, and exclaimed: 'They are firing on the boulevards!'

"This is what had happened:

III

"A little after one o'clock, a quarter of an hour after the last order given by Louis Bonaparte to General Roguet, the boulevards throughout their whole length, from the Madeleine, were suddenly covered with cavalry and infantry. Almost the whole of Carrelet's division, composed of the five brigades of Cotte, Bourgon, Canrobert, Dulac, and Reibell, making a total of sixteen thousand four hundred and ten men, had taken up their position, and extended in echelon from Rue de la Paix to

Faubourg Poissonnière. Each brigade had its battery with it. Eleven pieces were counted on Boulevard Poisonnière alone. Two of the guns, with their muzzles turned different ways, were levelled at the entrance to Rue Montmartre and Faubourg Montmartre respectively; no one knew why, as neither the street nor the faubourg presented even the appearance of a barricade. The spectators, who crowded the sidewalks and the windows, gazed in dismay at all these guns, sabres, and bayonets.

"'The troops were laughing and chatting,' says one witness. Another witness says: 'The soldiers acted strangely. Most of them were leaning on their muskets, with the butt-end on the ground, and seemed nearly falling from fatigue, or something else.' One of those old officers who are accustomed to read a soldier's thoughts in his eyes, General L——, said, as he passed Café Frascati: 'They are drunk.'

"There were now some indications of what was about to happen.

"At one moment, when the crowd was crying to the troops, 'Vive la République!' 'Down with Louis Bonaparte!' one of the officers was heard to say, in a low voice: 'There's going to be some pigsticking!'

"A battalion of infantry debouches from Rue Richelieu. Before the Café Cardinal it is greeted by a unanimous cry of 'Vive la République!' A writer, the editor of a Conservative paper, who happens to be on the spot, adds: 'Down with Soulouque!' The staff officer in command of the detachment aims a blow at him with his sabre, which, being dodged by the journalist, cuts in two one of the small trees on the boulevard.

"As the 1st Regiment of Lancers, commanded by Colonel Rochefort, reached a point abreast of Rue Taitbout, a numerous crowd covered the pavement of the boulevard. They were residents of the quarter, tradesmen, artists, journalists, and among them several young mothers leading their children by the hand. As the regiment was passing, men and women—every one—cried: 'Vive la Constitution!' 'Vive la Loi!' 'Vive la République!' Colonel Rochefort,—the same who had presided at the

banquet given on the 31st of October, 1851, at the Êcole Militaire, by the 1st Regiment of Lancers to the 7th Regiment of Lancers, and who, at this banquet, had proposed as a toast, 'Prince Louis-Napoleon, the head of the State, the personification of that order of which we are the defenders!'—this colonel, when the crowd uttered the above perfectly lawful cry, spurred his horse into the midst of them through the chairs on the sidewalk, while the Lancers precipitated themselves after him, and men, women, and children were indiscriminately cut down. 'A great number remained dead on the spot,' says a defender of the coup d'état; and adds, 'It was done in a moment.'[1]

"About two o'clock, two howitzers were pointed at the extremity of Boulevard Poissonnière, a hundred and fifty paces from the little advanced barricade at the Bonne Nouvelle guard-house. While placing the guns in position, two of the artillerymen, who are not often guilty of a false manœvre, broke the pole of a caisson. 'Don't you see they are drunk!' exclaimed a man of the lower classes.

"At half past two, for it is necessary to follow the progress of this hideous drama minute by minute, and step by step, fire was opened before the barricade languidly, and almost as if done for amusement. The officers appeared to be thinking of anything but a fight. We shall soon see, however, of what they were thinking.

"The first cannon-ball, badly aimed, passed above all the barricades and killed a little boy at the Château d'Eau as he was drawing water from the fountain.

"The shops were shut, as were also almost all the windows. There was, however, one window left open in an upper story of the house at the corner of Rue du Sentier. The curious spectators continued to assemble mainly on the southern side of the street. It was an ordinary crowd and nothing more,—men, women, children, and old people who looked upon the languid attack and defence of the barricade as a sort of sham fight.

"This barricade served as a spectacle pending the moment when it should become a

pretext.

1 (Return) Captain Mauduit, Révolution Militaire du 2 Décembre, p. 217.

IV

"The soldiers had been firing, and the defenders of the barricade returning their fire, for about a quarter of an hour, without any one being wounded on either side, when suddenly, as if by an electric shock, an extraordinary and threatening movement took place, first in the infantry, then in the cavalry. The troops suddenly faced about.

"The historiographers of the coup d'état have asserted that a shot, directed against the soldiers, was fired from the window which had remained open at the corner of Rue du Sentier. Others say that it was fired from the roof of the house at the corner of Rue Notre-Dame-de-Recouvrance and Rue Poissonnière. According to others, it was a pistol shot and was fired from the roof of the tall house at the corner of Rue Mazagran. The shot is contested, but what cannot be contested is that, for having fired this problematical shot, which was perhaps nothing more than the slamming of a door, a dentist, who lived in the next house, was shot. The question resolves itself into this: Did any one hear a pistol or musket shot fired from one of the houses on the boulevard? Is this the fact, or is it not? a host of witnesses deny it.

"If the shot was really fired, there still remains a question: Was it a cause, or was it a signal?

"However this may be, all of a sudden, as we have said before, cavalry, infantry, and artillery faced towards the dense crowd upon the sidewalks, and, no one being able to guess why, unexpectedly, without motive, 'without parley,' as the infamous proclamations of the morning had announced, the butchery began, from the Gymnase Theatre to the Bains Chinois, that is to say, along the whole length of the richest, the most frequented, and the most joyous boulevard of Paris.

"The army began shooting down the people at close range.

"It was a horrible and indescribable moment: the cries, the arms raised towards

heaven, the surprise, the terror, the crowd flying in all directions, a shower of balls falling on the pavement and bounding to the roofs of the houses, corpses strewn along the street in a moment, young men falling with their cigars still in their mouths, women in velvet gowns shot down by the long rifles, two booksellers killed on their own thresholds without knowing what offence they had committed, shots fired down the cellar-holes and killing any one, no matter who, the Bazaar riddled with shells and bullets, the Hôtel Sallandrouze bombarded, the Maison d'Or raked with grape-shot, Tortoni's carried by assault, hundreds of corpses stretched upon the boulevard, and a torrent of blood on Rue de Richelieu.

"The narrator must here again crave permission to suspend his narrative.

"In the presence of these nameless deeds, I who write these lines declare that I am the recording officer. I record the crime, I appeal the cause. My functions extend no further. I cite Louis Bonaparte, I cite Saint-Arnaud, Maupas, Moray, Magnan, Carrelet, Canrobert, and Reybell, his accomplices; I cite the executioners, the murderers, the witnesses, the victims, the red-hot cannon, the smoking sabres, the drunken soldiers, the mourning families, the dying, the dead, the horror, the blood, and the tears,—I cite them all to appear at the bar of the civilized world.

"The mere narrator, whoever he might be, would never be believed. Let the living facts, the bleeding facts, therefore, speak for themselves. Let us hear the witnesses.

V

"We shall not print the names of the witnesses, we have said why, but the reader will easily recognize the sincere and poignant accent of reality.

"One witness says:—

"'I had not taken three steps on the sidewalk, when the troops, who were marching past, suddenly halted, faced about towards the south, levelled their muskets, and, by an instantaneous movement, fired upon the affrighted crowd.

"'The firing continued uninterruptedly for twenty minutes, drowned from time to

time by a cannon-shot.

"'At the first volley, I threw myself on the ground and crept along on the pavement like a snake to the first door I found open.

"'It was a wine-shop, No. 180, next door to the Bazaar de l'Industrie. I was the last person who went in. The firing still continued.

"'In this shop there were about fifty persons, and among them five or six women and two or three children. Three poor wretches were wounded when they came in; two of them died, after a quarter of an hour of horrible agony: the third was still alive when I left the shop at four o'clock; however, as I afterwards learned, he did not survive his wound.

"'In order to give an idea of the crowd on whom the troops fired, I cannot do better than mention some of the persons assembled in the shop.

"'There were several women, two of whom had come into the quarter to buy provisions for their dinners; a little lawyer's clerk, who had been sent on an errand by his master; two or three frequenters of the Bourse; two or three house-holders; several workmen, in wretched blouses, or in nothing. One of the unhappy beings who had taken refuge in the shop produced a deep impression on me. He was a man of about thirty, with light hair, wearing a gray paletot. He was going with his wife to dine with his family in Faubourg Montmartre, when he was stopped on the boulevard by the passage of the column of troops. At the very beginning, at the first discharge, both he and his wife fell down; he rose and was dragged into the wine-shop, but he no longer had his wife on his arm, and his despair cannot be described. In spite of all we could say, he insisted that the door should be opened so that he might run and look for his wife amid the grape-shot that was sweeping the street. It was all we could do to keep him with us for an hour. The next day, I learned that his wife had been killed, and her body found in the Cité Bergère. A fortnight afterwards I was informed that the poor wretch, having threatened to apply

the lex talionis to M. Bonaparte, had been arrested and sent to Brest, on his way to Cayenne. Almost all the persons assembled in the wine-shop held monarchical opinions, and I saw only two, a compositor named Meunier, who had formerly worked on the Réforme, and a friend of his, who declared themselves to be Republicans. About four o'clock, I left the shop.'

"Another witness, one of those who fancied he heard the pistol-shot on Rue de Mazagran, adds:—

"'This shot was a signal to the soldiers for a fusillade on all the houses and their windows, the roar of which lasted at least thirty minutes. The discharge was simultaneous from Porte Saint-Denis as far as the Café du Grand Balcon. The artillery soon took part with the musketry.'

"Another witness says:—

"'At quarter past three, a singular movement took place. The soldiers who were facing Porte Saint-Denis, suddenly faced about, resting on the houses from the Gymnase, the Maison du Pont-de-Fer, and the Hôtel Saint-Phar, and immediately, a running fire was directed on the people on the opposite side of the way, from Rue Saint-Denis to Rue Richelieu. A few minutes were sufficient to cover the pavement with dead bodies; the houses were riddled with balls, and this paroxysm of fury on the part of the troops continued for three quarters of an hour.'

"Another witness says:—

"'The first cannon-shots aimed at the barricade Bonne-Nouvelle served as a signal to the rest of the troops, who fired almost simultaneously at every one within range of their muskets.'

"Another witness says:—

"'No words are powerful enough to describe such an act of barbarity. One must himself have seen in order to be bold enough to speak of it, and to attest the truth of so unspeakable a deed.'

"'The soldiers fired thousands and thousands of shots—the number is inappreciable[1] —on the unoffending crowd, and that without any sort of necessity. There was a desire to produce a deep impression. That was all.'

"Another witness says:—

"'The troops of the line, followed by the cavalry and the artillery, arrived on the boulevard at a time when the general excitement was very great. A musket-shot was fired from the midst of the troops, and it was easy to see that it had been fired in the air, from the smoke which rose perpendicularly. This was the signal for firing on the people and charging them with the bayonet without warning. This is a significant fact, and proves that the military wanted the pretence of a motive for beginning the massacre which followed.'

"Another witness tells the following tale:—

"'The cannon, loaded with grape-shot, cut up all the shop-fronts from the shop Le Prophète to Rue Montmartre. From Boulevard Bonne-Nouvelle they must have fired also on the Maison Billecoq, for it was struck at the corner of the wall on the Aubusson side, and the ball, having traversed the wall, penetrated the interior of the house.'

"Another witness, one of those who deny the shot, says:—

"'People have endeavoured to excuse this fusillade and these murders, by pretending that the troops had been fired on from the windows of some of the houses. Not only does General Magnan's official report seem to deny this rumour, but I assert that the discharge was instantaneous from Porte Saint-Denis to Porte Montmartre, and that there was not, previously to the general discharge, a single shot fired separately, either from the windows or by the soldiers, from Faubourg Saint-Denis to Boulevard des Italiens.'

"Another witness, who is also one of those who did not hear the shot, says:—

"'The troops were marching past the veranda of the Café Tortoni, where I had been

about twenty minutes, when, before any report of fire-arms had reached us, they quickened their pace; the cavalry went off at a gallop, the infantry at double-quick. All of a sudden we saw, coming from the direction of Boulevard Poissonnière, a sheet of fire, which spread and came on rapidly. I can vouch for the fact that, before the fusillade began, there had been no report of fire-arms, and that not a single shot had been fired from any of the houses between the Café Frascati and the spot where I stood. At last we saw the soldiers before us level their muskets and threaten us. We took refuge on Rue Taitbout, under a porte-cochère. At the same moment the balls flew over our heads, and all around us. A woman was killed ten paces from me just as I ran under the porte-cochère. I can swear that, up to that time, there was neither barricade nor insurgents; there were hunters, and there was game flying from them,—that is all.'

"This image 'hunters and game' is the one which immediately suggests itself to the mind of all those who beheld this horrible proceeding. We meet with the same simile in the testimony of another witness:—

"'At the end of my street, and I know that the same thing was observed in the neighbouring ones as well, we saw the gendarmes mobiles with their muskets, and themselves in the position of hunters waiting for the game to rise, that is to say, with their muskets at their shoulders, in order that they might take aim and fire more quickly.

"'In order that those persons who had fallen wounded near the doors on Rue Montmartre might receive the first necessary attentions, we could see the doors open from time to time and an arm stretched out, which hastily drew in the corpse, or dying man, whom the balls were striving to claim as their own.'

"Another witness hits upon the same image:—

"'The soldiers stationed at the corners of the streets awaited the people as they passed, like hunters lying in wait for their game, and as soon as they saw them in the

street they fired at them as at a target. A great many persons were killed in this manner on Rue du Sentier, Rue Rougemont, and on Rue du Faubourg-Poissonnière.'

"'"Go on," said the officers to the unoffending citizens who demanded their protection. At these words they went their way quickly and with confidence; but it was merely a watchword which meant death; for they had gone only a few steps before they fell.'

"'At the moment the firing began on the boulevards,' says another witness, 'a bookseller near the carpet warehouse was hastily closing his shop, when a number of fugitives who were striving to obtain admittance were suspected by the troops of the line, or the gendarmerie mobile, I do not know which, of having fired upon them. The soldiers broke into the bookseller's house. The bookseller endeavoured to explain matters; he was taken out, alone, before his own door, and his wife and daughters had only time to throw themselves between him and the soldiers when he fell dead. His wife had her thigh traversed by a ball, while his daughter was saved by the steel of her stays. I have been informed that his wife has since gone mad.'

"Another witness says:—

"'The soldiers entered the two booksellers' shops between Le Prophète and M. Sallandrouze's. The murders committed there have been proved. The two booksellers were massacred on the pavement. The other prisoners were put to death in the shops.'

"Let us conclude with three extracts which it is impossible to transcribe without a shudder:—

"'For the first quarter of an hour of this scene of horror,' says a witness, 'the firing, which for a moment became less sharp, caused some persons who were only wounded to suppose that they might get up. Of those who were lying before Le Prophète two rose. One of them fled by Rue du Sentier, from which he was only a few yards away. He reached it amid a shower of balls which carried away his cap.

The other could only succeed in raising himself on his knees, in which position, with his hands clasped, he besought the soldiers to spare his life; but he fell at once, shot dead. The next day one could see in the side of the veranda of Le Prophète a spot only a few feet in extent, which more than a hundred balls had struck.'

"'At the end of Rue Montmartre as far as the fountain, a distance of about sixty paces, there were sixty bodies of men and women, mothers, children, and young girls. All these unfortunate creatures had fallen victims of the first volley fired by the troops and the gendarmerie, who were stationed on the opposite side of the boulevard. They all fled at the first discharge, took a few steps, then fell to rise no more. One young man had taken refuge in a gateway, and tried to shelter himself behind the projection of the wall towards the boulevards. After ten minutes of badly aimed shots, he was hit, in spite of all his efforts to render himself as small as possible by drawing himself up to his full height, and he too was seen to fall, to rise no more.'

"Another:—

"'The plate glass and the windows in the Maison du Pont-de-Fer were all shattered. One man, who was in the courtyard, went mad with fright. The cellars were filled with women who had sought refuge there, but in vain. The soldiers fired into the shops and the cellar windows. From Tortoni's to the Gymnase Theatre similar things took place. This lasted more than an hour.'

1 (Return) The witness means incalculable, but we have preferred to change nothing in the original depositions.

VI

"Let us confine ourselves to these extracts. Let us close this mournful inquest. We have proofs enough.

"The general execration of the deed is visible. A hundred other depositions which we have before us repeat the same facts in almost the same words. It is at present

certain, it is proved, it is beyond the possibility of doubt, it cannot be denied, it is evident as the sunlight, that on Thursday, the 4th of December, 1851, the unoffending citizens of Paris, the citizens who were not in any way mixed up with the fighting, were shot down without warning, and massacred merely for the sake of intimidation, and that it is not possible to attach any other meaning to Monsieur Bonaparte's mysterious command.

"This execution lasted until nightfall. For more than an hour, there was, as it were, a debauch of musketry and artillery. The cannonade and the platoon-firing crossed each other indiscriminately; at one time the soldiers were killing one another. The battery of the 6th Regiment of Artillery, which belonged to Canrobert's brigade, was dismounted; the horses, rearing in the midst of the balls, broke the axles, the wheels and the poles, and of the whole battery, in less than a minute there remained only one gun in commission. A whole squadron of the 1st Lancers was obliged to seek refuge in a shed on Rue Saint-Fiacre. Seventy bullet-holes were counted the next day in the pennons of the lances. A sort of frenzy had seized the soldiers. At the corner of Rue Rougemont, and in the midst of the smoke, one general was waving his arms as if to restrain them; a medical officer of the 27th was nearly killed by the soldiers whom he endeavoured to check. A sergeant said to an officer who took hold of his arm: 'Lieutenant, you are betraying us.' The soldiers had no consciousness of themselves; they had gone mad with the crime they were ordered to commit. There comes a moment when the very outrageousness of what you are doing makes you redouble your blows. Blood is a kind of horrible wine; men get drunk with carnage.

"It seemed as if some invisible hand were launching death from the midst of a cloud. The soldiers were no longer aught but projectiles.

"Two guns in the roadway of the boulevard were pointed at the front of a single house, that of M. Sallandrouze, and fired volley after volley at it, at close range. This house, which is an old mansion of hewn stone, remarkable for its almost

monumental flight of steps, being split by bullets as if by iron wedges, opened, gaped, and cracked from top to bottom. The soldiers fired faster and faster. At every discharge, the walls cracked again. Suddenly an officer of artillery galloped up, and cried, 'Hold! hold!' The house was leaning forward; another ball, and it would have fallen on the guns and the gunners.

"The artillerymen were so drunk that many of them, not knowing what they were doing, allowed themselves to be killed by the rebound of their guns. The balls came simultaneously from Porte Saint-Denis, Boulevard Poissonnière and Boulevard Montmartre; the drivers, hearing them whizzing past their ears in every direction, lay down upon their horses, while the gunners hid underneath the caissons and behind the wagons; soldiers were seen to drop their caps and fly in dismay into Rue Notre-Dame-de-Recouvrance; troopers, losing their heads, fired their carbines in the air, while others dismounted and made a breastwork of their horses. Two or three of the latter, without riders, ran here and there, mad with terror.

"The most horrible amusements were blended with the massacre. The tirailleurs from Vincennes had established themselves at one of the barricades on the boulevard which they had carried by assault, and from thence they practised shooting at persons passing at a distance. From the neighbouring houses, such shocking dialogues as this were heard: 'I'll bet I bring that fellow down.'—'I'll bet you don't.'—'I'll bet I do.' And the shot followed. When the man fell, one could guess by the roar of laughter. Whenever a woman passed, the officers cried: 'Fire at that woman; fire at the women!'

"This was one of the watchwords; on Boulevard Montmartre, where the bayonet was greatly in requisition, a young staff-captain cried: 'Prick the women!'

"One woman, with a loaf under her arm, thought she might cross Rue Saint-Fiacre. A tirailleur shot her down.

"On Rue Jean-Jacques-Rousseau they did not go so far. A woman cried, 'Vive la

République!' she was merely whipped by the soldiers. But let us return to the boulevard.

"One of the passers-by, a bailiff, was struck by a ball aimed at his head; he fell on his hands and knees, imploring mercy! He received thirteen more balls in his body. He survived: by a miraculous chance, not one of his wounds was mortal. The ball which struck his head tore the skin, and made the circuit of his skull without fracturing it.

"An old man of eighty, being found concealed somewhere or other, was brought before the steps of Le Prophète, and shot: he fell. 'He will have no bump on his head,' said a soldier; the old man had fallen upon a heap of dead bodies. Two young men from Issy, who had been married only a month, to two sisters, were crossing the boulevard on their way from business. They saw the muskets levelled at them, and threw themselves on their knees, crying, 'We married the two sisters!' They were killed. A dealer in cocoa, named Robert, living on Faubourg Poissonnière, No. 97, fled, with his can on his back, down Rue Montmartre; he was killed.[1] A boy of thirteen, a saddler's apprentice, was passing along the boulevard opposite the Café Vachette. The soldiers took aim at him. He uttered the most heart-rending cries, and, holding up a bridle that he had in his hand, waved it in the air, exclaiming, 'I am sent on an errand!' He was killed. Three balls perforated his breast. All along the boulevards were heard the shrieks and heavy falls of the wounded, whom the soldiers pierced with their bayonets, and then left, without taking the trouble to despatch them.

"Some villains seized the opportunity to steal. The treasurer of a company, whose offices are on Rue de la Banque, left at two o'clock to collect a note on Rue Bergère, returned with the money, and was killed on the boulevard. When his body was removed, he had neither ring, nor watch, nor the money he was taking to his office.

"On the pretence that shots had been fired at the troops, the latter entered ten or

twelve houses, at random, and despatched with their bayonets every one they found. In all the houses on the boulevard, there are metal pipes by which the dirty water runs out into the gutter. The soldiers, with no idea why it was so, conceived a feeling of mistrust or hatred for such and such a house, closed from top to bottom, mute and gloomy, and like all the houses on the boulevard, seeming uninhabited, so silent was it. They knocked at the door; the door opened, and they entered. An instant after there was seen to flow from the mouth of the metal pipes a red, smoking stream. It was blood.

"A captain, with his eyes starting from their sockets, cried to the soldiers: 'No quarter!' A major vociferated: 'Enter the houses and kill every one!'

"Sergeants were heard to say: 'Pitch into the Bedouins; hit them hard!' 'In the uncle's time,' says a witness, 'the soldiers used to call the civilians pékins. At present, we are Bedouins; the soldiers massacred the people to the cry of "Give it to the Bedouins."'

"At the Frascati Club, where many of the regular frequenters of the place were assembled, among them an old general, they heard the thunder of musketry and artillery, and could not believe that the troops were firing ball. They laughed, and said to one another: 'It's blank cartridges. What a mise-en-scène! What an actor this Bonaparte is!' They thought they were at the Circus. Suddenly the soldiers entered, mad with rage, and were about to shoot every one. They had no idea of the danger they were running. They continued to laugh. One of the eye-witnesses said to us: 'We thought that this was part of the buffoonery.' However, seeing that the soldiers continued to threaten them, they at last understood.—'Kill them all!' cried the soldiers. A lieutenant, who recognized the old general, prevented them from carrying out their threat. In spite of this, a sergeant said: 'Hold your d——d tongue, lieutenant; this isn't your affair, it's ours.'

"The troops killed for the mere sake of killing. A witness says: 'In the courtyards of the houses, they shot even the horses and dogs.'

"In the house next Frascati's, at the corner of Rue Richelieu, the soldiers were coolly going to shoot even the women and children, who were already drawn up in a mass before a platoon for that purpose when a colonel arrived. He stopped the massacre, boxed up these poor trembling creatures in the Passages des Panoramas, where he locked them in, and saved them. A celebrated writer, Monsieur Lireux, after having escaped the first balls, was led about, during an hour, from one guard-house to another, preparatory to being shot. It required a miracle to save him. The celebrated artist, Sax, who happened to be in the musical establishment of M. Brandus, was about to be shot, when a general recognized him. Everywhere else the people were killed indiscriminately.

"The first person killed in this butchery—history has in like manner preserved the name of the first person killed at the massacre of Saint Bartholomew—was one Théodore Debaecque, who lived in the house at the corner of Rue du Sentier, where the carnage began.

1 (Return) "We may name the witness who saw this. He is one of the proscribed; it is M. Versigny, a representative of the people. He says:—

"'I can still see, opposite Rue du Croissant, an unfortunate itinerant vender of cocoa, with his tin can on his back, stagger, then gradually sink in a heap, and fall dead before a shop. Armed only with his bell, he had received all by himself the honour of being fired at by a whole platoon.'

"The same witness adds:—'The soldiers swept the streets with their guns, even where there was not a paving-stone moved from its place, not a single combatant.'"

VII

"When the slaughter came to an end,—that is to say when it was black night, and it had begun in broad day,—the dead bodies were not removed; they were so numerous that thirty-three of them were counted before a single shop, that of M. Barbedienne. Every square of ground left open in the asphalt at the foot of the trees

on the boulevards was a reservoir of blood. 'The dead bodies,' says a witness, 'were piled up in heaps, one upon another, old men, children, blouses and paletots, assembled pell-mell, in an indescribable mass of heads, arms, and legs.'

"Another witness describes thus a group of three individuals: 'Two had fallen on their backs; and the third, having tripped over their legs, had fallen upon them.' The single corpses were rare and attracted more notice than the others. One young man, well dressed, was seated against a wall, with his legs apart, his arms half folded, one of Verdier's canes in his hand, and seemed to be looking at what was going on around him; he was dead. A little farther on, the bullets had nailed against a shop a youth in velveteen trousers who had some proof-sheets in his hand. The wind fluttered these bloody proofs, on which the fingers of the corpse were still closed. A poor old man, with white hair, was lying in the middle of the road, with his umbrella at his side. His elbow almost touched a young man in patent leather boots and yellow gloves, who had his eye-glass still in his eye. A few steps away, with her head on the sidewalk, and her feet in the road, lay a woman of the people, who had attempted to escape, with her child in her arms. Both were dead; but the mother still tightly grasped her child.'

"Ah! you will tell me, M. Bonaparte, that you are very sorry, but that it was an unfortunate affair; that in presence of Paris, ready to rise, it was necessary to adopt a decided course, and that you were forced to this extremity; that, as regards the coup d'état, you were in debt; that your ministers were in debt; that your aides-de-camp were in debt; that your footmen were in debt; that you were answerable for them all; and that, deuce take it! a man cannot be a prince without spending, from time to time, a few millions too much; that one must amuse one's self and enjoy life a bit; that the Assembly was to blame for not having understood this, and for seeking to restrict you to two paltry millions a year, and, what is more, to force you to resign your authority at the expiration of your four years, and to execute the Constitution; that, after all, you could not leave the Élysée to enter the debtors' prison at Clichy;

that you had in vain had recourse to those little expedients which are provided for by Article 405; that exposure was at hand, that the demagogical press was chattering, that the matter of the gold ingots threatened to become known, that you were bound to respect the name of Napoleon, and that, on my word! having no other alternative, rather than become one of the vulgar swindlers named in the code, you preferred to be one of the great assassins of history!

"So then, instead of polluting, this blood has purified you! Very good.

"I resume.

VIII

"When all was finished, Paris came to see the sight. The people flocked in crowds to those terrible places; no one interfered with them. This was what the butcher wanted. Louis Bonaparte had not done all this to hide it afterwards.

"The southern side of the boulevard was covered with torn cartridge wads; the sidewalk on the northern side disappeared beneath the mortar torn from the fronts of the houses by the bullets, and was as white as if snow had fallen on it; while pools of blood left large dark patches on that snow of ruins. The foot of the passer-by avoided a corpse only to tread upon fragments of broken glass, plaster, or stone; some houses were so riddled by the grape and cannon-balls, that they seemed on the point of tumbling down; this was the case with M. Sallandrouze's, which we have already mentioned, and the mourning warehouse at the corner of Faubourg Montmartre. 'The Billecoq house,' says a witness, 'is, at the present moment, still propped up by wooden beams, and the front will have to be partly rebuilt. The balls have made holes in the carpet warehouse in several places.' Another witness says: 'All the houses from the Cercle des Étrangers to Rue Poissonnière were literally riddled with balls, especially on the right-hand side of the boulevard. One of the large panes of plate glass in the warehouses of La Petite Jeannette received certainly more than two hundred for its share. There was not a window that had not its ball.

One breathed an atmosphere of saltpetre. Thirty-seven corpses were heaped up in the Cité Bergère; the passers-by could count them through the iron railings. A woman was standing at the corner of Rue Richelieu. She was looking on. Suddenly she felt that her feet were wet. 'Why, has it been raining?' she said, 'my feet are in the water.'—'No, madame,' replied a person who was passing, 'it is not water.'—Her feet were in a pool of blood.

"On Rue Grange-Batelière three corpses were seen in a corner, quite naked.

"During the butchery, the barricades on the boulevards had been carried by Bourgon's brigade. The corpses of those who had defended the barricade at Porte Saint-Denis, of which we have already spoken at the beginning of our narrative, were piled up before the door of the Maison Jouvin. 'But,' says a witness, 'they were nothing compared to the heaps which covered the boulevard.'

"About two paces from the Théâtre des Variétés, the crowd stopped to look at a cap full of brains and blood, hung upon a tree.

"A witness says: 'A little beyond the Variétés, I came to a corpse lying on the ground with its face downwards; I tried to raise it, aided by others, but we were repelled by the soldiers. A little farther on, there were two bodies, a man and a woman; then one alone, a workman' (we abridge the account). 'From Rue Montmartre to Rue du Sentier one literally walked in blood; at certain spots, it covered the sidewalk some inches deep, and, without exaggeration, one was obliged to use the greatest caution not to step into it. I counted there thirty-three corpses. The sight was too much for me: I felt great tears rolling down my cheeks. I asked leave to cross the road, in order to enter my own house, and my request was granted as a favour!'

"Another witness says: 'The boulevard presented a horrible sight. We literally walked in blood. We counted eighteen corpses in about five and twenty paces.'

"Another witness, the keeper of a wine-shop on Rue du Sentier, says: 'I went along Boulevard du Temple to my house. When I got home, I had an inch of blood around

the bottom of my trousers.'

"Representative Versigny has this to say: 'We could see, in the distance, almost as far as Porte Saint-Denis, the immense bivouac-fires of the infantry. The light from them, with the exception of that from a few rare lamps, was all we had to guide us amid that horrible carnage. The fighting in the daytime was nothing compared to those corpses and that silence. R. and I were half-dead with horror. A man was passing us; hearing one of my exclamations, he came up to me, took my hand, and said: "You are a republican; and I was what is called a friend of order, a reactionary, but one must be forsaken of God, not to execrate this horrible orgy. France is dishonoured." And he left us, sobbing.'

"Another witness, who allows us to give his name, a Legitimist, the honourable Monsieur de Cherville, deposes as follows: 'In the evening, I determined on continuing my sad inspection. On Rue Le Peletier I met Messieurs Bouillon and Gervais (of Caen). We walked a few steps together, when my foot slipped. I clung to M. Bouillon. I looked at my feet. I had walked into a large pool of blood. M. Bouillon then informed me, that, being at his window, in the morning, he saw a druggist, whose shop he pointed out to me, shutting his door. A woman fell; the druggist rushed forward to raise her; at the same moment, a soldier, ten paces off, aimed at him and lodged a bullet in his head. Overcome with wrath, and forgetting his own danger, M. Bouillon exclaimed to the passers-by: "You will all bear witness to what has taken place."'

"About eleven o'clock at night, when the fires of the bivouacs were everywhere lighted, M. Bonaparte allowed the troops to amuse themselves. It was like a fête-de-nuit on the boulevards. The soldiers laughed and sang, as they threw into the fire the débris of the barricades. After this, as at Strasbourg and Boulogne, money was distributed among them. Let us hear what a witness says: 'I saw, at Porte Saint-Denis, a staff-officer give two hundred francs to the chief of a detachment of

twenty men, with these words: "The prince ordered me to give you this money, to be distributed among your brave soldiers! the marks of his satisfaction will not be confined to this."—Each soldier received ten francs.'

"On the evening of the battle of Austerlitz, the Emperor said: 'Soldiers, I am content with you.'

"Another person adds: 'The soldiers, with cigars in their mouths, twitted the passers-by and jingled the money in their pockets.' Another says: 'The officers broke the rolls of louis d'or like sticks of chocolate.'

"The sentinels allowed only women to pass; whenever a man made his appearance, they cried: 'Be off!' Tables were spread in the bivouacs, and officers and soldiers drank around them. The flame of the braziers was reflected on all those merry faces. The corks and capsules of the champagne bottles floated on the red torrents of blood. From bivouac to bivouac the soldiers exchanged loud cries and obscene jokes. They saluted one another with: 'Long live the grenadiers!' 'Long live the lancers!' and all joined in, 'Long live Louis-Napoleon!' One heard the clinking of glasses, and the crash of broken bottles. Here and there, in the shadow, women, with a taper of yellow wax or a lantern in their hands, prowled among the dead bodies, gazing at those pale faces, one after another, and seeking a son, a father, or a husband.

IX

"Let us hasten to have done with these ghastly details.

"The next day, the fifth, something terrible was seen in the cemetery of Montmartre.

"An immense space, the exact location of which is unknown to this day, was 'utilized' for the temporary interment of some of those who had been massacred. They were buried with their heads above ground, in order that their relations might recognize them. Most of them had also their feet above ground, with a little earth upon their breasts. The crowd flocked to the spot, the sightseers pushed one here and

there, they wandered about among the graves, and, at times, one felt the earth giving way beneath one's feet: one was walking on the stomach of a corpse. One turned and beheld a pair of boots, of sabots, or of women's shoes; while on the other side was the head, which the pressure on the body caused to move.

"An illustrious witness, the great sculptor David, who is now proscribed and wandering far from France, says:—

"'In the cemetery of Montmartre, I saw about forty bodies with their clothes still on them; they had been placed side by side and a few shovelfuls of earth hid all except their heads, which had been left uncovered in order that they might be recognized by their relations. There was so little earth that their feet were still visible; the crowd, horrible to say, was walking on their bodies. Among them were young men with noble features, bearing the stamp of courage; in the midst was a poor woman, a baker's servant, who had been killed while she was carrying bread to her master's customers, and near her a young girl who sold flowers on the boulevards. Those persons who were looking for friends who had disappeared, were obliged to trample the bodies under foot, in order to obtain a near view of their faces. I heard a man of the lower classes say, with an expression of horror: "It is like walking upon a spring-board."'

"The crowd continued to flock to the various spots where the victims had been carried, especially to the Cité Bergère, so that, on this day, the fifth, as the numbers increased to such an extent as to become troublesome, and as it was necessary to get rid of them, these words, written in capital letters on a large placard, were to be seen at the entrance of the Cité Bergère: 'There are no more dead bodies here.'

"The three naked corpses on Rue Grange-Batelière were not removed until the evening of the fifth.

"It is evident, and we insist upon it, that at first, and for the advantage which it wished to derive from it, the coup d'état did not make the least endeavour to conceal

its crime; shame did not come until later; the first day, on the contrary, it flaunted it. It was not content with atrocity, it must needs add cynicism. Massacre was but a means; the end was intimidation.

X

"Was this end attained?

"Yes.

"Immediately afterwards, as early as the evening of December 4, the public excitement subsided. Paris was frozen with stupor. The indignation that raised its voice before the coup d'état, held its peace before the carnage. The affair had ceased to resemble anything in history. One felt that one had to deal with a man of a hitherto unknown type.

"Crassus crushed the gladiators; Herod slaughtered the infants; Charles IX exterminated the Huguenots; Peter of Russia, the Strelitz; Mehemet Ali, the Mamelukes; Mahmoud, the Janissaries; while Danton massacred the prisoners. Louis Bonaparte had just discovered a new sort of massacre—the massacre of the passers-by.

"This massacre ended the struggle. There are times when what should exasperate a people, strikes them with terror. The population of Paris felt that a ruffian had his foot upon his throat. It no longer offered any resistance. That same evening Mathieu (of the Drôme) entered the place where the Committee of Resistance was sitting and said to us: 'We are no longer in Paris, we are no longer under the Republic; we are at Naples under the sway of King Bomba.'

"From that moment, in spite of all the efforts of the committee, of the representatives, and of their courageous allies, there was, save at certain points only,—such as the barricade of the Petit-Carreau, for instance, where Denis Dussoubs, the brother of the representative, fell so heroically,—naught but a resistance which resembled the last convulsions of despair rather than a combat. All

was finished.

"The next day, the 5th, the victorious troops paraded on the boulevards. A general was seen to show his naked sword to the people, and to exclaim: 'The Republic—here it is!'

"Thus an infamous butchery, the massacre of the passers-by, was included, as a supreme necessity, in the 'measure' of the 2nd of December. To undertake it, a man must be a traitor; to make it successful, he must be an assassin.

"It was by this proceeding that the coup d'état conquered France and overcame Paris. Yes, Paris! It is necessary for one to repeat it again and again to himself,—it was at Paris that all this happened!

"Great God! The Russians entered Paris brandishing their lances and singing their wild songs, but Moscow had been burnt; the Prussians entered Paris, but Berlin had been taken; the Austrians entered Paris, but Vienna had been bombarded; the English entered Paris, but the camp at Boulogne had menaced London; they came to our barriers, these men of all nations, with drums beating, trumpets resounding, colours flying, swords drawn, cannon rumbling, matches lighted, drunk with excitement, enemies, conquerors, instruments of vengeance, shrieking with rage before the domes of Paris the names of their capitals,—London, Berlin, Vienna, Moscow! The moment, however, that they crossed the threshold of the city, the moment that the hoofs of their horses rang upon the pavement of our streets, Englishmen, Austrians, Prussians, Russians, on entering Paris, beheld in its walls, its buildings, its people, something predestined, something venerable and august; they all felt a holy sentiment of respect for the sacred city; they all felt that they had before them, not the city of one people, but the city of the whole human race; they all lowered the swords they had raised! Yes, to massacre the Parisians, to treat Paris like a place taken by assault, to deliver up to pillage one quarter of the town, to outrage the second Eternal City, to assassinate civilization in her very sanctuary, to

shoot down old men, children, and women, in this illustrious spot, this home of the world; that which Wellington forbade his half-naked Highlanders, and Schwartzenberg his Croats to do; that which Blucher did not suffer his Landwehr to do, and which Platow dared not allow his Cossacks to undertake,—all these things hast thou, base wretch, caused to be done by French soldiers!"

BOOK IV

THE OTHER CRIMES

I

SINISTER QUESTIONS

What was the number of the dead?

Louis Bonaparte, conscious of the advent of history, and imagining that a Charles IX can extenuate a Saint Bartholomew, has published as a pièce justificative, a so-called "official list of the deceased persons." In this "Alphabetical List,"[1] you will meet with such items as these: "Adde, bookseller, 17 Boulevard Poissonnière, killed in his house; Boursier, a child seven years and a-half old, killed on Rue Tiquetonne; Belval, cabinetmaker, 10 Rue de la Lune, killed in his house; Coquard, house-holder at Vire (Calvados), killed on Boulevard Montmartre; Debaecque, tradesman, 45 Rue de Sentier, killed in his house; De Couvercelle, florist, 257 Rue Saint-Denis, killed in his house; Labilte, jeweller, 63 Boulevard Saint-Martin, killed in his house; Monpelas, perfumer, 181 Rue Saint-Martin, killed in his house; Demoiselle Grellier, housekeeper, 209 Faubourg Saint-Martin, killed on Boulevard Montmartre; Femme Guillard, cashier, 77 Faubourg Saint-Denis, killed on Boulevard Saint-Denis; Femme Garnier, confidential servant, 6 Boulevard Bonne-Nouvelle, killed on Boulevard Saint-Denis; Femme Ledaust, housekeeper, 76 Passage du Caire, at the Morgue; Françoise Noël, waistcoat-maker, 20 Rue des Fossés-Montmartre, died at La Charité; Count Poninski, annuitant, 32 Rue de la

Paix, killed on Boulevard Montmartre; Femme Raboisson, dressmaker, died at the National Hospital; Femme Vidal, 97 Rue de Temple, died at the Hôtel-Dieu; Femme Séguin, embroideress, 240 Rue Saint-Martin, died at the hospital Beaujon; Demoiselle Seniac, shop-woman, 196 Rue du Temple, died at the hospital Beaujon; Thirion de Montauban, house-holder, 10 Rue de Lancry, killed at his own door," etc., etc.

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.

1 (Return) 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.

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."

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 Francœur, 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.

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.

1 (Return) 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 (Return) "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 (Return) 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

4 (Return) 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."

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!"

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.

1 (Return) Littérature et Philosophie Mêlées 1830.

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.

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.

1 (Return) 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."

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.

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!

1 (Return) As Senator.

2 (Return) As First President of the Court of Appeal at Rouen.

3 (Return) As a member of his Municipal Council.

BOOK VIII

PROGRESS CONTAINED IN THE COUP D'ÉTAT

I

THE QUANTUM OF GOOD CONTAINED IN EVIL

Among us democrats, many well-meaning minds were stupefied by the event of the 2nd of December. It disconcerted some, discouraged others, and terrified many. I have seen some who cried: Finis Poloniae. As for myself, since at certain times I am obliged to say, I, and to speak in the face of history as a witness, I proclaim that I saw that event without perturbation. I say more than this, that at times, in the face of the 2nd of December, I declare myself satisfied.

When I can abstract myself from the present, when for a moment I can turn my eyes away from all the crimes, from all the blood spilt, from all the victims, from all the proscribed, from those hulks that echo the death rattle, from those deadful penal settlements of Lambessa and Cayenne, where death is swift, from that exile where death is slow, from this vote, from this oath, from this vast stain of shame inflicted upon France, which is growing wider and wider each day; when, forgetting for a few moments these painful thoughts, the usual obsession of my mind, I succeed in confining myself within the severe calmness of the politician, and in considering, not the fact, but the consequences of the fact; then, among many results, disastrous beyond doubt, a considerable, real, enormous progress becomes manifest to me, and, from that moment, while I am still of those whom the 2nd of December exasperates, I am no longer of those whom it afflicts.

Fixing my eyes upon certain points in the future, I say to myself: "The deed was infamous, but the result is good."

Attempts have been made to explain the inexplicable victory of the coup d'état in a hundred ways. A true balance has been struck between all possible resistances, and

they are neutralized one by the other: the people were afraid of the bourgeoisie, the bourgeoisie were afraid of the people;—the faubourgs hesitated before the restoration of the majority, fearing, wrongfully however, that their victory would bring back to power that Right which is so thoroughly unpopular; the shopocracy recoiled before the red republic; the people did not understand; the middle classes shuffled; some said, "Whom shall we send to the legislative palace?" others: "whom are we going to see at the Hotel de Ville?" In fine, the rude repression of 1848, the insurrection crushed by cannon-shot, the quarries, the casements, and the transportations—a living and terrible recollection;—and then—Suppose some one had succeeded in beating the call to arms! Suppose a single legion had sallied forth! Suppose M. Sibour had been M. Affre, and had thrown himself in the midst of the bullets of the pretorians! Suppose the High Court had not suffered itself to be driven away by a corporal! Suppose the judges had followed the example of the representatives, and we had seen the scarlet gowns on the barricades, as we saw the scarfs! Suppose a single arrest had miscarried! Suppose a single regiment had hesitated! Suppose the massacre on the boulevards had not taken place, or had turned out ill for Louis Bonaparte! etc., etc., etc. This is all true, and yet what has been, was what was to be. Let us say again, under the shadow of that monstrous victory vast and definitive progress is taking place. The 2nd of December succeeded, because in more than one point of view, I repeat, it was good that it should succeed. All explanations are just, but all are vain. The invisible hand is mingled in all this. Louis Bonaparte committed the crime; Providence brought about the result.

In truth, it was essential that order should come to the end of its logic. It was essential that people should learn, and should learn for all time, that, in the mouths of the men of the past, that word order signifies false oaths, perjury, pillage of the public cash-box, civil war, courts-martial, confiscation, sequestration, deportation, transportation, proscription, fusillades, police, censorship, degradation of the army, disregard of the people, debasement of France, a dumb Senate, the tribune

overthrown, the press suppressed, a political guillotine, murder of liberty, garroting of the right, violation of laws, sovereignty of the sword, massacre, treason, ambuscades. The spectacle that we have before our eyes is a profitable spectacle. What we see in France since the 2nd of December is the debauch of order.

Yes, the hand of Providence is in it. Reflect, too, upon this: for fifty years the Republic and the Empire have filled men's imaginations, the one with its souvenirs of terror, the other with its souvenirs of glory. Of the Republic men saw only 1793, that is to say, the terrible revolutionary necessity,—the furnace; of the Empire they saw only Austerlitz. Hence a prejudice against the Republic, and prestige for the Empire. Now, what is the future of France to be? is it the Empire? No, it is the Republic.

It became necessary to reverse that situation, to suppress the prestige of that which cannot be restored, and to suppress the prejudice against that which must be. Providence did it: it destroyed those two mirages. February came and took away from the Republic its terror; Louis Bonaparte came and deprived the Empire of its prestige. Henceforth, 1848, fraternity, is superimposed upon 1793, terror; Napoleon the Little is superimposed upon Napoleon the Great. The two grand things, one of which alarmed and the other dazzled, are receding. We perceive '93 only through its justification, and Napoleon only through his caricature; the foolish fear of the guillotine vanishes, the empty imperial popularity disappears. Thanks to 1848, the Republic no longer terrifies; thanks to Louis Bonaparte, the Empire no longer fascinates. The future has become possible. These are the secrets of the Almighty!

But the word republic is not sufficient; it is the thing republic that is wanting; well, we shall have the thing with the word. Let us develop this thought.

II

THE FOUR INSTITUTIONS THAT STAND OPPOSED TO THE REPUBLIC

Awaiting the marvellous but tardy simplifications which the union of Europe and the

democratic federation of the continent will some day bring forth, what will be in France, the form of the social edifice, of whose ill-defined and luminous outlines the thinking man already has a glimpse, through the darkness of dictatorships?

That form is this:—

The sovereign commune, ruled by an elective mayor; universal suffrage everywhere, subordinate to the national unity only in respect to acts of general concern; so much for the administration. Syndics and upright men arranging the private differences of associations and industries; the jury, magistrate of the fact, enlightening the judge, magistrate of the law; elective judges; so much for justice. The priest excluded from everything except the church, living with his eye fixed on his book and on Heaven, a stranger to the budget, unknown to the state, known only to his flock, no longer possessing authority, but possessing liberty; so much for religion. War confined to the defence of the territory. The whole nation constituting a national guard, divided into three districts, and able to rise as one man; so much for power. The law for ever, the right for ever, the ballot for ever, the sword nowhere.

Now, what were the obstacles to this future, to this magnificent realization of the democratic ideal?

There were four material obstacles, namely:—

The standing army. Centralized administration. The office-holding clergy. The irremovable magistracy.

III

SLOW MOVEMENT OF NORMAL PROGRESS

What these four obstacles are, what they were even under the Republic of February, even under the Constitution of 1848; the evil they produced, the good they prevented, what sort of past they perpetuated, what excellent social order they postponed, the publicist saw, the philosopher knew, the nation did not know.

These four institutions, immense, ancient, solid, supported one upon another, composite at their base and summit, growing like a hedge of tall old trees, their roots under our feet, their branches over our heads, smothered and crushed on all sides the scattered germs of the new France. Where life and movement, association, local liberty, communal initiative should have been, there was administrative despotism; where there should have been the intelligent vigilance, armed at need, of the patriot and the citizen, there was the passive obedience of the soldier; where the quick Christian faith should have gushed forth, there was the Catholic priest; where there should have been justice, there was the judge. And the future was there, under the feet of suffering generations, which could not rise and were waiting.

Was this known among the people? Was it suspected? Was it divined?

No!

Far from it. In the eyes of the greater part, and of the middle classes in particular, these four obstacles were four buttresses. Army, magistracy, administration, clergy, these were the four virtues of order, the four social powers, the four sacred pillars of the old French structure.

Attack that, if you dare!

I have no hesitation is saying, that in the state of blindness in which are plunged the best minds, with the measured march of normal progress, with our assemblies, of which I shall not be suspected to be the detractor, but which, when they are both honest and timid, as is often the case, are disposed to be led only by their average men, that is, by mediocrity; with the committees of initiative, their delays and ballottings, if the 2nd of December had not brought its overwhelming demonstration, if Providence had not taken a hand, France would have remained condemned for an indefinite term to its irremovable magistracy, to administrative centralization, to the standing army, and to the office-holding clergy.

Surely, the power of the tribune and of the press combined, these two great forces of

civilization,—it is not I who seek to deny or belittle them; but see how many efforts of all kinds it would have required, in every direction, and under every form, by the tribune and by the newspaper, by the book and by the spoken word, to succeed even in shaking the universal prejudice in favor of these four fatal institutions! How many to succeed in overthrowing them! to exhibit the evidence to the eyes of all, to overcome selfish, passionate or unintelligent resistance, thoroughly to enlighten public opinion, the consciences of the people, and the ruling powers, to cause this fourfold reform to force its way first into ideas, then into the laws. Reckon up the speeches, the writings, the newspaper articles, the projects of laws, the counter-projects, the amendments, the amendments to amendments, the reports, the counter-reports, the facts, the incidents, the polemics, the discussions, the assertions, the denials, the storms, the steps forward, the steps backward, the days, the weeks, the months, the years, the quarter-century, the half-century!

IV

WHAT AN ASSEMBLY WOULD HAVE DONE

I imagine, on the benches of an assembly, the most intrepid of thinkers, a brilliant mind, one of those men who, when they ascend the tribune, feel it beneath them like the tripod of the oracle, suddenly grow in stature and become colossal, surpass by a head the massive appearances that mask reality, and see clearly the future over the high, frowning wall of the present. That man, that orator, that seer, seeks to warn his country; that prophet seeks to enlighten statesmen; he knows where the breakers are; he knows that society will crumble by means of these four false supports: centralized government, standing army, irremovable judges, salaried priesthood; he knows it, he desires that all should know it, he ascends the tribune and says:—

"I denounce to you four great public perils. Your political system bears that within it that will destroy it. It is incumbent upon you to transform your government root and branch, the army, the clergy, and the magistracy: to suppress here, retrench there,

remodel everything, or perish through these four institutions, which you consider as lasting elements, but which are elements of dissolution."

Murmurs. He exclaims: "Do you know what your centralized administration may become in the hands of a perjured executive power? A vast treason, carried into effect at one blow over the whole of France, by every office-holder without exception."

Murmurs break out anew with redoubled violence; cries of "order!" The orator continues: "Do you know what your standing army may become at any moment? An instrument of crime. Passive obedience is the bayonet ever pointed at the heart of the law. Yes, here, in this France, which is the initiatress of the world, in this land of the tribune and the press, in this birthplace of human thought, yes, the time may come when the sword will rule, when you, inviolable legislators, will be collared by corporals, when our glorious regiments will transform themselves, for the profit of one man and to the shame of the nation, into gold-laced hordes and pretorian bands, when the sword of France will become a thing that strikes from behind, like the dagger of a hired assassin, when the life-blood of the first city in the world, done to death, will splash the gold epaulettes of your generals!"

The murmur becomes an uproar, cries of "Order!" are heard from all quarters. The orator is interrupted: "You have been insulting the government, now you insult the army!" The President calls the orator to order.

The orator resumes:

"And if it should happen some day that a man, having in his hand the five hundred thousand officeholders who constitute the government, and the four hundred thousand soldiers composing the army, if it should happen that this man should tear up the Constitution, should violate every law, break every oath, trample upon every right, commit every crime, do you know what your irremovable magistrates, instructors in the right, and guardians of the law, would do? They would hold their

tongues."

The uproar prevents the orator from completing his sentence. The tumult becomes a tempest.—"This man respects nothing. After the government and the army, he drags the magistracy in the mire! Censure! censure!" The orator is censured and the censure entered in the journal. The President declares that, if he continues, the Assembly will proceed to a vote, and the floor will be taken from him.

The orator continues: "And your paid clergy! and your office-holding bishops! On the day when a pretender shall have employed in such enterprises the government, the magistracy, and the army; on the day when all these institutions shall drip with the blood shed by and for the traitor; when, placed between the man who has committed the crimes and God who orders an anathema to be launched against the criminal—do you know what these bishops of yours will do? They will prostrate themselves, not before God, but before man!"

Can you form any idea of the frenzied shouts and imprecations that would greet such words? Can you imagine the shouts, the apostrophes, the threats, the whole Assembly rising en masse, the tribune escaladed and with difficulty guarded by the ushers! The orator has profaned every sanctified ark in succession, and he has ended by profaning the Holy of Holies, the clergy! And what does he mean by it all? What a medley of impossible and infamous hypotheses! Do you not hear Baroche growl, and Dupin thunder? The orator would be called to order, censured, fined, suspended from the Chamber for three days, like Pierre Leroux and Émile de Girardin; who can tell, perhaps expelled, like Manuel.

And the next day, the indignant citizen would say: "That is well done!" And from every quarter the journals devoted to order would shake their fist at the Calumniator. And in his own party, on his usual bench in the Assembly, his best friends would forsake him, and say: "It is his own fault; he has gone too far; he has imagined chimeras and absurdities."

And after this generous and heroic effort, it would be found that the four institutions that have been attacked were more venerable and impeccable than ever, and that the question, instead of advancing, had receded.

V

WHAT PROVIDENCE HAS DONE

But Providence,—Providence goes about it differently. It places the thing luminously before your eyes, and says, "Behold!"

A man arrives some fine morning,—and such a man! The first comer, the last comer, without past, without future, without genius, without renown, without prestige. Is he an adventurer? Is he a prince? This man has his hands full of money, of bank-notes, of railroad shares, of offices, of decorations, of sinecures; this man stoops down to the office-holders, and says, "Office-holders, betray your trust!"

The office-holders betray their trust.

What, all? without one exception?

Yes, all!

He turns to the generals, and says: "Generals, massacre."

And the generals massacre.

He turns towards the irremovable judges, and says: "Magistrates, I shatter the Constitution, I commit perjury, I dissolve the sovereign Assembly, I arrest the inviolate members, I plunder the public treasury, I sequester, I confiscate, I banish those who displease me, I transport people according to my fancy, I shoot down without summons to surrender, I execute without trial, I commit all that men are agreed in calling crime, I outrage all that men are agreed in calling right; behold the laws—they are under my feet."

"We will pretend not to see any thing," say the magistrates.

"You are insolent," replies the providential man. "To turn your eyes away is to insult

me. I propose that you shall assist me. Judges, you are going to congratulate me to-day, me who am force and crime; and to-morrow, those who have resisted me, those who are honor, right, and law, them you will try,—and you will condemn them."

These irremovable judges kiss his boot, and set about investigating l'affaire des troubles.

They swear fidelity to him, to boot.

Then he perceives, in a corner, the clergy, endowed, gold-laced, with cross and cope and mitre, and he says:—

"Ah, you are there, Archbishop! Come here. Just bless all this for me."

And the Archbishop chants his Magnificat.

VI

WHAT THE MINISTERS, ARMY, MAGISTRACY, AND CLERGY HAVE DONE

Oh! what a striking thing and how instructive! "Erudimini," Bossuet would say.

The Ministers fancied that they were dissolving the Assembly; they dissolved the government.

The soldiers fired on the army and killed it.

The judges fancied that they were trying and convicting innocent persons; they tried and convicted the irremovable magistracy.

The priests thought they were chanting hosannahs upon Louis Bonaparte; they chanted a De profundis upon the clergy.

VII

THE FORM OF THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD

When God desires to destroy a thing, he entrusts its destruction to the thing itself.

Every bad institution of this world ends by suicide.

When they have weighed sufficiently long upon men, Providence, like the sultan to his viziers, sends them the bowstring by a mute, and they execute themselves.

Louis Bonaparte is the mute of Providence.

CONCLUSION—PART FIRST

PETTINESS OF THE MASTER—ABJECTNESS OF THE SITUATION

I

Never fear, History has him in its grip.

If perchance it flatters the self-love of M. Bonaparte to be seized by history, if perchance, and truly one would imagine so, he cherishes any illusion as to his value as a political miscreant, let him divest himself of it.

Let him not imagine, because he has piled up horror on horror, that he will ever raise himself to the elevation of the great historical bandits. We have been wrong, perhaps, in some pages of this book, here and there, to couple him with those men. No, although he has committed enormous crimes, he will remain paltry. He will never be other than the nocturnal strangler of liberty; he will never be other than the man who intoxicated his soldiers, not with glory, like the first Napoleon, but with wine; he will never be other than the pygmy tyrant of a great people. Grandeur, even in infamy, is utterly inconsistent with the calibre of the man. As dictator, he is a buffoon; let him make himself emperor, he will be grotesque. That will finish him. His destiny is to make mankind shrug their shoulders. Will he be less severely punished for that reason? Not at all. Contempt does not, in his case, mitigate anger; he will be hideous, and he will remain ridiculous. That is all. History laughs and crushes.

Even the most indignant chroniclers will not help him there. Great thinkers take

satisfaction in castigating the great despots, and, in some instances, even exalt them somewhat, in order to make them worthy of their rage; but what would you have the historian do with this fellow?

The historian can only lead him to posterity by the ear.

The man once stripped of success, the pedestal removed, the dust fallen, the tinsel and spangles and the great sabre taken away, the poor little skeleton laid bare and shivering,—can one imagine anything meaner and more pitiful?

History has its tigers. The historians, immortal keepers of wild beasts, exhibit this imperial menagerie to the nations. Tacitus alone, that great showman, captured and confined eight or ten of these tigers in the iron cage of his style. Look at them: they are terrifying and superb; their spots are an element in their beauty. This is Nimrod, the hunter of men; this, Busiris, the tyrant of Egypt; this, Phalaris, who baked living men in a brazen bull, to make the bull roar; this, Ahasuerus, who flayed the heads of the seven Maccabees, and had them roasted alive; this, Nero, the burner of Rome, who smeared Christians with wax and pitch, and then set them alight as torches; this, Tiberius, the man of Capræa; this, Domitian; this, Caracalla; this, Heliogabalus; that other is Commodus, who possesses an additional claim to our respect in the horrible fact that he was the son of Marcus Aurelius; these are Czars; these, Sultans; these, Popes, among whom remark the tiger Borgia; here is Philip, called the Good, as the Furies were called the Eumenides; here is Richard III, sinister and deformed; here, with his broad face and his great paunch, Henry VIII, who, of five wives that he had, killed three, one of whom he disemboweled; here is Christiern II, the Nero of the North; here Philip II, the Demon of the South. They are terrifying: hear them roar, consider them, one after the other; the historian brings them to you; the historian drags them, raging and terrible, to the side of the cage, opens their jaws for you, shows you their teeth and their claws; you can say of every one of them: "That is a royal tiger." In fact, they are taken from all the thrones of the earth. History parades

them through the ages. She prevents them from dying; she takes care of them. They are her tigers.

She does not mingle jackals with them.

She puts and keeps apart the disgusting beasts. M. Bonaparte will be with Claudius, with Ferdinand VII of Spain, with Ferdinand II of Naples, in the hyena cage.

He is a bit of a brigand, and a great deal of a knave. One is always conscious of the poor prince of industry, who lived from hand to mouth in England; his present prosperity, his triumph, his empire, and his inflation amount to nothing; the purple mantle trails over shoes down at heel. Napoleon the Little, nothing more, nothing less. The title of this book is well chosen.

The meanness of his vices prejudices the grandeur of his crimes. What would you have? Peter the Cruel massacred, but he did not steal; Henry III assassinated, but he did not swindle; Timour crushed children under horses' hoofs, much as M. Bonaparte exterminated women and old men on the boulevard, but he did not lie. Hear the Arabian historian: "Timour-Beg, Sahib-Keran (master of the world and of the age, master of the planetary conjunctions), was born at Kesch, in 1336; he slaughtered a hundred thousand captives; as he was besieging Siwas, the inhabitants, to mollify him, sent him a thousand little children, bearing each a Koran on its head, and crying, 'Allah! Allah!' He caused the sacred books to be removed with respect, and the children to be crushed beneath the hoofs of wild horses. He used seventy thousand human heads, with cement, stone, and brick, in building towers at Herat, Sebzvar, Tekrit, Aleppo, and Bagdad; he detested lying; when he had given his word, men could rely upon it."

M. Bonaparte is not of this stature. He has not that dignity which the great despots of the East and of the West mingle with ferocity. The amplitude of the Cæsars is wanting in him. To bear one's self worthily and make a fair appearance among all the illustrious executioners who have tortured mankind in the course of four

thousand years, one must not have any mental hesitation between a general of division and a bass-drummer on the Champs-Elysées; one must not have been a constable in London; one must not have undergone, with lowered eyes, in the Court of Peers, the haughty scorn of M. Magnan; one must not have been called "pickpocket" by the English newspapers; one must not have been menaced with Clichy; in a word, there must have been nothing of the sneak in the man.

Monsieur Louis Napoleon, you are ambitious, you aim high, but you must have the truth told you. Well, what would you have us do in the matter? In vain have you, by overturning the tribune of France, realized, after your fashion, the wish of Caligula: "I would that mankind had but one head, so that I might cut it off with a blow;" in vain have you banished the republicans by thousands, as Philip III expelled the Moors, and as Torquemada drove out the Jews; in vain have you dungeons like Peter the Cruel, hulks like Hariadan, dragonnades like Père Letellier, and oubliettes like Ezzelino III; in vain have you perjured yourself like Ludovic Sforza; in vain have you massacred and assassinated en masse like Charles IX; in vain have you done all this, in vain have you recalled all these names to men's minds when they think of your name,—you are nothing but a rogue. A man is not a monster for the wishing.

II

From every agglomeration of men, from every city, from every nation, there inevitably arises a collective force.

Place this collective force at the service of liberty, let it rule by universal suffrage, the city becomes a commune, the nation becomes a republic.

This collective force is not, of its nature, intelligent. Belonging to all, it belongs to no one; it floats about, so to speak, outside of the people.

Until the day comes when, according to the true social formula,—as little government as possible,—this force may be reduced to a mere street and road police, paving the streets, lighting the lamps, and looking after malefactors; until

that day comes, this collective force, being at the mercy of many chances and many ambitions, needs to be guarded and protected by jealous, clear-sighted, well-armed institutions.

It may be subjugated by tradition, it may be surprised by stratagem.

A man may rush upon it, seize it, bridle it, quell it, and cause it to trample upon the citizens.

The tyrant is the man, who, born of tradition, like Nicholas of Russia, or of stratagem, like Louis Bonaparte, seizes for his own profit, and according to his caprice disposes of the collective force of a people.

This man, if he be by birth what Nicholas is, is the enemy of society; if he have done what Louis Bonaparte has done, he is a public robber.

The former has no account to settle with regular legal justice, with the articles of codes. He has behind him, spying upon and watching him, hatred in their hearts, and vengeance in their hands, Orloff in his palace, and Mouravieff among the people; he may be assassinated by one of his army, or poisoned by one of his family; he runs the risk of barrack conspiracies, of revolts of regiments, of secret military societies, of domestic plots, of sudden, mysterious maladies, of terrible blows, of great catastrophes. The other ought simply to go to Poissy.

The former has the wherewithal to die in the purple, and to end his life with pomp and royally, as monarchs end and tragedies. The other must live; live between four walls behind bars, through which the people can look at him, sweeping courtyards, making horse-hair brushes or list shoes, emptying buckets, with a green cap on his head, wooden shoes on his feet, and straw in his shoes.

Ah! ye leaders of the old parties, ye men of absolutism, in France you voted en masse among 7,500,000; outside of France you applauded, taking this Cartouche for the hero of order. He is ferocious enough for it, I admit; but look at his size. Don't be ungrateful to your real colossi; you have cashiered your Haynaus and your

Radetzkys too precipitately. Above all, weigh this comparison, which so naturally presents itself to the mind. What is this Mandrin of Lilliput beside Nicholas, Czar, Emperor, and Pope, a power half-Bible, half-knout, who damns and condemns, drills eight hundred thousand soldiers and two hundred thousand priests, holds in his right hand the keys of paradise, and in his left hand the keys of Siberia, and possesses, as his chattel, sixty millions of men—their souls as if he were God, their bodies as if he were the tomb!

III

If there should not be ere long a sudden, imposing, and overwhelming catastrophe, if the present situation of the nation should be prolonged and endure, the grand injury, the fearful injury, would be the moral injury.

The boulevards of Paris, the streets of Paris, the rural districts and the towns of twenty departments of France, were strewn on the 2nd of December with dead and dying citizens; there were seen, before their thresholds, fathers and mothers slaughtered, children sabred, dishevelled women in pools of blood, disemboweled by grape-shot; there were seen, in the houses, suppliants massacred, some shot in heaps in their cellars, others despatched by the bayonet under their beds, others struck down by a bullet on their own hearths. The impress of bloodstained hands of all sizes may be seen at this moment, here on a wall, there on a door, there in a recess; for three days after the victory of Louis Bonaparte, Paris walked in ruddy mire; a cap full of human brains was hung on a tree on Boulevard des Italiens. I, who write these lines, saw, among other victims, on the night of the 4th, near the Mauconseil barricade, an aged white-haired man, stretched on the pavement, his bosom pierced with a bayonet, his collar-bone broken; the gutter that ran beneath him bore away his blood. I saw, I touched with my hands, I helped to undress, a poor child seven years old, killed, they told me, on Rue Tiquetonne; he was pale, his head rolled from one shoulder to the other while they were taking off his clothes; his

half-closed eyes were fixed and staring, and as I leaned over his half-opened mouth, it seemed that I could still hear him murmur faintly, "Mother!"

Well, there is something more heart-rending than murdered child, more lamentable than that old man shot dead, more horrible than that cap full of human brains, more frightful than those pavements red with carnage, more irreparable than those men and women, those fathers and those mothers, stabbed and murdered,—it is the vanishing honour of a great people!

Assuredly those pyramids of dead bodies which one saw in the cemeteries, after the wagons from the Champ-de-Mars had emptied their contents; those immense open trenches, which they filled in the morning with human bodies, making speed because of the increasing light of day,—all this was frightful; but what is still more frightful is to think that, at this hour, the nations are in doubt; and that in their eyes France, that great moral splendour, has disappeared!

That which is more heart-rending than skulls cleft by the sword, than breasts riddled by bullets, more disastrous than houses pillaged, than murder filling the streets, than blood shed in rivers, is to think that now, among all the peoples of the earth, men are saying to one another: "Do you know that that nation of nations, that people of the 14th of July, that people of the 10th of August, that people of 1830, that people of 1848, that race of giants which razed bastiles, that race of men whose faces cast a bright light, that fatherland of the human race which produced heroes and thinkers, those heroes who made all the revolutions and gave birth to all births, that France whose name meant liberty, that soul of the world, so to say, which shone resplendent in Europe, that light.... Well! some one has stepped upon it, and put it out. There is no longer a France. It is at an end. Look! everywhere darkness. The world is feeling its way."

Ah! it was so grand. Where are those times, those glorious times, interspersed with storms, but glorious, when all was life, when all was liberty, when all was glory?

those times when the French people, awake before all others, and up before the light, their brows illumined by the dawn of the future already risen for them, said to the other nations, still drowsy and overborne, and scarcely able to shake their chains in their sleep: "Fear naught, I work for all, I dig the earth for all,—I am the workman of the Almighty!"

What profound grief! Regard that torpor where formerly there was such power! that shame, where formerly there was such pride! that noble people, whose heads were once held erect and are now lowered!

Alas! Louis Bonaparte has done more than kill persons, he has caused men's minds to dwindle, he has withered the heart of the citizen. One must belong to the race of the invincible and the indomitable, to persevere now in the rugged path of renunciation and of duty. An indescribable gangrene of material prosperity threatens to cause public honesty to degenerate into rottenness. Oh! what happiness to be banished, to be disgraced, to be ruined,—is it not, brave workmen? Is it not, worthy peasants, driven from France, who have no roof to shelter you, and no shoes to your feet? What happiness to eat black bread, to lie on a mattress thrown on the ground, to be out at elbows, to be away from all this, and to those who say to you: "You are French!" to answer, "I am proscribed!"

What a pitiful thing is this delight of self-interest and cupidity, wallowing in the slough of the 2nd of December! Faith! let us live, let us go into business, let us speculate in zinc and railway shares, let us make money; it is degrading but it is an excellent thing; a scruple less, a louis more; let us sell our whole soul at that rate. One runs to and fro, one rushes about, one cools his heels in anterooms, one drinks deep of every kind of shame, and if one cannot get a concession of railways in France or of lands in Africa, one asks for an office. A host of intrepid devotions besiege the Elysée, and collect about the man. Junot, beside the first Bonaparte, defied the splashing of shells, these fellows beside the second, defy the splashing of

mud. What care they about sharing his ignominy, provided they share his fortune? The competition is to see who shall carry on this traffic in himself most cynically; and among these creatures there are young men with pure limpid eyes, and all the appearance of generous youth; and there are old men, who have but one fear, which is, that the office solicited may not reach them in time, and that they may not succeed in dishonouring themselves before they die. One would sell himself for a prefecture, another for a collectorship, another for a consulate; one wants a tobacco license, another an embassy. All want money, some more, some less; for it is of the salary they think, not of the duties. Every one has his hand out. All offer themselves. One of these days we shall have to appoint an assayer of consciences at the Mint.

What! this is what we have come to! What! those very men who supported the coup d'état, those very men who recoiled from the red croquemitaine and the twaddle about Jacquerie in 1852; those very men to whom that crime seemed a good thing, because, according to them, it rescued from peril their consols, their ledgers, their money-boxes, their bill-books,—even they do not comprehend that material interest, surviving alone, would, after all, be only a melancholy waif in an immense moral shipwreck, and that it is a fearful and monstrous situation, when men say: "All is saved, save honour!"

The words independence, enfranchisement, progress, popular pride, national pride, French greatness, may no longer be pronounced in France. Hush! these words make too much noise; let us walk on tiptoe, and speak low; we are in a sick man's chamber.

Who is this man?—He is the chief, the master. Every one obeys him.—Ah! every one respects him, then?—No, every one despises him.—Oh! what a plight!

And military honour, where is it? Let us say no more, if you please, of what the army did in December, but of what it is undergoing at this moment, of that which is at its head, of that which is on its head. Do you think of that? Does it think of that?

O army of the republic! army that had for captains, generals paid with four francs a day; army that had for leaders, Carnot, austerity, Marceau, unselfishness, Hoche, honour, Kléber, devotion, Joubert, probity, Desaix, valour, Bonaparte, genius! O, French army, poor, unfortunate, heroic army, gone astray in the train of these men! What will they do with it? whither will they lead it? how will they occupy it? what parodies are we destined to see and hear? Alas! what are these men who command our regiments, and who govern us? The master—we know him. This fellow, who had been a minister, was going to be "seized" on the 3rd of December; it was for that reason he made the 2nd. That other is the "borrower" of the twenty-five millions from the Bank. That other is the man of the gold ingots. To that other, before he was made minister, "a friend" said:—"I say! you are humbugging us about the shares in that affair; that won't go down with me. If there's any swindling going on, let me at least have a finger in it." That other, who wears epaulettes, has just been convicted of selling mortgaged property; that other, who also wears epaulettes, received, on the morning of the 2nd of December, 100,000 francs, for "emergencies." He was only a colonel; if he had been a general he would have had more. This man, who is a general, when he was a body-guard of Louis XVIII, being on duty behind the king's chair during mass, cut a gold tassel from the throne and put it in his pocket; he was expelled from the guards for that. Surely, to these men, also, we might rear a column, ex aere capto, with the money they stole. This other, who is a general of division, "converted" 52,000 francs, to the knowledge of Colonel Caharras, in the construction of the villages of Saint André and Saint Hippolyte, near Mascara. This one, who is general-in-chief, was christened at Ghent, where he is known, le général Cinq-cents-francs. This one, who is Minister of War, has only General Rulhière's clemency to thank that he was not sent before a court-martial. Such are the men. No matter; forward! beat, drums, sound, trumpets, wave, flags! Soldiers, from the top of yon pyramids the forty thieves look down upon you!

Let us go farther into this mournful subject, and survey it in all its aspects.

The mere spectacle of fortune like that of M. Bonaparte, placed at the head of the state, would suffice to demoralize a people.

There is always, and it is the fault of our social institutions, that ought, above all, to enlighten and civilize, there is always, in a large population like that of France, a class which is ignorant, which suffers, covets, and struggles, placed between the brutish instinct which impels it to take, and the moral law which invites it to labour. In the grievous and oppressed condition in which it still is, this class, in order to maintain itself in probity and well-doing, requires all the pure and holy light that emanates from the Gospel; it requires that, on the one hand, the spirit of Jesus Christ, and, on the other, the spirit of the French Revolution, should address to it the same manly words, and should never cease to point out to it, as the only lights worthy of the eyes of man, the exalted and mysterious laws of human destiny,—self-denial, devotion, sacrifice, the labour which leads to material well-being, the probity which leads to inward well-being; even with this perennial instruction, at once divine and human, this class, so worthy of sympathy and fraternity, often succumbs. Suffering and temptation are stronger than virtue. Now do you comprehend the infamous counsel which the success of M. Bonaparte gives to this class?

A poor man, in rags, without money, without work, is there in the shadow, at the corner of the street, seated on a stone; he is meditating, and at the same time repelling, a bad action; now he wavers, now he recovers himself; he is starving, and feels a desire to rob; to rob he must make a false key, he must scale a wall; then, the key made and the wall scaled, he will stand before the strong box; if any one wakes, if any one resists, he must kill. His hair stands on end, his eyes become haggard, his conscience, the voice of God, revolts within him, and cries to him: "Stop! this is evil! these are crimes!" At that moment the head of the state passes by; the man sees M. Bonaparte in his uniform of a general, with the cordon rouge, and with footmen in gold-laced liveries, dashing towards his palace in a carriage drawn by four horses;

the unhappy wretch, hesitating before his crime, greedily gazes on this splendid vision; and the serenity of M. Bonaparte, and his gold epaulettes, and his cordon rouge, and the liveries, and the palace, and the four-horse carriage, say to him: "Succeed."

He attaches himself to this apparition, he follows it, he runs to the Élysée; a gilded mob rushes in after the prince. All sorts of carriages pass under that portal, and he has glimpses of happy, radiant men! This one is an ambassador; the ambassador looks at him, and says: "Succeed." This is a bishop; the bishop looks at him and says: "Succeed." This is a judge; the judge looks at him, and smiles on him, and says: "Succeed."

Thus, to escape the gendarmes,—therein consists henceforth the whole moral law. To rob, to pillage, to poignard, to assassinate, all this is criminal only when one is fool enough to allow himself to be caught. Every man who meditates a crime has a constitution to violate, an oath to break, an obstacle to destroy. In a word, take your measures well. Be adroit. Succeed. The only guilty actions are the coups that fail.

You put your hand in the pocket of a passer-by, in the evening, at nightfall, in a lonely place; he seizes you; you let go; he arrests you, and takes you to the guard-house. You are guilty; to the galleys! You do not let go: you have a knife about you, you bury it in the man's throat; he falls; he is dead; now take his purse, and make off. Bravo! capitally done! You have shut the victim's mouth, the only witness who could speak. Nobody has anything to say to you.

If you had only robbed the man, you would have been in the wrong; kill him, and you are right.

Succeed, that is the point.

Ah! this is indeed alarming!

On the day when the human conscience shall lose its bearings, on the day when success shall carry the day before that forum, all will be at an end. The last moral

gleam will reascend to heaven. Darkness will be in the mind of man. You will have nothing to do but to devour one another, wild beasts that you are!

With moral degradation goes political degradation. M. Bonaparte treats the people of France like a conquered country. He effaces the republican inscriptions; he cut down the trees of liberty, and makes firewood of them. There was on Place Bourgogne a statue of the Republic; he puts the pickaxe to it; there was on our coinage a figure of the Republic, crowned with ears of corn; M. Bonaparte replaces it by the profile of M. Bonaparte. He has his bust crowned and harangued in the market-places, just as the tyrant Gessler made the people salute his cap. The rustics in the faubourgs were in the habit of singing in chorus, in the evening, as they returned from work; they used to sing the great republican songs, the Marseillaise, the Chant du Depart; they were ordered to keep silent; the faubourgers will sing no more; there is amnesty only for obscenities and drunken songs. The triumph is so complete, that they no longer keep within bounds. Only yesterday they kept in hiding, they did their shooting at night; it was shocking, but there was still some shame; there was a remnant of respect for the people; they seemed to think that it had still enough life in it to revolt, if it saw such things. Now they show themselves, they fear nothing, they guillotine in broad day. Whom do they guillotine? Whom? the men of the law, and the law is there! Whom? the men of the people! and the people is there! Nor is this all. There is a man in Europe, who horrifies Europe: that man sacked Lombardy, he set up the gibbets of Hungary; he had a woman whipped under the gibbet upon which hung her husband and her son; we still remember the terrible letter in which that woman recounts the deed, and says: "My heart has turned to stone."

Last year this man took it into his head to visit England as a tourist, and, while in London, he took it into his head to visit a brewery, that of Barclay and Perkins. There he was recognized; a voice whispered: "It is Haynau!"—"It is Haynau!" repeated the workmen!—It was a fearful cry; the crowd rushed upon the wretch, tore

out his infamous white hair by handfuls, spat in his face, and thrust him out. Well, this old bandit in epaulettes, this Haynau, this man who still bears on his cheek the immense buffet of the English people, it is announced that "Monseigneur the Prince-President invites him to visit France." It is quite right; London put an affront on him, Paris owes him an ovation. It is a reparation. Be it so. We will be there to see. Haynau was cursed and hooted at the brewery of Barclay and Perkins, he will receive bouquets at the brewery of Saint-Antoine. The Faubourg Saint-Antoine will receive an order to conduct itself properly. The Faubourg Saint-Antoine, mute, motionless, impassive, will see them pass, triumphant and conversing together, like two friends, through its old revolutionary streets, one in French, the other in Austrian uniform,—Louis Bonaparte, the murderer of the boulevard, arm-in-arm with Haynau, the whipper of women! Go on, add insult to insult, disfigure this France of ours, fallen flat on the pavement! make her unrecognizable! crush the faces of the people with your heels!

Oh! inspire me, seek for me, give me, invent for me a means, whatever it may be, short of a poignard, which I repudiate,—a Brutus for that man! bah! he is not worthy of even a Louvel!—find me some means of laying that man low, and of delivering my country! of laying that man low, that man of craft, that man of lies, that man of success, that man of evil! Some means, the first that offers,—pen, sword, paving-stone, émeute,—by the people, by the soldier; yes, whatever it be, so it be honourable, and in open day, I take it, we all take it, we proscribed, if it can re-establish liberty, set free the republic, deliver our country from shame, and drive back to his dust, to his oblivion, to his cloaca, this imperial ruffian, this prince pick-pocket, this gypsy king, this traitor, this master, this groom of Franconi's! this radiant, imperturbable, self-satisfied governor, crowned with his successful crime, who goes and comes, and peacefully parades trembling Paris, and who has everything on his side,—the Bourse, the shopkeepers, the magistracy, all influences, all guarantees, all invocations, from the Nom de Dieu of the soldier to the Te Deum

of the priest!

Really, when one has fixed one's eyes too long on certain aspects of this spectacle, even the strongest minds are attacked with vertigo.

But does he, at least, do himself justice, this Bonaparte? Has he a glimmering, an idea, a suspicion, the slightest perception, of his infamy? Really, one is driven to doubt it.

Yes, sometimes, from the lofty words he uses, when one hears him make incredible appeals to posterity, to that posterity which will shudder with horror and wrath at him; when one hears him speak coolly of his "legitimacy," and his "mission," one is almost tempted to think that he has come to take himself into high consideration, and that his head is turned to such a degree that he no longer perceives what he is, nor what he does. He believes in the adhesion of the poor, he believes in the good-will of kings, he believes in the fête of eagles, he believes in the harangues of the Council of State, he believes in the benedictions of the bishops, he believes in the oath that he has forced people to take, he believes in the 7,500,000 votes!

He is talking now, feeling in the humour of Augustus, of granting amnesty to the proscribed. Usurpation granting amnesty to right! treason to honour! cowardice to courage! crime to virtue! He is to that degree embruted by his success that he thinks this all very simple.

Singular effect of intoxication! Optical illusion! In his eyes that thing of the 14th of January appears all golden and glorious and radiant, that constitution defiled with mud, stained with blood, laden with chains, dragged amid the hooting of Europe by the police, the Senate, the Corps Législatif and the Council of State, all newly shod. He takes as a triumphal car, and would drive under the Arc de l'Étoile, that sledge, standing on which, hideous, with whip in hand, he parades the ensanguined corpse of the republic!

CONCLUSION—PART SECOND

FAITH AND AFFLICTION

I

Providence brings to maturity men, things, and events, by the single fact of universal life. To cause the disappearance of an old world it is sufficient that civilization, ascending majestically towards its solstice, should shine upon old institutions, upon old prejudices, upon old laws, and upon old customs. This radiation burns and devours the past. Civilization enlightens, this is the visible fact; and at the same time it consumes, this is the mysterious fact. Under its influence, gradually and without a shock, that which should decline declines, and what should grow old grows old; wrinkles appear upon things condemned, on castes, on codes, on institutions, and on religions. This work of decrepitude is, in some sort, self-acting. A fruitful decrepitude, under which germinates the new life. Little by little the ruin progresses; deep crevices, which are not visible, ramify in the darkness, and internally reduce to powder the venerable structure, which still appears a solid mass without; and suddenly, some fine day, this ancient ensemble of worm-eaten things, of which decaying societies are composed, becomes shapeless, the nails come out, the structure becomes disjointed, and overhangs. Then it no longer has any solidity. Let one of those giants peculiar to revolutions appear; let him raise his hand, and all is said. There was a moment in history when a nudge of Danton's elbow would have shaken all Europe to its foundations.

The year 1848 was such a moment. Ancient Europe, feudal, papal, and monarchical, replastered so disastrously for France, in 1815, tottered. But there was no Danton. The crash did not take place.

It has often been said, in the commonplace phraseology used on similar occasions, that 1848 opened a gulf. Not at all. The corpse of the past lay upon Europe; it lies there still at this moment. The year 1848 opened a grave wherein to throw that

corpse. It is this grave that has been taken for a gulf.

In 1848 all that still held to the past, all that still survived of the body, had a close view of this grave. Not only the kings upon their thrones, the cardinals under their hats, the judges in the shadow of their guillotines, the captains on their war-horses, were thrown into commotion; but he who had any interest whatever in what was about to disappear; he who was cultivating for his own profit a social fiction, and had an abuse to let out on hire; he who was guardian of some falsehood, doorkeeper of some prejudice, or farmer of some superstition; he who was taking advantage of another, or dealing in usury, oppression and falsehood; he who sold by false weights, from those who falsify a balance to those who falsify the Bible; from the cheating merchant to the cheating priest; from those who manipulate figures to those who traffic in miracles,—all, from the Jew banker who feels that he is more or less Catholic, to the bishop who becomes more or less of a Jew,—all the men of the past inclined their heads towards one another and trembled.

This grave, which was gaping, and into which had nearly fallen all the fictions—their treasure—which have weighed upon men for so many ages, they resolved to fill up. They determined to wall it up, to pile rocks and stones upon it, and to erect upon the pile a gibbet, and to hang upon this gibbet, all bleeding and dejected, that mighty culprit, Truth.

They determined, once for all, to make an end of the spirit of freedom and emancipation, and to drive back and repress for ever the upward tendency of mankind.

The enterprise was formidable. What the nature of it was we have already indicated, more than once, in this book and elsewhere.

To undo the labour of twenty generations; to kill in the nineteenth century, by strangulation, three centuries, the sixteenth, the seventeenth, and the eighteenth, that is to say, Luther, Descartes, and Voltaire, religious scrutiny, philosophical scrutiny,

universal scrutiny; to crush throughout all Europe this immense vegetation of free thought, here a tender blade, there a sturdy oak; to marry the knout and the holy-water-sprinkler; to put more of Spain in the South, and more of Russia in the North; to resuscitate all they could of the Inquisition, and to stifle all they could of intelligence; to stultify youth, in other words to brutalize the future; to make the world a witness of the auto-da-fé of ideas; to throw down the tribune, to suppress the newspaper, the placard, the book, the spoken word, the cry, the whisper, the breath; to make silence; to pursue thought into the case of the printer, into the composing-stick, into the leaden type, into the stereotype, into the lithograph, into the drawing, upon the stage, into the street-show, into the mouth of the actor, into the copy-book of the schoolmaster, into the hawker's pack; to hold out to each man, for faith, for law, for aim in life, and for God, his selfish interest; to say to nations: "Eat and think no more;" to take man from the brain, and put him in the belly; to extinguish individual initiative, local life, national impulse, all those deep-rooted instincts which impel man to that which is right; to annihilate that ego of nations which is called the fatherland; to destroy nationality among partitioned and dismembered peoples, constitutions in constitutional states, the republic in France, and liberty everywhere; to plant the foot everywhere upon human effort.

In one word, to close that abyss which is called Progress.

Such was the plan, vast, enormous, European, which no one conceived, for not one of those men of the old world had had genius for it, but which all followed. As for the plan in itself, as for that all-embracing idea of universal repression, whence came it? who could tell? It was seen in the air. It appeared in the past. It enlightened certain souls, it pointed to certain routes. It was a gleam issuing from the tomb of Machiavelii.

At certain moments of human history, from the things which are plotted and the things which are done, it would seem that all the old demons of humanity, Louis XI,

Philip II, Catherine de Medicis, the Duke of Alva, Torquemada, are somewhere or other in a corner, seated around a table, and taking counsel together.

We look, we search, and instead of the colossi, we find abortions. Where we expected to see the Duke of Alva, we find Schwartzenberg; where we expected to see Torquemada we find Veuillot. The old European despotism continues its march, with these little men, and goes on and on; it resembles the Czar Peter when travelling:—"We relay with what we can find," he wrote; "when we had no more Tartar horses, we took donkeys." To attain this object, the repression of everything and everybody, it was necessary to pursue an obscure, tortuous, rugged, difficult path; they pursued it. Some of those who entered it, knew what they were doing.

Parties are kept alive by watchwords; those men, those ringleaders, whom 1848 frightened and assembled, had, as we have said above, adopted theirs: religion, family, property. With that commonplace adroitness which suffices when one speaks to fear, they exploited certain obscure aspects of what was called socialism. It was a question of "saving religion, property, and the family."—"Save the flag!" they exclaimed. The vulgar herd of terrified selfish interests threw themselves into the current.

They coalesced, they made a stand, they formed in mass. They had a crowd around them. This crowd was composed of diverse elements. The landed proprietor entered it because his rents had fallen; the peasant, because he had paid the forty-five centimes; he who did not believe in God thought it necessary to save religion, because he had been forced to sell his horses. They extracted from this crowd the force it contained, and made use of it. They made everything contribute to repression: the law, despotism, the assemblies, the tribune, the jury, the magistracy, the police; in Lombardy the sabre, at Naples the convict prison, in Hungary the gibbet. To remuzzle men's intellects, to replace the fetters on men's minds, these runaway slaves, to prevent the past from disappearing, to prevent the future from

being born, to remain kings, powerful, privileged and happy, all means were good, all just, all legitimate. For the exigencies of the struggle, they manufactured and spread throughout the world a sort of ambuscade-morality against liberty, which Ferdinand put in action at Palermo, Antonelli at Rome, Schwartzenberg at Milan and at Pesth, and later, at Paris, those wolves of state, the men of December.

There was a nation among the nations, which was a sort of elder brother in this family of the oppressed, a prophet in the human tribe. This nation took the initiative of the whole human movement. It went on, saying, "Come!" and the rest followed. As a complement to the fraternity of men, in the Gospel, it taught the fraternity of nations. It spoke by the voice of its writers, of its poets, of its philosophers, of its orators, as by a single mouth, and its words flew to the extremities of the earth, to rest, like tongues of fire, upon the brow of all nations. It presided over the communion of intellects. It multiplied the bread of life to those who were wandering in the desert. One day it was enveloped in a tempest; it marched over the abyss, and said to the frightened nations: "Why are you afraid?" The wave of the revolutions it had excited subsided under its footsteps, and, far from engulfing it, increased its glory. The suffering, infirm, and diseased nations pressed around it; one was limping, for the chain of the Inquisition, riveted to its foot for three centuries, had lamed it; to this one it said, "Walk!" and it walked. Another was blind, the old Roman papistry had filled its eyes with mist and darkness; to this one it said, "Receive thy sight!" it opened its eyes and saw. "Throw away your crutches, that is to say, your prejudices," it said; "throw away your bandages, that is to say, your superstitions; stand upright, raise your head, look at the sky, look at God. The future is yours. O nations! you have a leprosy, ignorance; you have a plague, fanaticism; there is not one of you but is afflicted with that frightful malady called a despot; go, march, break the bonds of evil; I deliver you, I cure you!" Throughout the earth a grateful clamour arose among the nations which these words made sound and strong. One day it accosted dead Poland; it raised its finger, and exclaimed, "Arise!"

and dead Poland arose.

This nation, the men of the past, whose fall it announced, dreaded and hated. By dint of stratagem, of tortuous patience, and of audacity, they ended by seizing it, and succeeded in throttling it.

For three years and more, the world has witnessed a tremendous agony and a frightful spectacle. For three years and more, the men of the past, the scribes, the Pharisees, the publicans, the princes of the priests, have crucified, in presence of the human race, the Christ of nations, the French people. Some furnished the cross, others the nails, others the hammer. Falloux placed upon its forehead the crown of thorns. Montalembert placed upon its mouth the sponge, dipped in gall and vinegar. Louis Bonaparte is the miserable soldier who struck his lance into its side, and caused it to utter the supreme cry: Eli! Eli! Lama Sabachthani!

Now it is all over. The French nation is dead. The great tomb is about to open.

For three days!

II

Let us have faith.

No, let us not be cast down. To despair is to desert.

Let us look to the future.

The future,—no one knows what tempests still separate us from port, but the port, the distant and radiant port, is in sight; the future, we repeat, is the republic for all men; let us add, the future is peace with all men.

Let us not fall into the vulgar error, which is to curse and to dishonour the age in which we live. Erasmus called the sixteenth century "the excrement of the ages," fex temporum. Bossuet thus qualified the seventeenth century: "A wicked and paltry age." Rousseau branded the eighteenth century, in these terms: "This great rottenness amidst which we live." Posterity has proved these illustrious men in the

wrong. It has said to Erasmus: "The sixteenth century was great;" it has said to Bossuet: "The seventeenth century was great;" it has said to Rousseau: "The eighteenth century was great."

Even had the infamy of those ages been actual, those great men would have been wrong to complain. The man who thinks should accept simply and calmly the surroundings in which Providence has placed him. The splendour of human intelligence, the loftiness of genius, shine no less by contrast than by harmony with the age. The stoic and profound philosopher is not diminished by an external debasement. Virgil, Petrarch, Racine are great in their purple; Job is still greater on his dunghill.

But we can say, we men of the nineteenth century, that the nineteenth century is not the dunghill. However deep the shame of the present, whatever blows we receive from the fluctuation of events, whatever the apparent desertion or the momentary lethargy of mental vigour, none of us, democrats, will repudiate the magnificent epoch in which we live, the virile age of mankind.

Let us proclaim it aloud, let us proclaim it in our fall and in our defeat, this is the greatest of all ages! and do you know the reason why? because it is the mildest. This age, the immediate issue, the firstborn offspring, of the French Revolution, frees the slave in America, raises from his degradation the pariah in Asia, abolishes the suttee in India, and extinguishes in Europe the last brands of the stake, civilizes Turkey, carries the Gospel into the domain of the Koran, dignifies woman, subordinates the right of the strongest to that of the most just, suppresses pirates, mitigates sentences, makes the galleys healthy, throws the red-hot iron into the sewer, condemns the penalty of death, removes the ball and chain from the leg of the convict, abolishes torture, degrades and brands war, stifles Dukes of Alva and Charles the Ninths, and extracts the claws of tyrants.

This age proclaims the sovereignty of the citizen, and the inviolability of life; it

crowns the people, and consecrates man.

In art, it possesses all varieties of genius,—writers, orators, poets, historians, publicists, philosophers, painters, sculptors, musicians; majesty, grace, power, force, splendour, colour, form, style; it renews its strength in the real and in the ideal, and bears in its hand the two thunderbolts, the true and the beautiful. In science it accomplishes unheard-of miracles; it makes of cotton saltpetre, of steam a horse, of the voltaic battery a workman, of the electric fluid a messenger, of the sun a painter; it waters itself with subterranean streams, pending the time when it shall warm itself with the central fire; it opens upon the two infinites those two windows, the telescope upon the infinitely great, the microscope upon the infinitely little, and it finds stars in the first abyss, and insects in the second, which prove to it the existence of God. It annihilates time, it annihilates space, it annihilates suffering; it writes a letter from Paris to London, and has an answer in ten minutes; it cuts off a man's leg, the man sings and smiles.

It has now only to realize—and it has nearly done it—a progress which is nothing compared to the miracles it has already wrought; it has only to find the means of directing through a mass of air a bubble of lighter air; it has already obtained the bubble of air, and keeps it imprisoned; it has now only to find the impulsive force, only to cause a vacuum before the balloon, for instance, only to burn the air before the aerostat, as the rocket does before itself; it has only to solve this problem in some way or other; and it will solve it, and do you know what will happen then? At that instant frontiers will vanish, all barriers will be swept away; everything that constitutes a Chinese wall round thought, round commerce, round industry, round nationalities, round progress, will crumble; in spite of censorships, in spite of index expurgatorius, it will rain books and journals upon every country under the sun; Voltaire, Diderot, Rousseau, will fall like hail upon Rome, Naples, Vienna, St. Petersburg; the human word is manna, and the serf will gather it in the furrows; fanaticism will die, oppression will be impossible; man dragged himself along the

ground,—he will escape; civilization changes itself into a flock of birds, and flies away, and whirls about and alights joyously at the same moment upon every point of the globe. Lo! yonder it passes; aim your cannons, old despotisms, it disdains you; you are only the bullet, it is the lightning; no more hatreds, no more mutually devouring interests, no more wars; a sort of new life, composed of concord and light, pervades and soothes the world; the fraternity of nations soars through space, and holds communion in the eternal azure; men mingle in the skies.

While we await this final progress, let us consider the point to which this age had brought civilization.

Formerly there was a world in which people walked slowly, with bent back, and eyes cast down; in which the Comte de Gouvon was served at table by Jean-Jacques; in which the Chevalier de Rohan belaboured Voltaire with a stick; in which Daniel Defoe was placed in the pillory; in which a city like Dijon was separated from a city like Paris by the necessity of making one's will, by robbers at every corner, and ten days by stage; in which a book was a sort of infamy and filth which the hangman burned upon the steps of the Palais de Justice; in which superstition and ferocity shook hands; in which the Pope said to the Emperor: "Jungamus dexteras, gladium gladio copulemus;" in which one met at every step crosses hung with amulets, and gibbets hung with men; in which there were heretics, Jews, and lepers; in which houses had battlements and loop-holes; in which streets were closed with a chain, rivers with a chain, and even camps with a chain (as at the battle of Tolosa), cities with walls, kingdoms with prohibitions and penalties; in which, with the exception of force and authority, which stuck tightly together, everything was penned up, distributed, divided, cut into fragments, hated and hating, scattered and dead; men were as dust, power a solid block. But now we have a world in which everything is alive, united, combined, coupled, mingled together; a world in which thought, commerce, and industry reign; in which politics, more and more firmly fixed, tends to an intimate union with science; a world in which the last scaffolds and the last

cannon are hastening to cut off their last heads and to vomit forth their last shells; a world in which light increases every instant; a world in which distance has disappeared, in which Constantinople is nearer to Paris than Lyons was a hundred years ago, in which Europe and America pulsate with the same heart-throb; a world all circulation and all love, of which France is the brain, the railroads the arteries, and the electric wires the fibres. Do you not see that simply to set forth such a state of affairs is to explain, to demonstrate, and to solve everything? Do you not feel that the old world had an aged soul, tyranny, and that into the new world is about to descend, necessarily, irresistibly, and divinely, a youthful soul, liberty?

This was the work that the nineteenth century had done among men, and was continuing in glorious, fashion to do,—that century of sterility, that century of domination, that century of decadence, that century of degradation, as it is called by the pedants, the rhetoricians, the imbeciles, and all that filthy brood of bigots, of knaves, and of sharpers, who sanctimoniously slaver gall upon glory, who assert that Pascal was a madman, Voltaire a coxcomb, and Rousseau a brute, and whose triumph it would be to put a fool's-cap upon the human race.

You speak of the Lower Empire; are you serious? Had the Lower Empire behind it John Huss, Luther, Cervantes, Shakespere, Pascal, Molière, Voltaire, Montesquieu, Rousseau, and Mirabeau? Had the Lower Empire behind it the taking of the Bastile, the Federation, Danton, Robespierre, the Convention? Did the Lower Empire possess America? Had the Lower Empire universal suffrage? Had the Lower Empire those two ideas, country and humanity: country which enlarges the heart, humanity which expands the horizon? Do you know that, under the Lower Empire, Constantinople fell in ruins, and finally had only thirty thousand inhabitants? Has Paris fallen so low? Because you have witnessed the success of a pretorian coup de main, you liken yourselves to the Lower Empire! 'Tis quickly said, and meanly thought. But reflect, if you can. Had the Lower Empire the compass, the electric battery, the printing press, the newspaper, the locomotive, the electric telegraph? So

many wings to bear man aloft, which the Lower Empire did not possess! The nineteenth century soars, where the Lower Empire crawled. Are you aware of this? What! Shall we see once more the Empress Zoé, Roman Argyrio, Nicephorus Logothetes, Michael Calafates? Nonsense! Do you imagine that Providence repeats itself so tamely? Do you believe that God keeps repeating himself?

Let us have faith! Let us speak with decision! Self-irony is the beginning of baseness. It is by speaking with decision that we become good, that we become great. Yes, the enfranchisement of intellects, and the consequent enfranchisement of nations, this was the sublime task that the nineteenth century was performing in conjunction with France; for the twofold providential work of the time and of men, of maturation and of action, was blended in the common labour, and the great epoch had for its true home the great nation.

O my country! it is at this moment, when I see you bleeding, inanimate, your head hanging, your eyes closed, your mouth open, and no words issuing therefrom, the marks of the whip upon your shoulders, the nails of the executioner's shoes imprinted upon your body, naked and ashamed, and like a thing deprived of life, an object of hatred, of derision, alas! it is at this moment, my country, that the heart of the exile overflows with love and respect for you!

You lie there motionless. The minions of despotism and oppression laugh, and enjoy the haughty illusion that you are no longer to be feared. Fleeting joy! The peoples that are in the dark forget the past; they see only the present, and despise you. Forgive them, they know not what they do. Despise you! Great Heaven! despise France? And who are they? What language do they speak? What books have they in their hands? What names do they know by heart? What is the placard pasted on the walls of their theatres? What forms do their arts assume, their laws, their manners, their clothing, their pleasures, their fashions? What is the great date for them, as for us? '89! If they take France from out their hearts, what remains to them? O my

people! Though it be fallen and fallen for ever, is Greece despised? Is Italy despised? Is France despised? Look at those breasts, they are your nurse; look at that womb, it is your mother.

If she sleeps, if she is in a lethargy, silence, and off with your hat. If she is dead, to your knees!

The exiles are scattered; destiny has blasts which disperse men like a handful of ashes. Some are in Belgium, in Piedmont, in Switzerland, where they do not enjoy liberty; others are in London, where they have no roof to shelter them. One, a peasant, has been torn from his native field; another, a soldier, has only a fragment of his sword, which was broken in his hand; another, an artisan, is ignorant of the language of the country, he is without clothes and without shoes, he knows not if he shall eat food to-morrow; another has left behind him a wife and children, a dearly loved group, the object of his labour, and the joy of his life; another has an old mother with grey hairs, who weeps for him; another an old father, who will die without seeing him again; another is a lover,—he has left behind him some adored being, who will forget him; they raise their heads and they hold out their hands to one another; they smile; there is no nation that does not stand aside with respect as they pass, and contemplate with profound emotion, as one of the noblest spectacles which destiny can offer to men, all those serene consciences, all those broken hearts.

They suffer and are silent; in them the citizen has sacrificed the man; they look with firmness on adversity, they do not cry out even under the pitiless rod of misfortune: Civis Romanus sum! But at eve, when one dreams,—when everything in the strange city of the stranger is involved in melancholy, for what seems cold by day becomes funereal in twilight,—but at night, when sleep does not close one's eyes, hearts the most stoical open to mourning and dejection. Where are the little ones? who will give them bread? who will give them their father's kiss? where is the wife? where is the mother? where is the brother? where are they all? And the songs which at

eventide they used to hear, in their native tongue, where are they? where is the wood, the tree, the forest path, the roof filled with nests, the church tower surrounded by tombs? Where is the street, the faubourg, the lamp burning bright before the door, the friends, the workshop, the trade, the customary toil? And the furniture put up for sale, the auction invading the domestic sanctuary! Oh! these eternal adieux! Destroyed, dead, thrown to the four winds, that moral existence which is called the family hearth, and which is composed not only of loving converse, of caresses and embraces, but of hours, of habits, of friendly visits, of joyous laughter, of the pressure of the hand, of the view from certain windows, of the position of certain furniture, of the arm-chair where the grandsire used to sit, of the carpet on which the first-born used to play! Flown away for ever are those objects which bore the imprint of one's daily life! Vanished are the visible forms of one's souvenirs! There are in grief private and secret recesses, where the most lofty courage bends. The Roman orator put forth his head without flinching to the knife of the centurion Lenas, but he wept when he thought of his house demolished by Clodius.

The exiles are silent, or, if they complain, it is only among themselves. As they know one another, and are doubly brothers, having the same fatherland and sharing the same proscription, they tell one another their sufferings. He who has money shares it with those who have none, he who has firmness imparts it to those who lack it. They exchange recollections, aspirations, hopes. They turn, their arms extended in the darkness towards those they have left behind. Oh! how happy they who think no more of us! Every man suffers and at times waxes wroth. The names of all the executioners are engraven in the memory of all. Each has something to curse,—Mazas, the hulk, the dungeon, the informer who betrayed, the spy who watched, the gendarme who arrested him, Lambessa, where one has a friend, Cayenne, where one has a brother; but there is one thing that is blessed by all, and that is thou, France!

Oh! a complaint, a word against thee, France! No! no! one's country is never so deeply fixed in the heart as when one is torn from it by exile.

They will do their whole duty, with a tranquil brow and unshaken perseverance. Never to see thee again is their sorrow, never to forget thee their joy.

Ah, what grief! And after eight months it is in vain that we say to ourselves that these things are so; it is in vain that we look around us and see the spire of Saint-Michael's instead of the Pantheon, and Saint-Gudule instead of Notre-Dame,—we cannot believe it.

It is, however, true, it cannot be denied, we must admit it, we must acknowledge it, even though we expire of humiliation and despair,—that which is lying there, on the ground, is the nineteenth century, is France!

And it is this Bonaparte who has caused all this ruin!

And it is in the very centre of the greatest nation upon earth! it is in the midst of the greatest century of all history, that this man has suddenly risen and has triumphed! To seize upon France as his prey, great Heaven! What the lion would not dare to do, the ape has done! what the eagle would have dreaded to seize in his talons, the parrot has taken in his claws! What! Louis XI failed! Richelieu destroyed himself in the attempt! Even Napoleon was unequal to it! In a single day, between night and morning, the absurd became the possible! All that was axiomatic has become chimerical. All that was false has become living fact. What! the most brilliant concourse of men! the most magnificent movements of ideas! the most formidable sequence of events! a thing that no Titian could have controlled, that no Hercules could have turned aside,—the human flood in full course, the French wave sweeping onward, civilization, progress, intelligence, revolution, liberty,—he stopped it all one fine morning, stopped it short, he, this mask, this dwarf, this aborted Tiberius, this nothing!

God was advancing. Louis Bonaparte, his plume on his head, blocked his path and

said to God: "Thou shalt go no farther!"

God halted.

And you fancy that this is so! and you imagine that this plebiscite exists, that this constitution of some day or other in January exists, that this Senate exists, that this Council of State and this Corps Législatif exist! You fancy that there is a lackey who is called Rouher, a valet who is called Troplong, a eunuch who is called Baroche, and a sultan, a pacha, a master who is called Louis Bonaparte! You do not see, then, that all this is a chimera! you do not see that the 2nd of December is nothing but an immense illusion, a pause, a breathing-space, a sort of drop-curtain behind which God, that marvellous scene-shifter, is preparing and constructing the last act, the supreme, triumphal act of the French Revolution! You gaze stupidly at the curtain, at the things painted on the coarse canvas, this one's nose, that one's epaulettes, the great sabre of a third, those belaced venders of eau de Cologne whom you call generals, those poussahs whom you call magistrates, those worthy men whom you call senators, this mixture of caricatures and spectres, and you take them all for realities! And you do not hear beyond them, in the shadow, that hollow sound! you do not hear some one going and coming! you do not see that curtain quiver in the breath of Him who is behind!

THE END.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK NAPOLEON THE LITTLE ***

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